

# MENTOR - APPRENTICE PROGRAM

**300-Hour  
Intermediate  
Program  
Handbook**



This handbook is in draft form and put together specifically for YNLC's 2024 Intermediate Mentor-Apprentice Program.

Draft handbook



*Acknowledging that we live and work in the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.*

**"Gratitude and respect goes out to present and past leadership, elders, fluent speakers, language staff and teachers that dedicated many years of their lives to Yukon First Nation (YFN) languages."**

- YNLC Strategic Plan 2018-2021



Yukon Native Language Centre Fluent Speaker  
Recognition and Graduation Ceremony 2023

The Yukon Native Language Centre (YNLC) would like to acknowledge everyone who has been a part of Mentor-Apprentice Programs (MAP) through YNLC; the work that has been done to create the first Yukon MAP guidebook and facilitated orientations; the language learners who use this approach to learning; the speakers who dedicate their time and knowledge to pass to the next generations. We would like to acknowledge all for laying a foundation for Mentor-Apprentice learning in the Yukon. We would like to acknowledge and give a special thanks to the following for being leaders in this program: Skàйда.û (Tina Jules, Tlingit), Khàganê (Connie Jules, Tlingit) & Marianne Ignace (Simon Fraser University).

**Dágha sháwkwäthän to the following organizations for sharing their resources and knowledge for YNLC to create this version of MAP handbook specifically for this 2024 Intermediate 300-hour MAP.**

Doyon Foundation (Alaska)

First Peoples Cultural Council (FPCC) (British Columbia)

Sealaska Heritage (Alaska)



INFORMATION ABOUT  
YNLC'S PROGRAM

HOW TO GET STARTED

TIPS FOR  
LEARNING/IMMERSION

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

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**Neenjit dàgòonch'uu? | Nänjit dähòonch'e? | Dénht'ā? | Dǎninch'í? | Dǎnnch'e? |  
Dànìt'ē? | Mâ sá iyatì? | Nts'ǎtdjìt'eh?  
How are you?**

This resource has been made to provide information and resources specifically for YNLC's 300-hour Intermediate Mentor-Apprentice Program. Throughout the program a new version of a YNLC MAP handbook will be developed with input from teams. You're input and feedback is needed! To create a great resource for those following who will use this approach to YFN language learning.

## Purpose

This handbook is intended to be a practical tool for participants of the Mentor Apprentice Program. It will serve as a resource from which individuals and communities can gather ideas, examples and guidance for the planning and completion of the Mentor Apprentice Program. Please note that the examples in this handbook are given in English and they are only provided to help generate ideas for a personalized program. Concepts from one culture to another are not easily adapted, and often a direct translation from one language to another is impossible and cannot express meaning in the same way. The examples in this handbook are not intended for direct translation into First Nation Languages.

## YNLC's Intermediate Mentor-Apprentice Program

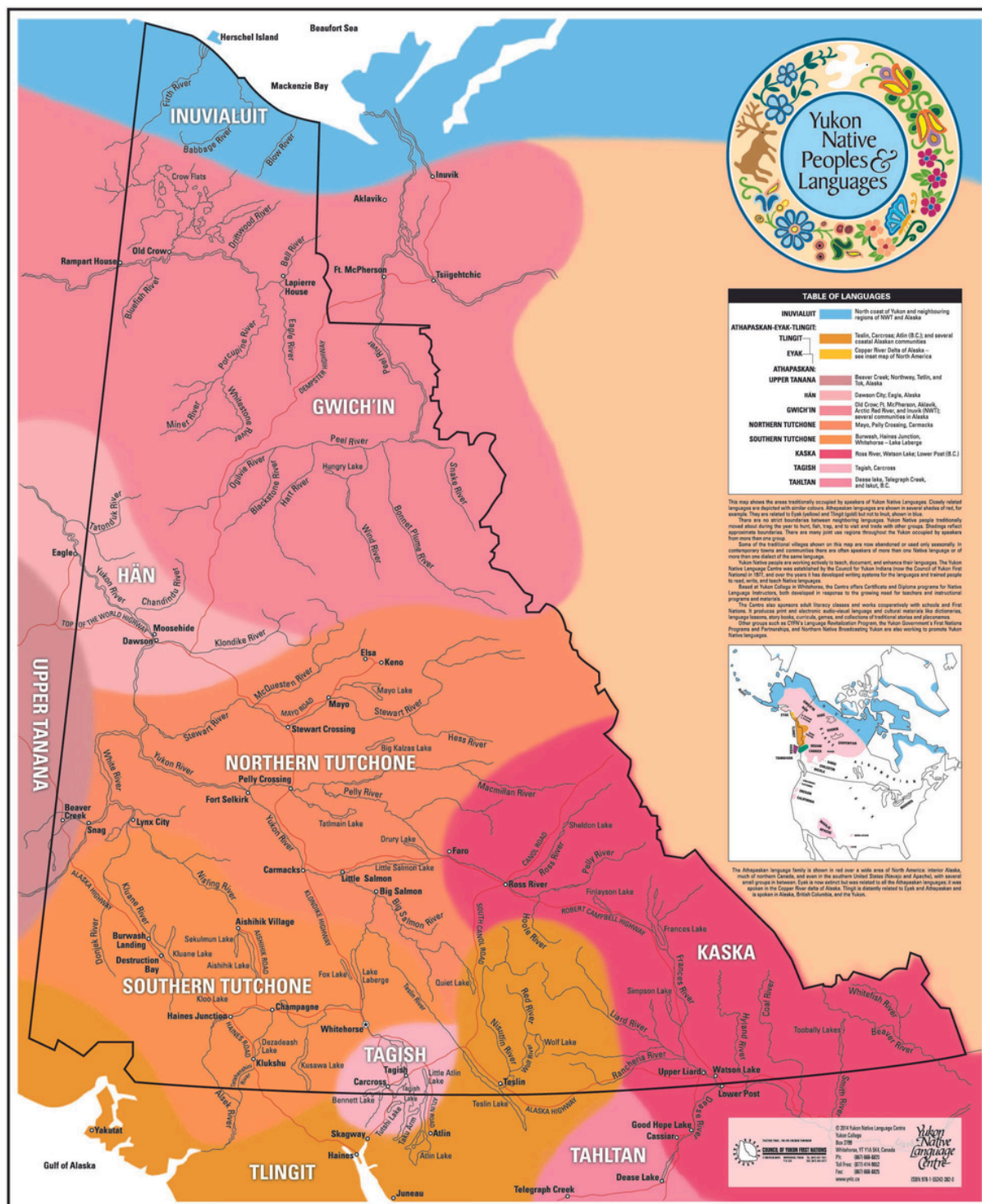
This 300-hour Mentor Apprentice Program aims to ensure traditional knowledge and language are passed on to the next generation of fluent speakers, increase language documentation and preservation of Yukon First Nation languages, and support a cohort of intermediate to advanced language learners across the eight critically endangered Yukon First Nation languages.

The program will consist of:

- Documentation of Critically Endangered Yukon First Nations Languages.
- 300 contact-hours with a speaker in the target Yukon First Nation language.
- Increased fluency for Apprentice with the goal of reaching high-intermediate understanding and speaking proficiency.
- Training Sessions for Mentors and Apprentices (immersion methods, on-the-land methods, documentation and preservation).
- Ongoing support and motivation for MAP Teams from Program Coordinator (One-on-one sessions, program administration, resource sharing, archival materials).

**"It is paramount to immediately support and create a new generation of fluent speakers with the higher levels of language proficiency needed to pass on the language to future generations. Essentially, to create the speakers needed to teach babies in the home their First Nation language as their first language once again, and to create speakers to work in future immersion programs such as nests, camps, and schools and in community programs."**

- YNLC Strategic Plan 2018-2021



## What is MAP, Mentor-Apprentice Program?

Mentor-Apprentice Program (MAP) is an intensive one-on-one language knowledge transfer approach that utilizes activity-based immersion environments. A committed language learner is paired with a fluent speaker to build their language trail and strengthen their proficiency. This approach focuses on speaking and understanding your First Nation language by being immersed in and using the language for 10 hours a week. MAP is used by many endangered Indigenous languages and is grounded in a natural learning process. Formalized in California in the 1990s for Native Languages, the program has since been offered by many language organizations and Indigenous communities reporting success (Hinton, 2001).

## History of Mentor-Apprentice Program

The approach, then termed Master-Apprentice learning, was pioneered in the 1990s by Indigenous language learners and the last few fluent speakers of Indigenous languages in California, working together with Prof. Leanne Hinton. Some young people were becoming interested in learning their ancestral language from these last remaining speakers, however, they were often dispersed across cities and across the state. Thus, classroom language instruction that brought larger groups of learners together was not feasible, and the remaining elderly speakers were not trained language teachers.

Since then, mentor-apprentice programs have spread across North America and beyond as a method for revitalizing Indigenous languages. First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) in British Columbia first started their Mentor-Apprentice Program in 2007. FPCC's program goal was to immerse apprentices in 900 hours of immersion in their languages (three years of 300 hours per year).

Other North American language communities that have had Mentor-Apprentice programs include Cherokee, Inuinnaqtun, Northwest Territories (Inuvialuktun, Gwich'in, North Slavey, Dene Zhatié, Tłı̨chǫ, Dëne Sų́łiné) and California (Karuk, Hupa, Yurok, Wintu, Yowlumne, Mojave), among others. In Alaska, Sealaska Heritage Institute has run a Mentor-Apprentice Program for Lingít, Sm'algıax and Xaad Kíl.

The Yukon Native Language Centre with Simon Fraser University and Council of Yukon First Nations has offered 40-hour MAP with optional credits through SFU. These come in sets of 40+ hours of practice by the team per module or course, but the expectation is that the apprentice spends an additional 60–80 hours of ongoing practice and study, working with the recorded oral language from their sessions with their mentor. The MAP we are currently implementing is the first intensive version of MAP designed for intermediate learners offered by YNLC. The design is based off of programs offered in British Columbia and Alaska that have showed great success.

## ABOUT IMMERSION

Language immersion is the key to gaining proficiency in any language. While other types of non-immersive learning can help you to learn more about your language, language immersion allows you to learn in your language. In this way, we acquire language like we do as children. Immersion means you refrain from using English while learning your language. Vocabulary, grammar and culture are taught in the language and are learned in context. Language immersion is challenging. We are accustomed to speaking English day in and day out, and it is a significant challenge to keep English out of the learning space, even for fluent speakers. Overcoming the tendency to use English as a crutch will likely be the most challenging aspect of your Mentor-Apprenticeship.

Language immersion is successful. Dozens of academic studies and real-world examples have demonstrated that immersion is the most successful mode for learning a language, whether this be for young children or for adults. (Doyon Foundation Handbook 2023 p. 8)

## GOAL

THE GOAL OF THE PROGRAM IS ORAL COMMUNICATION OR FLUENCY, BEING ABLE TO SPEAK AND UNDERSTAND CONVERSATIONAL LANGUAGE.

## STRATEGY & APPROACH

PARTICIPANTS SET LANGUAGE PLANS AND A SCHEDULE TO SPEND TIME TOGETHER SPEAKING ONLY THE LANGUAGE FOR APPROXIMATELY 10 HOUR PER WEEK. USING VOCABULARY IN FULL SENTENCES AND IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS.

## ASSESSMENT

THE ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR THIS PROGRAM IS MEANT TO HELP YOU REFLECT ON WHAT YOU CAN DO, TO HELP YOU FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU WANT TO FOCUS ON NEXT, AND TO KEEP TRACK OF HOW YOUR SKILLS ARE INCREASING OVER TIME.

## ACTIVITIES

DAILY, ORDINARY LIFE & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES SHOULD MAKE UP A MAJORITY OF THE TIME THAT MENTORS & APPRENTICES SPEND TOGETHER. LANGUAGE LEARNING SHOULD BE NATURAL AND INCLUDE LEARNING TO SPEAK ABOUT CULTURALLY AND DAILY LIFE RELEVANT TOPICS.



## 2024 Intermediate MAP information

- **Monthly check-in with Program Coordinator**

- Program Coordinator will work with Apprentice to Schedule monthly meetings
- Review hours and plans, immersion update, supplies and travel budget.

- **Assessment Tool (Your Language Trail)**

- To be completed every 50 hours
- Please notify or keep Program Coordinator up-to-date on your hours to ensure oral assessments are scheduled.

- **Monthly language documentation**

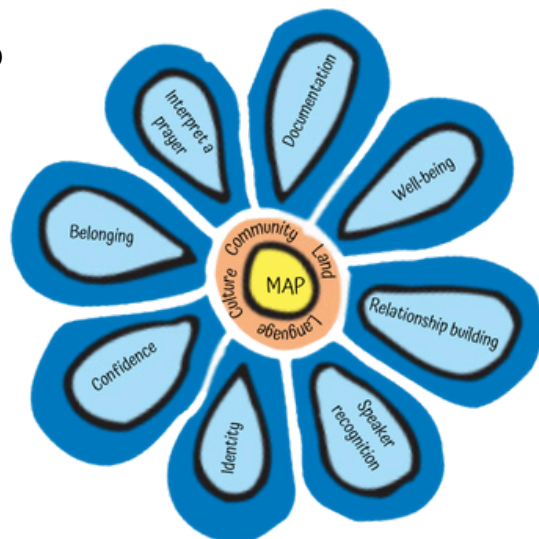
- Required: Record speaker/mentor telling story or narrative activity once a month to document and preserve language for future generations. Consent forms and information are required for each video. Videos and paperwork will be sent to the Program Coordinator.
- Optional: Recording your sessions for your immersion sessions for your own learning is encouraged. Consider sharing these recordings for future learners and generations to learn from.

- **Financials**

- Speakers are paid \$75/hr
- Apprentice to submit an invoice for their stipend every 100 hours, after the completion of every second assessment (\$5,000 max).
- Fuel and supplies budget will be reimbursed up to \$2,000 per team.

- **We are here to support**

- Please keep in contact with Program Coordinator, if anything comes up or would like support with planning, we are here to support you through this program.
- If you are having difficulty in any area of your MAP please let us know. We can help participants access mental health supports or work with your team to make a new plan.



## Program Dates

- Apprentice Orientation: February 17 & 18, 2024
- Speaker gathering (optional): February 23, 2024
- Mentor & Apprentice orientation: February 24 & 25, 2024
- Program starts (one-on-one sessions w/mentor): March 1, 2024
- Monthly online apprentice meetings: Every 3rd Thursday
- 1st 3-month gathering: May 25, 2024.
- 2nd 3-month gathering: August 10, 2024
- Program completion & final celebration: November 29, 2024

*Mandatory assessments are scheduled upon completion of every 50 hours to continue in the program.*

## Post-Secondary Accreditation

18 Credits are available for the Intermediate 300-hour MAP program (3 credits per 50 hours completed upon assessment) through Simon Fraser University.

Attaining credits will require an oral assessment with Speaker, Apprentice, Program Coordinator & YNLC Language Training Officer where we will review the Assessment Tool and hear from you on the growth of your understanding and speaking of the language.

### **Possible Intermediate Courses:**

INLG 433 - MAP 1

INLG 434 - MAP 2

INLG 358 - Immersion 3

INLG 458 - Immersion 4

INLG 333 - Language Learning Level 5

INLG 334 - Language Learning Level 6

Depending on where you are at/which courses you have previously taken, the courses you receive credit for may vary. Please set up a meeting with YNLC ([info@ynlc.ca](mailto:info@ynlc.ca)) to review transcripts, classes-to-date, and what credits would best suit your learning goals if you would like university credit.

# YNLC 2024 Intermediate Mentor-Apprentice Program Roles & Responsibilities:

**MAP Teams:** Fluent speaker (Mentor) with an intermediate-level learner (Apprentice)

**Mentor:** a fluent speaker wanting to pass on their knowledge, willing to spend a lot of time a week with an apprentice doing daily and cultural activities in the language. Responsible for assisting Apprentices in expanding their fluency.

**Apprentice:** a dedicated intermediate-level learner willing to work hard and commit at least 10 hours/week to immersion with a speaker for 9 months or a total of 300 hours.

- MAP is an apprentice-led program
  - Preparing and maintaining a schedule, arriving on time and being prepared when meeting with your speaker, tracking hours and speaker time, and excellent communication.
  - Be active learners, seek to always maintain an immersion environment by reminding and encouraging all to speak in the language, and making sure their mentor is comfortable

**Program Coordinator Role:** Ongoing support and motivation for MAP Teams. Contact for teams, organize and plan support sessions. program and team tracking, assessments and accreditation, logistics, reimbursement, payments, bookings.



“During data analysis, we noticed repeating comments from participants about how their involvement with a Mentor-Apprentice Program impacted their own and their community’s wellbeing...”  
(Jenni et al., 2017 p.25)

Wellness ~ Mental ~ Physical ~ Emotional ~ Spiritual ~

Learning your language can be extremely rewarding but we also acknowledge that the journey can bring up heavy emotions for both Apprentices and Mentors.

Please keep yours and your mentor’s health priority and reach out to Program Coordinator, we can help connect you to supports.



Create a wellness toolbox!

*Create a prayer with your mentor*

**CRAFTING - PAINTING**

Plan sessions doing an activity you and your mentor both enjoy regularly.

**EAT GOOD FOOD**

*Journaling*

Reflect on your language goals and journey, give yourself credit for the work and commitment you have put in.

*Land activities*

*Grounding exercises (in your language)*





## GOALS

**THE APPRENTICE NEEDS TO THINK ABOUT WHY THEY WANT TO BE PART OF THE MENTOR-APPRENTICE PROGRAM.**

### Internal:

- Teaching my children and grandchildren
- Maintaining my Native identity
- Reconnecting with my culture and the land

### External:

- Ensuring continuation of the language
- Strengthening community
- Start an immersion program

It is also a good idea for the mentor to come up with his or her own goals. What do they want to achieve by mentoring an apprentice in the program?

Language is culture. Keep in mind that language goals you design in English may not always translate well to your language and as you learn more of your language, your language goals may adjust and change.



## WORKPLAN

### CREATE A WORK PLAN

At the beginning of each month, Mentor and Apprentice should develop a work plan together for the entire month.

- The work plan will give you a chance to set some goals for what the apprentice would like to learn. To guide your planning, think about the following questions:
  - What kinds of topics do you want to learn about? The learning must be natural to you and where you live.
  - What do you want to learn in the next 50 hours?
  - What kinds of activities can you do together to help accomplish your goals?
  - Are there other language/culture experts in the community you would like to involve?

Set specific language learning objectives or outcomes and try to be as specific as you can in planning your monthly activities. During your activities, you will learn new words and practice using them in phrases.

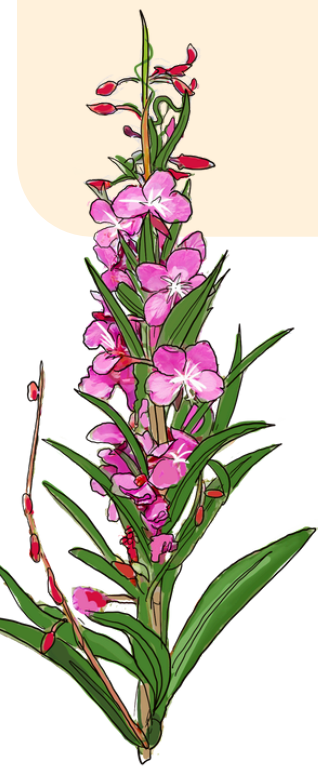
Unplanned or unstructured immersion: You do not have to plan every minute of your time together. Sometimes it is really useful to just sit, relax and talk to each other about anything that comes to you, as long as you continue to use the language. How much the apprentice contributes will depend on her/his level of fluency, but you can have a pretty good conversation with the apprentice adding whatever she/he can. For example, you can talk about what happened that day, the latest news from the community, your family, etc.

## Setting a Program Schedule

Decide on a schedule and stick to it. Find a schedule that works for both the Mentor and Apprentice, 5-10 hours per week, for a total of 30-40 hours per month.

Remember: You don't need to stop doing what you would usually do. For example, if you choose Sunday, and you usually go for a Sunday drive, you can still go on your Sunday drive - you will just do it together, talking about what you're doing, where you're going, or what you're seeing in the language.

See **Appendix 1 - MAP Hour Tracking** to track hours studying and with mentor.



**Sample Schedule #1: Evenings and one weekend day per week**

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Total
Week 1				2			6	8
Week 2				2			6	8
Week 3				2			6	8
Week 4				2			6	8
Total								32

**Sample Schedule #2: Evenings Only**

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Total
Week 1			3	3	3			9
Week 2			3	3	3			9
Week 3			3	3	3			9
Week 4			3	3	3			9
Total								36

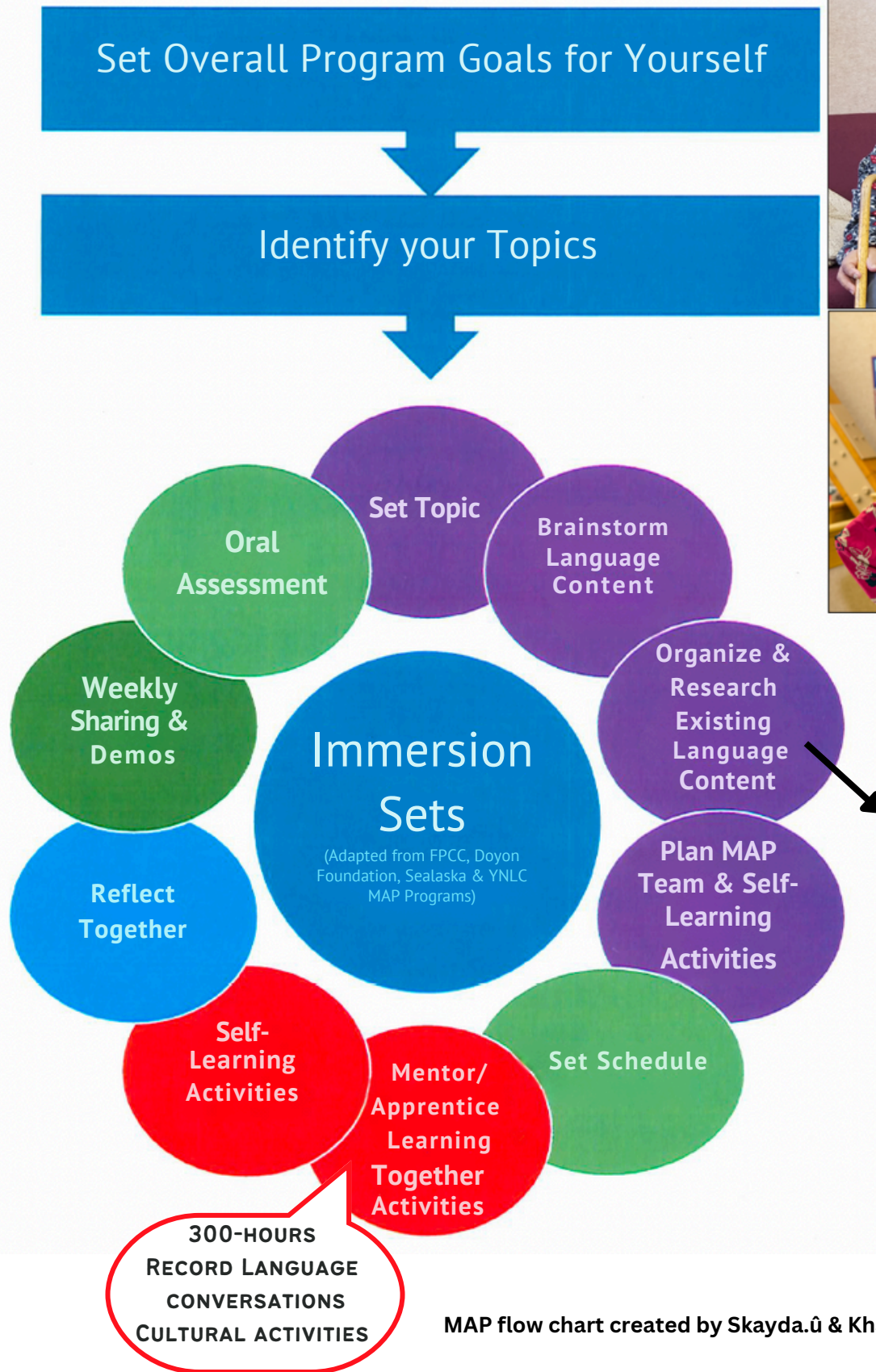
**Sample Schedule #3: Weekends Only**

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Total
Week 1	4						4	8
Week 2	4						4	8
Week 3	4						4	8
Week 4	4						4	8
Total								32

### Sample schedules

The above sample schedules are meant to give you ideas for creating your schedule - it's important to choose a schedule that works best for you. You can choose one of these or you can make your own combination. Keep track of your schedule with your Mentor and stick to it!

# Planning Your Mentor Apprentice Program



Research! Contact YNLC to see available language recordings.

You may want to record some of the language with your speaker ahead of time to come to the planned activity prepared to **speak & understand**.



After you have figured out how to get started with your Mentor-Apprenticeship, it's important to be clear about how you will learn and how you will do it in immersion.

Here are some important points to remember when learning your language. These points are adapted from the First Peoples' Cultural Council's MAP Handbook, Doyon Foundation MAP Handbook, Sealaska Heritage MAP Handbook and Chapter 2 from Leanne Hinton's book "How to Keep Your Language Alive" (Hinton 2002)

## 1. LEAVE ENGLISH BEHIND • Communicate **ONLY** using your language

- This is the hardest part of this program. Resist speaking English. Speaking English is a habit you are trying to break. If you catch yourself speaking English, switch right back into your language.
- Remember to always be polite and considerate when asking or being asked to stay in your language. Staying in immersion is difficult at first but it will get easier.
- Once you get in the habit of staying in your language that will become your norm.

## 2. MAKE YOURSELF UNDERSTOOD WITH NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

- Our languages are not only oral! Use non-verbal communication to your advantage!
- Instead of switching to English, use actions, gestures, facial expressions, pictures and objects to show what you are trying to say.

**Actions** - Act out what you are trying to say with motions.

**Gestures and facial expressions** - Point to things you are talking about and use facial expressions that show what you are thinking and feeling.

**Sign language** - If you and your mentor know or created some sign language for learning, you can use it to indicate meaning without using English.

**Use Pictures, photos, books, and surroundings** to help make yourself understood.

It may feel uncomfortable and silly but that's okay, have fun & laugh lots!

## 3. USE FULL SENTENCES

- Hearing words in the context of full sentences will help the learner remember and understand their real meanings. It is important to speak in full sentences, so that apprentices can learn the structure and flow of conversation.
- 20 x 20 - It is generally understood that to learn a new word or phrase an Apprentice needs to hear/see/say it 20 times in 20 different ways.



## 4. USE YOUR LANGUAGE FOR REAL COMMUNICATION

- Try to do everything in your language. Don't think of your language as something you only do during sessions, but as everyday language of your community.
- Learning a language means learning to communicate. The best way to learn is by using real communication in the language.

## 5. REMEMBER THAT LANGUAGE IS ALSO CULTURE

- Indigenous languages are not just translations of English. Some ideas, phrases, thoughts we say in English may be impossible to say in the same way in your language, and some things in your language may be impossible to say in the same way in English.
- It may not be polite or proper protocol to talk about some things in your language that we usually talk about in English.

## 6. FOCUS ON LISTENING AND SPEAKING

- In many of our English language classrooms, there is often a strong focus on writing and reading. Although this can sometimes be helpful, people almost never learn how to speak a language fluently when writing and grammar are the focus. To gain proficiency in your language you have to focus on listening and speaking.
- A good way to improve your writing skills is to audio or video record your sessions with your mentor and transcribe the recording later on. Try to keep your time together for listening and speaking, not writing.

## 7. LEARN THROUGH ACTIVITIES - "LIVE THE LANGUAGE"

- The best way to learn to speak a language is through activities using real communication in the language. This is exactly how all babies learn language, through real-life communication and activities.
- One question people always ask is "What do we do to learn/teach language when we are together?"
  - Live daily life together, don't think of this time together as outside of your normal patterns of living. Hands-on daily activities will keep the apprentice actively learning and interested. *If you have to cook supper, do it and talk about what you're doing in the language, step by step.*
  - Do traditional activities.

## 8. USE AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDING

- Recordings are useful to help the apprentice practice, and they create a record for the Mentor as well. Record your session or an activity to practice. Reminder we are not focusing on formal elicitation.
- Although the apprentice needs to hear the repetition many times to internalize them, it is exhausting and sometimes frustrating for the mentor to repeat what they say over and over again. This is where audio and video recording can be a helping aid. The apprentice can take the recording away from the session and play it as many times as they like whenever they want to. The apprentice can listen to recordings on a walk, in the car, or at home to continue to immerse themselves in the language. Apprentices can practice their writing skills by transcribing their sessions in between meetings if they would like to do so.
- With consent recordings can be shared and used by others as a learning resource and preservation of language.

## 9. BE AN ACTIVE LEARNER

- The Mentor is the language expert and a vast store of cultural knowledge, but they should not have to take charge of what, how, and when to teach.
- The Mentor-Apprentice team should be a true partnership rather than the mentor “teaching” the apprentice language “lessons”.
- By actively learning and taking responsibility for learning, the Apprentice will remember more, enjoy the immersion language sessions more and get more out of the time spent with the Mentor.

## 10. BE SENSITIVE TO EACH OTHER'S NEEDS, FEELINGS AND SHOW GRATITUDE

- Be aware of each others' feelings. Language learning can sometimes feel overwhelming for both the Mentor and Apprentice. This is normal and it's important to give yourselves a break. Change the activity, do something fun, play a game or tell a joke.
- The Mentor is working hard to pass on the language by repeating things many times, slowing speech, and spending a considerable amount of time with the Apprentice.
- The Apprentice is also working very hard to learn the language. It is not quick and easy. The Mentor must be patient and kind to the Apprentice even when learning is going slowly.



*We asked Mentor-Apprentice teams:  
What is immersion?*



IT IS IN US  
 Immersion - our way  
 Our culture  
 Our customs  
 Our Language  
 Motion-Gestures  
 Our vision - That's the way  
 -Language is life  
 Everything  
 -No translation  
 No English  
 -Listening  
 Speaking  
 we see

YNLC MAP team orientation Feb 2024

### Five Stages of Language Learning

#### Comprehension

- Understanding what is being communicated (through non-verbal cues, even if not the words)
- Recognizing what is being said (actual words).

#### Production

- Mimicking what is being said
- Producing utterances without prompting
- Using words and phrases creatively in spontaneous communication (advanced knowledge).



Sealaska Heritage Mentor  
Apprentice Handbook p. 16

## Immersion Progression

Immersive learning cycles involve multiple steps between being able to hear a word, to being able to understand, comprehend, and use it in context. What steps would you take between hearing a narration of an activity and understanding and conversing about the activity?

### Narration

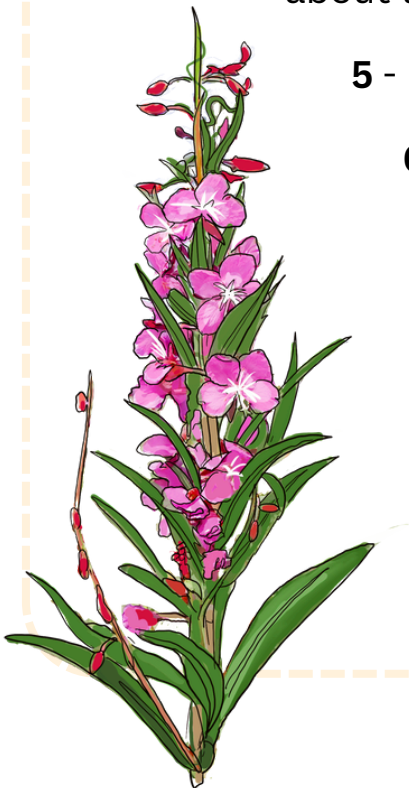
Listening and watching speaker.



### Conversation

Back and forth dialog about current activity through understanding and speaking.

- 1 - Speaker narrates what they are doing, you listen.
- 2 - Learner does activity & speaker narrates.
- 3 - Speaker tells you what to do.
- 4 - Learner narrates what you're doing. (Explaining what you're about to do/what you did)
- 5 - Bring in another learner to practice commands them around.
- 6 - Games about the activity, creating a resource together.
- 7 - Conversation about the activity
  - Preparing for activity with a phone call
  - Questions & answers while doing activity
- 8 - Feedback of growth from Speaker and assessment





## WHAT ACTIVITIES DO YOU WANT TO DO WITH YOUR SPEAKER?

## WHAT CULTURAL SPACES DO YOU WANT TO BE ABLE TO USE LANGUAGE IN?

- **ICE FISHING**
  - SETTING NET UNDER ICE
- **HAND GAMES**
- **CAMPING**
  - SETTING UP CAMP
  - TAKING DOWN CAMP
  - LANGUAGE
    - TALKING ABOUT WEIGHT, WHO PACKED WHAT, YOUR RESPONSIBLE FOR PACKING FOR YOURSELF.
    - DID YOU BRING? HANDING VERBS.
    - TALK ABOUT PICKING A SPOT
- **MAKING MEDICINE**
  - GATHERING > PREPPING & MAKING IT > STORING
  - GIVING THANKS
  - SHARING - GIVING IT OUT
  - USAGE
- **MAKING TRADITIONAL ART**
  - SEWING, BEADING, PAINTING...
  - PREP
    - SHOPPING
  - DOING ACTIVITY (NARRATING)
  - CLEAN UP
- **COOKING**
  - BUYING FOOD, PREPPING, COOKING, CLEANING, CLEAN-UP
- **TANNING A MOOSE HIDE**
  - TOOLS - HANDLING VERBS, CAN YOU BRING\_\_\_\_\_, DON'T FORGET
  - PREP, PICKING A SITE, SEASONAL PREP
  - CARING FOR TOOLS
  - USING THE TOOL
- **HARVESTING BEARROOTS**
  - PREP, LOCATION, WHAT NEEDS TO BE PACKED? FOODS, TOOLS,
  - ACTIVITY - FINDING BEAR ROOT, IDENTIFYING BEAR ROOT, HARVESTING BEAR ROOT
  - DIRECTIONALS
  - TRAVEL - GOING THERE/LEAVING
- **DUG-OUT CANOE**
  - CONVERSATION - CARVING, HANDLING VERBS
  - PROTOCOL
- **VISITING LANGUAGE**
- **DRYING MEAT**
- **SONG**
- **STORIES**

THESE ACTIVITIES WERE  
BRAINSTORMED WITH  
INTERMEDIATE APPRENTICES  
DURING APPRENTICE  
ORIENTATION IN FEBRUARY  
2024

**\*\* IF YOU ARE CHOOSING TO LEARN LANGUAGE THAT REQUIRES MEMORIZATION (POTLATCH SPEECH, LONG-AGO STORY), HOW WILL YOU ENSURE YOU CAN HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT THE SPEECH/STORY WITH YOUR MENTOR? MEMORIZED LANGUAGE TOPICS SHOULD ONLY MAKE UP APPROXIMATELY 10% OF YOUR MAP PLAN.**

IN THE BEGINNING PHASES IT IS OFTEN DIFFICULT FOR LANGUAGE LEARNERS TO STAY IN THE LANGUAGE FOR VERY LONG DUE TO LIMITED VOCABULARY. THE GOAL IS TO STAY IN THE LANGUAGE FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE TO CONVEY THE MEANING.

### IMMERSION LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Hands-on daily activities will keep the apprentice actively learning and interested. This will allow the apprentice to better remember what they learn. An apprentice can learn the language by watching, listening and practicing activities. For example: A mentor and apprentice can talk about washing the dishes as they are actually doing the dishes. This will give the apprentice the opportunity to see, feel, touch, hear, and speak about the topic.

**"Aim for brain melt. When you work on language learning for hours on end and your brain feels tired you are getting somewhere! You may even begin dreaming in the language or get a headache. In the beginning, you'll hit the mind-melt within an hour or two. This will be hard on your brain for a while, but it will get easier over time."**

-Witsuwit'en Language and Culture Society (WLCS)

- Language Learning Tips

### REFLECTION SPACE

WHAT ACTIVITIES DO YOU PLAN TO DO WITH YOUR MENTOR?



**REFLECTION SPACE**

**WHAT WILL BE YOUR APPROACH TO MOVE FROM HEARING THE LANGUAGE SURROUNDING A SPECIFIC TOPIC OR ACTIVITY TO CONVERSING ABOUT IT?**

**WHAT HAS WORKED FOR YOU LEARNING THROUGH IMMERSION IN THE PAST?**

The research of Mentor-Apprentice Programs in BC had results of tremendous positive impacts for Mentors, Apprentices and Communities. Apprentices not only reported increased fluency but also increased feelings of wellbeing and confidence. Although rewarding MAP teams had to overcome complex challenges throughout their program. The following are some Challenges and Solutions shared from FPCC MAP Handbook and the Doyon Foundation MAP Handbook.



As you face and overcome different challenges please share with the other teams and program coordinator. We can better support each other the more that is shared on how to work through all kinds of challenges teams may face.

## Challenge

### Staying in Immersion

### Possible Solutions

This might be the hardest challenge for some teams and the reason might be different for each team.

- Survival phrases! Possibly the first step is brushing up on survival phrases and thinking about phrases needed for a specific activity. This is also where you can reach out to YNLC about content we may have.
- Gently remind each other in the language to speak your language. This can be difficult for some speakers and apprentices to keep guiding them to stay in the language. Don't be discouraged keep on trying to stay in the language yourself and slowly your speaker might get more used to staying in the language.
  - If your speaker gets frustrated and keeps switching to English depending on activity, take a break. You may want to focus on smaller conversations and activities you are more comfortable with. Then expand your conversation abilities like focusing on language you do use together and pushing your topics (such as daily conversation) further. Use immersion chunking when working with a new activity or topic.
- Try immersion chunking. Do 15 minutes in the language then take a break, discuss how it went and try again. Once you are ready, expand the chunk of time you are in immersion
- Be easy on yourself and mentor, this is new and very challenging to create this immersion space. If you need to take a break or talk out challenges please take the time to and reach out.



## Challenge

### Getting bored and running out of ideas

### Possible Solutions

- Review something that you learned a while ago (this is where keeping a journal can help).
- Remember that you are trying to make the language a part of your daily life. If there is a chore make it into a language activity.
- Change the scenery, go for a walk, take a drive, go somewhere in your community that has been used historically to trigger memories.
- Use conversations cards or pictures. Turn the TV on mute and try to describe what is going on.
- Watch or listen to a recording together, pause and discuss what is going on.
- Learn a story or a song.
- Gather ideas from Doyon Foundation Sample Lessons and check out Moodle, start a discussion.

## Challenge

### Feeling discouraged

### Possible Solutions

- Language learning is not quick and easy, especially YFN languages (polysynthetic languages). Remind yourself how far you have come since you started. Even committing to spending consistent time with a mentor is a huge accomplishment and you are growing even if it doesn't feel like it at times.
- Listen back to previous sessions to see how far you have come.
- Be gentle with yourself. You are doing your best and language learning is hard!
- Trust you know more than you think. Your participation in this program is proof enough you are on the right track.
- You are not alone in feeling discouraged. Utilize your language learning community whether it is one person you talk to and/or bring it up in the monthly apprentice meetings (that space is for you).

## Challenge

### Apprentice plateau

### Possible Solutions

- Do something out of the ordinary. Depending on your level, brainstorm topics you don't have much experience with and try to build conversation and language around a new topic or activity. Choose more complicated topics and language, take what you know and add to it. Use longer more dynamic sentences, practice talking about topic in different tenses.
- Work on storytelling using your own words, try to tell stories about different times in your life.
- Measure your progress, reflect on your journey and where there are gaps.
- Practice your language with another speaker and listen to old recordings.

Documentation is a core part of this intermediate mentor-apprentice program. It is expected that each team contributes to the documentation and preservation of their language by filming 1 video a month to be shared with future generations.

## DOCUMENTATION VIDEO: STEPS & CONSIDERATIONS

### 1. Prepare for Session.

- Send the speaker the questions you are going to ask ahead of time. Set a location to record. Ensure your recording device (phone) is fully charged and you have a charger with you.

### 2. Get consent (consent form & oral consent attained).

- Consent form for recording appendix 5 - consent form

#### SCRIPT FOR CONSENT ORAL RECORDINGS AT BEGINNING OF VIDEO:

“It is \_\_\_\_\_(date), I am \_\_\_\_\_ (Recorder name) and I am here with \_\_\_\_\_ (Speaker name), and we are in \_\_\_\_\_(location). Do I have your permission to video record you and share the language recording for educational purposes and future generations? Is it all right if we share this on the Yukon Native Language Centre YouTube and website for other learners to learn from?”

**YES** - Continue Recording

**NO** - How would you prefer it to be shared? What would you feel comfortable sharing with the public?

### 3. Ask Question(s) and record the speaker's answers

#### Prompting Questions Ideas

Can you tell about the first time you \_\_\_\_\_?  
\*ask about topic you are learning\*

What was your childhood like?

Tell me about your friends/family/community.

When you were my age, what were you doing?

What is your favourite childhood memory?

What has been the best part of your week?

What do you remember about your grandmother?

#### 4. Save and Rename the recording

tli\_sam-johnston\_Childhood-Story  
(languages\_speaker in recording\_Topic)

#### 5. Email the consent form, any additional information on the recording, and the video to Program Coordinator to archive and share.



## Speaking & Understanding

Functional language acquisition connects contextual language learning settings that centre understanding and production of authentic speech with cultural identity and strengthening relations.

**Apprentices will complete oral assessment with their speaker and the Program Coordinator every 50 hours of the program to celebrate language growth, set new oral language goals, receive feedback from speaker and coordinator.**

### UNDERSTANDING

Speech perception always precedes speech production.

Deep cultural connectedness comes with understanding the meaning of words in context through a Yukon First Nations worldview.

### SPEAKING

Speaking in meaningful exchanges strengthens identity.

Contextual and authentic speech creates connections and applications to other contexts.

Voices of ancestors can be heard when you speak.





The focus is UNDERSTANDING & SPEAKING and is NOT on READING & WRITING.

Reading and writing are tools you can use to write down a new word, review when listening to a recording, preparing point form notes prior to a phone call with your speaker, etc.

### REFLECTION SPACE

Through increasing oral language input and the creation of committed immersion settings for Yukon First Nation languages, apprentices will find themselves in a first language acquisition setting that will feel uncomfortable at first. It is important to remember that the discomfort is your mind bringing you back to an immersive language learning stage you haven't been in since you were 3 years old. Be patient and kind on yourself.

How will you look after your learning spirit when you get frustrated with not learning as fast as you are used to?

## ASSESSMENT RUBRICS

Assessment rubrics are used to help you keep track of your progress, to identify what you still need to work on, or what to move onto next. This 300-hour MAP program assessment tool will be used to help you gauge your progress in understanding and speaking your language in conversational settings, cultural contexts, and everyday life. Taking the time to understand that language and producing authentic speech without relying on reading and writing is essential to create new, fluent generations.

The next 4-pages show circular Speaking and Understanding assessment rubrics that were adapted from the NETOLNEW Intermediate Assessment tool to include Yukon First Nation language structures.

Complete the two Speaking Rubrics and two Understanding Rubrics at the beginning of your Mentor Apprentice Program and a minimum of every 50 hours of the program. Track progress by using a different colour for every self-assessment to prepare for your mandatory oral assessments throughout the program.

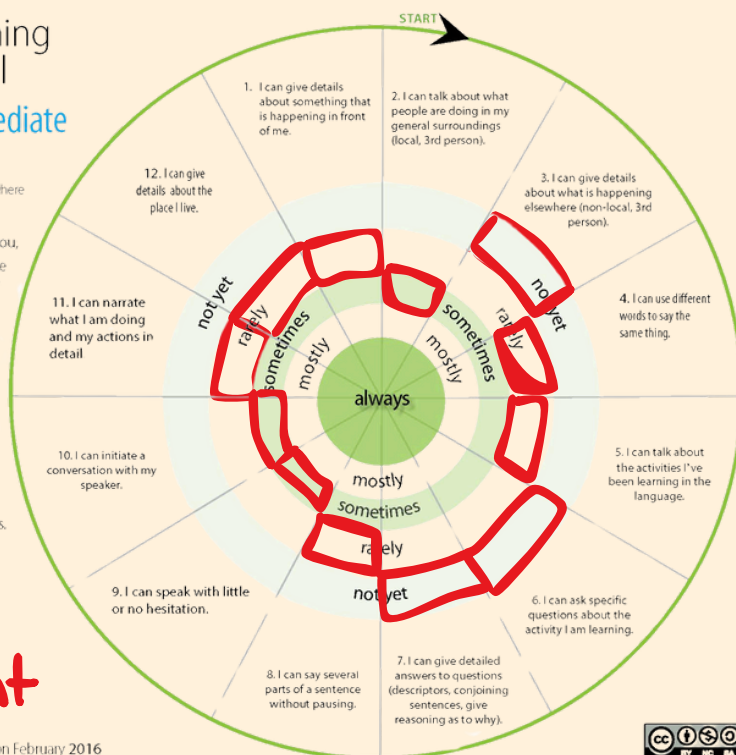
### Language Learning Assessment Tool Speaking – Intermediate

#### SCALE

(select one answer that best describes where you are at in your learning today)

**'Not yet'**—this is something new to you,  
**'Rarely'**—this is something that you've noticed, but you've only done it a few times or in a few contexts so far;  
**'Sometimes'**—this is something that you are more familiar with and you notice you are doing in a number of different contexts;  
**'Mostly'**—this is something that you are familiar with and that you've become good at doing in a wide variety of contexts;  
**'Always'**—this is something that you know well and you are confident in doing it all the time and in all contexts.

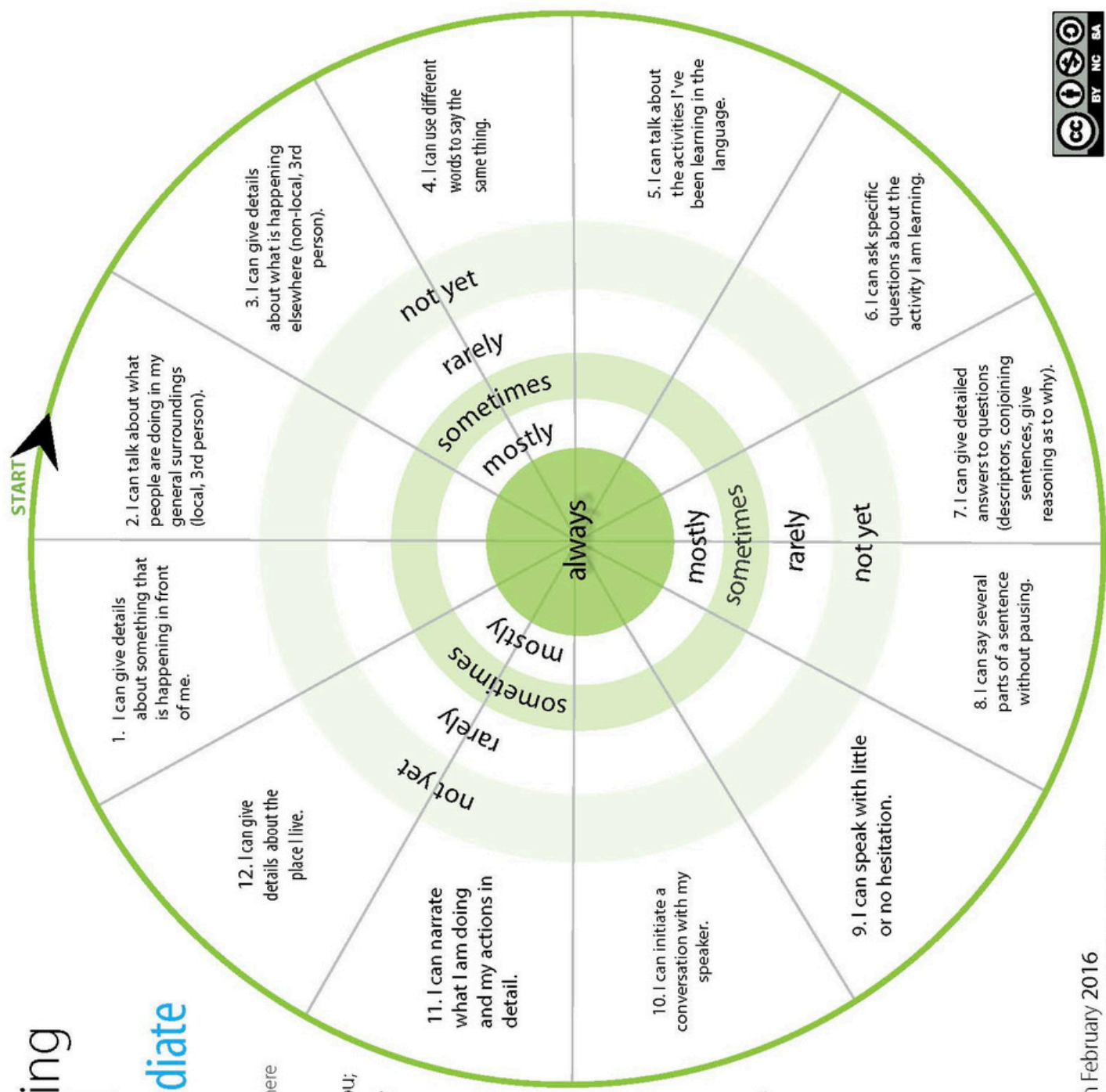
50 hr  
self-assessment



Language Learning  
Assessment Tool  
Speaking – Intermediate

**SCALE**  
(select one answer that best describes where you are at in your learning today):

- 'Not yet'—this is something new to you;
- 'Rarely'—this is something that you've noticed, but you've only done it a few times or in a few contexts so far;
- 'Sometimes'—this is something that you are more familiar with and you notice you are doing in a number of different contexts;
- 'Mostly' —this is something that you are familiar with and that you've become good at doing in a wide variety of contexts;
- 'Always'—this is something that you know well and you are confident in doing it all the time and in all contexts.



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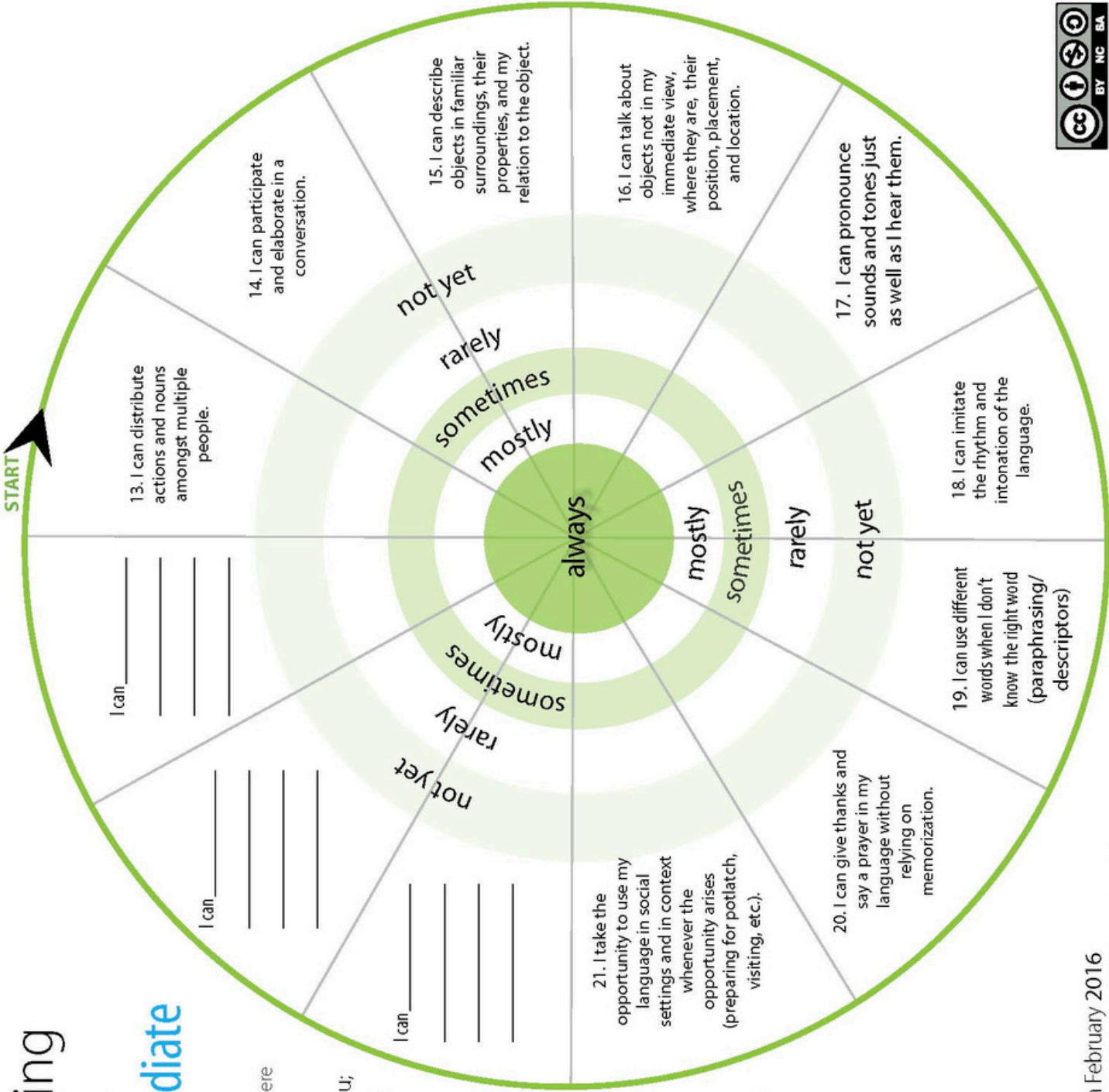


Language Learning  
Assessment Tool  
Speaking – Intermediate

SCALE

(select one answer that best describes where you are at in your learning today):

- 'Not yet'—this is something new to you;
- 'Rarely'—this is something that you've noticed, but you've only done it a few times or in a few contexts so far;
- 'Sometimes'—this is something that you are more familiar with and you notice you are doing in a number of different contexts;
- 'Mostly'—this is something that you are familiar with and that you've become good at doing in a wide variety of contexts;
- 'Always'—this is something that you know well and you are confident in doing it all the time and in all contexts.





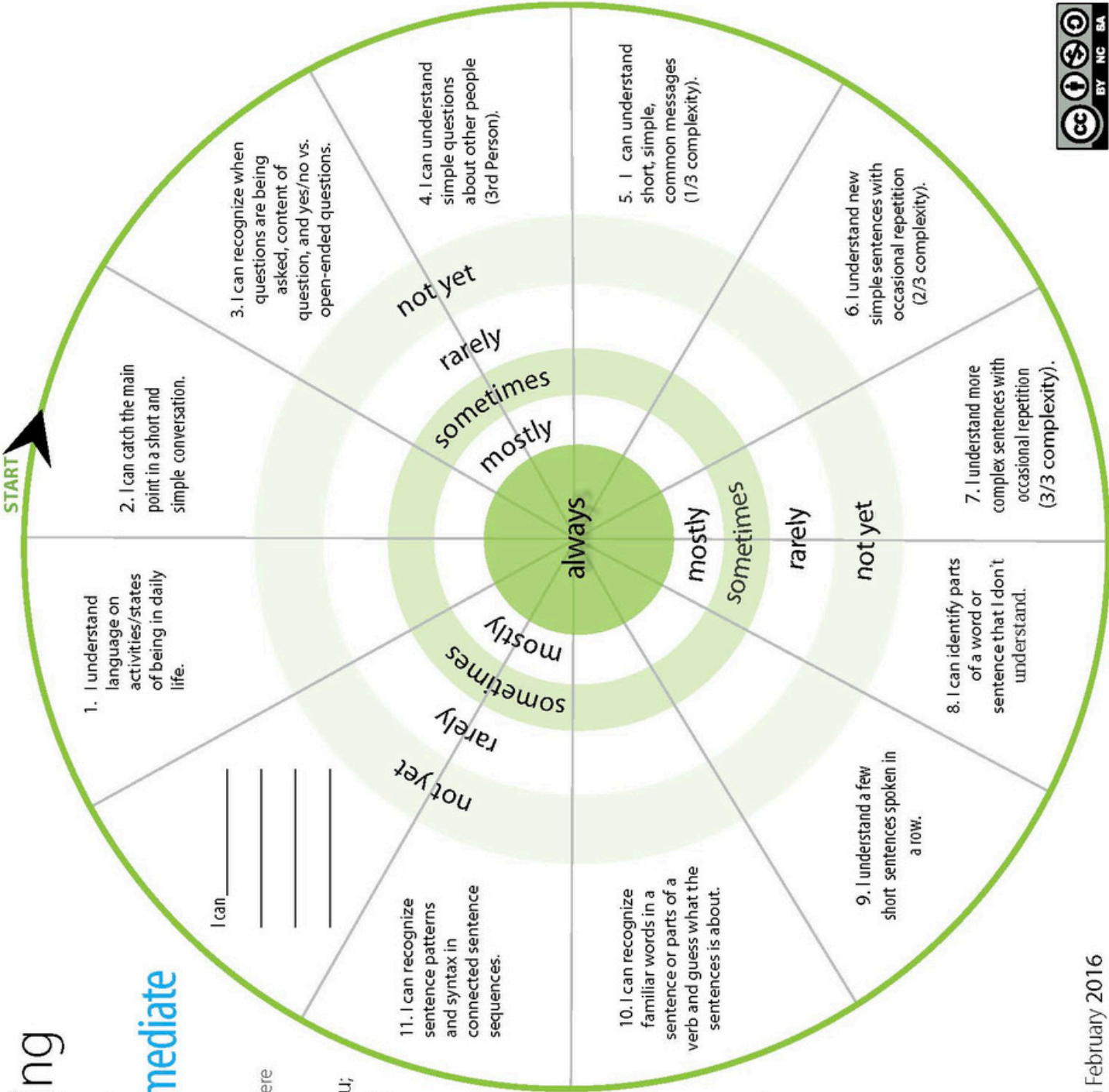
Language Learning  
Assessment Tool

Understanding – Intermediate

SCALE

(select one answer that best describes where you are at in your learning today):

- 'Not yet'—this is something new to you;
- 'Rarely'—this is something that you've noticed, but you've only done it a few times or in a few contexts so far;
- 'Sometimes'—this is something that you are more familiar with and you notice you are doing in a number of different contexts;
- 'Mostly' —this is something that you are familiar with and that you've become good at doing in a wide variety of contexts;
- 'Always'—this is something that you know well and you are confident in doing it all the time and in all contexts.



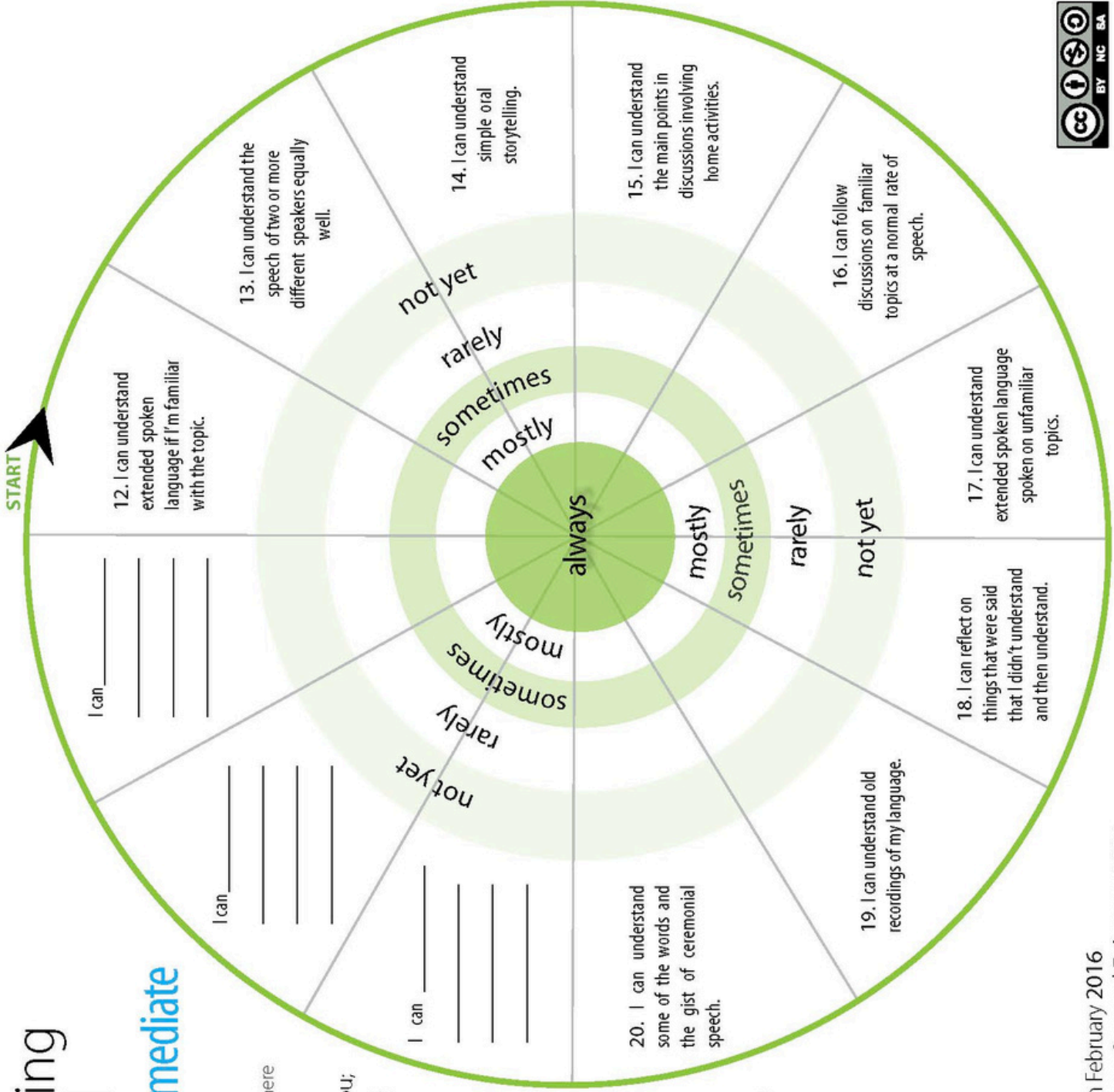
Language Learning  
Assessment Tool

Understanding – Intermediate

SCALE

(select one answer that best describes where you are at in your learning today):

- 'Not yet'—this is something new to you;
- 'Rarely'—this is something that you've noticed, but you've only done it a few times or in a few contexts so far;
- 'Sometimes'—this is something that you are more familiar with and you notice you are doing in a number of different contexts;
- 'Mostly'—this is something that you are familiar with and that you've become good at doing in a wide variety of contexts;
- 'Always'—this is something that you know well and you are confident in doing it all the time and in all contexts.



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## In-Context - Speaking Outcomes

USE THIS EXAMPLE TO HELP YOU SCRIPT OUT LANGUAGE YOU WANT TO LEARN

### EXAMPLE: SETTING RABBIT SNARES

1. I can give details about something that is happening in front of me.  
“These rabbit tracks look fresh; I’m going to set a snare there.”
2. I can talk about what is happening in my general surroundings.  
“There are four snares down the path; The clouds are moving.”
3. I can give details about what is happening elsewhere.  
“Alyce is making snares for us at her house;  
There is a trapping gathering happening at the school today.”
4. I can use different words to say the same thing.  
“I can’t find the snare wire/Have you seen the snare wire?”
5. I can talk about the activities I've been learning in the language.  
“I have been learning how to set rabbit snares with David every Saturday;  
I like learning about living on the land.”
6. I can ask specific questions about the activity I've been learning in the language.  
“After you make the snare, how do you attach it to the willows?”
7. I can give detailed answers to open-ended questions.  
“Where is the snare wire? The snare wire is my backpack.”
8. I can say several parts of a sentence without pausing.
9. I can speak with little or no hesitation.
10. I can initiate a conversation with my speaker.
11. I can narrate my actions in detail.  
“I open my backpack and take the snare wire and my knife out. I cut the wire, I make a loop with my hands, then tie a knot that can slide and tighten when pulled. I tighten the knot then put it on the ground...”



## example: Setting Rabbit Snares (Continued)

12. I can give details about the place I live.

“can You can pick me up from my house? it is the green house beside the water tower and down the street from the grocery store.”

13. I can distribute actions and nouns amongst multiple people.

“Everyone is setting one rabbit snare, David is setting seven snares.  
I handed a snare to all of you, I handed seven snares to David.”

14. I can participate and elaborate in a conversation.

Respond when asked questions, and elaborate using connected sequences like  
“Also, then, because, after that.”

15. I can describe objects in familiar surroundings.

“The spruce trees are tall along the trail.” “Have you seen my mitts? They are beaded and blue.”

16. I can talk about objects not in my immediate view.

“Where are the snares? The snares are in my truck in the back seat.”

17. I pronounce sounds and tones just as well as I hear them.

18. I can imitate the rhythm and intonation of the language.

19. I can use different words when I don’t know the right word.

“Pass me the snare/Pass me the wire to trap rabbits with/Pass me the looped wire.”

20. I can give thanks and say a prayer in my language without relying on memorization.

“gunalchéesh. I give thanks to the rabbit for it’s life, and for feeding me and community members.”

21. I take the opportunity to use my language in social settings and in context whenever the opportunity arises.

22. I can...

23. I can...

24. I can...



SELECT AN ACTIVITY YOU WOULD LIKE TO FOCUS ON. WHAT ARE SOME INTERMEDIATE-LEVEL SENTENCES AND QUESTIONS THAT WILL HELP YOU BUILD YOUR FLUENCY?

Activity: GETTING INTO A CANOE      TANNING MOOSE HIDE      MAKING MEDICINE

1. I can give details about something that is happening in front of me.

THE BOAT IS ON THE WATER HOLD ONTO THE BOAT	I HAVE CUT THE HAIR AND REMOVED THE FLESH, BUT I NEED TO CLEAN IT BETTER	THE TAMARACK BARK IS BOILING, IT HAS A NICE SMELL
--	---	--

2. I can talk about what is happening my general surroundings.

THE WIND IS GETTING STRONGER	THE SUN IS UP, THE MOOSE HIDE IS READY TO GO ON THE FRAME	THE CARIBOU HORN IS READY TO BE ADDED, IT FEELS HOT IN HERE, I'M SWEATY.
------------------------------	--	--

3. I can give details about what is happening elsewhere.

THEY ARE BRINGING MORE BOATS FROM HAINES JUNCTION	SHAWKWALITA IS GETTING ROTTEN WOOD FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY	MY SON IS MAKING MEDICINE TOO, ALL THE KIDS WILL BE GOING OUT TOMORROW TO GET BIRCH BARK.
--	--	---

4. I can use different words to say the same thing.

SPIN THE BOAT TO THE RIGHT; TURN THE BOAT TOWARDS SHORE	SHAWKWALITA IS GOING TO BE HERE IN A HOUR OR SHAWKWALITA SAID HE WOULD BE HERE WHEN HE IS DONE	THE TAMARACK BARK FELL ON THE FLOOR, PICK IT UP AND WASH IT AGAIN
--	--	---

5. I can talk about the activities I've been learning in the language.

TELLING SOMEONE I'VE BEEN TEACHING CANOEING IN THE LANGUAGE	I'VE BEEN TEACHING SHAWKWALITA HOW TO TAN A MOOSE HIDE IN THE LANGUAGE
---	--

6. I can ask specific questions about the activity I've been learning in the language.

WHY DO YOU SCRAPE THE HIDE MORE IN THAT  
AREA? I SCRAPE THE BACK OF THE MOOSE HIDE,  
BECAUSE IT IS THICK IN THAT AREA

7. I can give detailed answers to open-ended questions. I can give descriptors and expand on my answers.

8. I can say several parts of a sentence without pausing.

THESE EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES AND  
SENTENCES WERE CREATED AT  
APPRENTICE ORIENTATION  
FEBRUARY 2024

# Appendix 1 - MAP Hour Tracking

MENTOR APPRENTICE 10-WEEK SCHEDULE									
		Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Total Hours
Week 1	Speaker Time								
	Practise								
Week 2	Speaker Time								
	Practise								
Week 3	Speaker Time								
	Practise								
Week 4	Speaker Time								
	Practise								
Week 5	Speaker Time								
	Practise								
Week 6	Speaker Time								
	Practise								
Week 7	Speaker Time								
	Practise								
Week 8	Speaker Time								
	Practise								
Week 9	Speaker Time								
	Practise								
Week 10	Speaker Time								
	Practise								
TOTAL HOURS WITH SPEAKER									

# Appendix 2 - Immersion Set Template

Weekly Language Learning Template/Learning Log

Apprentice Name:

Date(s):

Materials Needed:

Immersion Set: (i.e. cooking, hide tanning)

Language Content: (list conversational language needed to elicit for immersion set)

Immersion Activities	What activity will you do with your speaker? (ex. cut up ingredients & cook moose head soup, build frame & flesh hide)
----------------------	--

<b>Self-Study</b>	What will you do to practice the language you've learned from your speaker?
-------------------	---

**Apprentice Self-Reflection**

**Dates & Hours with Speaker:**

**Dates & Hours Studying :**

**Mentor Signature:**

**Student-Apprentice Signature:**

# Appendix 3 - Speaking Outcomes & Objectives

## **SPEAKING OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES FOR INTERMEDIATE SPEAKERS**

1. I can give details about something that is happening in front of me.
2. I can talk about what is happening in my general surroundings.
3. I can give details about what is happening elsewhere.
4. I can use different words to say the same thing.
5. I can talk about the activities I've been learning in the language.
6. I can ask specific questions about the activity I've been learning in the language.
7. I can give detailed answers to open-ended questions.
8. I can say several parts of a sentence without pausing.
9. I can speak with little or no hesitation.
10. I can initiate a conversation with my speaker.
11. I can narrate my actions in detail.



## **SPEAKING OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES FOR INTERMEDIATE SPEAKERS**

12. I can give details about the place I live.

13. I can distribute actions and nouns amongst multiple people.

14. I can participate and elaborate in a conversation.

15. I can describe objects in familiar surroundings.

16. I can talk about objects not in my immediate view.

17. I pronounce sounds and tones just as well as I hear them.

18. I can imitate the rhythm and intonation of the language.

19. I can use different words when I don't know the right word.

20. I can give thanks and say a prayer in my language without relying on memorization.

21. I take the opportunity to use my language in social settings and in context whenever the opportunity arises.

22. I can...

23. I can...

24. I can...

# Appendix 4 - Understanding Outcomes & Objectives

## **UNDERSTANDING OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES FOR INTERMEDIATE SPEAKERS**

1. I understand language on activities/states of being in daily life.
2. I can catch the main point in a short story and simple conversation.
3. I can recognize when questions are being asked, content of questions, and yes/no vs. open ended questions.
4. I can understand simple questions about other people (3rd Person).
5. I can understand short, simple, common messages (1).
6. I can understand new simple sentences with occasional repetition (2).
7. I understand more complex sentences with occasional repetition (3).
8. I can identify parts of a word or sentence that I don't understand.
9. I understand a few short sentences spoken in a row.
10. I can recognize familiar words in a sentence, or parts of a verb, and guess what the sentence is about.
11. I can recognize sentence patterns and syntax in connected sentence sequences.
12. I can understand extended spoken language if I'm familiar with the topic.
13. I can understand the speech of two or more different speakers equally well.
14. I can understand simple oral storytelling
15. I can understand the main points in discussions involving home activities.
16. I can follow discussions on familiar topics at a normal rate of speech.

## **UNDERSTANDING OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES FOR INTERMEDIATE SPEAKERS**

- 17. I can understand extended spoken language on unfamiliar topics.
- 18. I can reflect on things that were said that I didn't understand, and then understand upon reflection.
- 19. I can understand old recordings of my language.
- 20. I can understand some of the words and the gist of ceremonial speech.
- 21. I can...
- 22. I can...
- 23. I can...

# Appendix 5 - Documentation Consent Form



## Consent Form

Project Title: **Mentor Apprentic Program - Language Documentation**

This consent form provides the Yukon Native Language Centre with permission to take/use audio recordings, videos, pictures, and/or shared knowledge throughout this project. The purpose of capturing these audio recordings, videos, pictures, and/or shared knowledge is to further language revitalization efforts within the Yukon, and to preserve/document Yukon First Nations languages to create language learning materials.

By signing, participants acknowledge they have read and understand the Description & Objectives of the project.

### Project Description & Objectives

Mentor Apprentic Programs pair language learners with fluent speakers to advance their language proficiency. As language apprentices spend valuable time learning with fluent speakers, it is a great opportunity to strengthen language preservation and documentation for Yukon First Nation languages.

The goal of recording speakers is to have language documentation that is accessible to future generations of language learners and to support current language apprentices achieve fluency. These recordings will be used in all ways listed below.

By signing this form, I give permission to YNLC to:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> record audio/video         | <input type="checkbox"/> archive materials             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> photograph                 | <input type="checkbox"/> upload to websites            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> produce teaching materials | <input type="checkbox"/> upload to social media        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> produce learning materials | <input type="checkbox"/> produce promotional materials |

\*Please ~~strike through~~ lines items you DO NOT consent to have shared\*

Telephone (867) 668-8820

Toll Free: (877) 414-9652

Facsimile: (867) 668-8825

[www.ynlc.ca](http://www.ynlc.ca)



# Consent Form

By signing, participants understand they will have the opportunity to review and approve products/materials before it's released to the public and understand that their participation is voluntary and that are free to withdraw at any time.

Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Email & Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Traditional Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Language: \_\_\_\_\_

Dialect: \_\_\_\_\_

First Nation: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of YNLC Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Telephone (867) 668-8820

Toll Free: (877) 414-9652

Facsimile: (867) 668-8825

[www.ynlc.ca](http://www.ynlc.ca)



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Doyon Foundation Mentor-Apprentice Handbook

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# Yukon Native Language Centre

***Gwich'in***

***Màhsi' choo***

***Hän***

***Màhsi' cho***

***Kaska***

***Sógá sélá'***

***Northern Tutchone***

***Másin cho (or) Niyę sáw nîidhín***

***Southern Tutchone***

***Shàw níthän (or) Kwànàschis***

***Tagish***

***Gùnèłchîsh***

***Tlingit***

***Gunatłchîsh***

***Upper Tanana***

***Tsin'jj choh***



**Council of Yukon  
First Nations**