

# PLANNING COMMUNITY LANGUAGE EVENTS



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# **Planning Community Language Events**

**A Guide Book**

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Chief Atahm School

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## Preface

This guidebook is intended to provide practical planning tips for community language events. It has a list of language event planning tips and several examples.

## Planning Language Events

This guidebook was created by Chief Atahm School. The school has a vision of language revitalization. This language event guide will help to increase language spoken in the home and community.

There are many people who are interested in being introduced to the language or learn the language but do not have the time to attend evening and summer courses. At the same time, there are fluent Elders who do not have opportunities to use, enjoy and maintain their language.

This guidebook shares ideas and strategies that Chief Atahm School has used to celebrate language through a variety of community language events. Most of these events require few resources and can be delivered in 1 day or evening sessions. The goal is to provide events for all people and all levels of language speakers, including those with no or little knowledge of language to fluent speakers who actively use their language. An important goal is to offer low stress, enjoyable ways for people to experience their language. The evening sessions and weekend events increase the language profile in the community.

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Adams Lake Indian Band

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## Introduction

### Why have language events?

First Nations languages are endangered.

First Nations languages contain the collective knowledge and wisdom gained over thousands of years. First Nations worldview, philosophy, values and cultural practices are embedded in their language. Traditional knowledge that sustained people for centuries are needed to meet today's challenges.

Language events provide a variety of ways for people of varying language skills to:

- be introduced to their language in a fun and enjoyable way (in low stress environment)
- participate in a language session where they controls their level of participation, whether they want to just listen, try a few words or challenge themselves with more speaking
- be in a multi-generation setting
- share and record their knowledge
- maintain their motivation to learn their language
- learn songs in the their First Nations language
- learn traditional place names
- be in a setting that values their language

## Language and Identity

“What make people unique is their knowledge of their traditional homeland and their language.”

Culture is transmitted from generation to generation through language and the more people who know their language, the stronger their identity.

In today's world, there are many First Nations people who are not connected to their land or language. Some families do not have Elders to teach them or family members who do not have specific cultural skills. There may be cost, family, transportation or other reasons that prevent them from attending long-term language courses.

Language events serve a valuable purpose by:

- connecting people with their land
- providing opportunities to practice language and traditional skills
- enhancing the participants sense of identity
- sharing language resource people within the community
- creating a network of people dedicated to language revitalization
- teaching language skills that can be used throughout the year
- providing activities for the whole family

## **Types of Language Events**

### **Singing**

- All ages and speaking levels can participate
- Enjoyable, high comfort level, no stress
- Practice in a group, no one singled out
- Individuals control level of their participation
- People relate to the content
- Attend sessions that teach the songs they want to sing

### **Storytelling**

Target is fluent speakers and people with a level of language comprehension  
Storytellers and fluent listeners enjoy and maintain their fluency  
Intermediate language learners can expand their knowledge

### **Cultural Field trip: Place names**

- All ages and speaking levels
- Key vocabulary is introduced and practiced before and during the trip
- Language is linked to real places
- Language is reinforced by hands-on activities

### **Language Bingo**

- All ages and speaking levels
- Enjoyable, high comfort level, no stress
- Language bingo focuses on comprehension and listening skills
- New target vocabulary is introduced in a game format
- Bingo illustrations provide visual clues to the meaning
- Repetition helps people to remember

### **Project based**

- Target groups varies according to the project, safety is a consideration
- High interest, no previous language is needed
- Language is related to a cultural skill
- Participants create a product at the end of the session

### **Language Feast**

- Fluent speakers and people with a level of language comprehension
- Storytellers and fluent listeners maintain their fluency
- Words and phrases are recalled and recorded
- Intermediate language learners can expand their knowledge

## Event planning Process

### Pre – event tasks checklist

- What is the event being that is being planned? Title?
- Who is the coordinator?
  - Who will write up the agenda?
  - Who is responsible for being on site during the session?
- Where will it be held? Indoors?
  - Is there a facility rental agreement that needs to be filled out?
    - Does it have deadlines?
  - Who is responsible for setting out tables and chairs? Putting them away?
  - Who is responsible for access?
    - Unlocking and locking doors?
    - Disarming and arming the alarm system?
  - Who is responsible for janitorial tasks?
    - Is clean up included in a rental agreement?
    - Is clean up the responsibility of the event organizers and volunteers?
  
- How will the date for the event be determined?
  - How will conflicts with other community activities be avoided?
  
- Who are the language speakers?
- Are they from the community or being invited from outside the community?
- Do they need travel costs?
- Accommodations?
- Who will greet them? Introduce them? Thank them?
- Are they volunteering or being paid?
- If there are contracts, who write and sign them? Funding source?
- If they are volunteering, who will thank and give them a gift?



## Pre-Event Checklist continued

- Who is responsible for communication?
  - Posters? Creating and posting? Taking down after the event?
  - Notices? Creating and sending out?
    - Band newsletter and local newspaper?
    - Email lists?
    - Facebook notice?
    - Deliver door to door?
  - Bill boards? Who is the contact?
  - Community or Band website current event notices? Who is the contact?
  - Announcing at gatherings?
  
- Does everyone have a copy of the agenda?

### What language resources are needed for the session?

- Is there a vocabulary list?
- Are songs books needed? Who will bring them and return them?
- Who has the language games? Who will bring and return?
- Are prizes part of the event?
  - Who pays? Buys? Brings to the event?

### Who are the support staff?

- Will an A.V. Technician record the language?
- If existing staff are being paid, how are they paid?
  - Timesheets?
  - Honorarium?
  - Cheque requisition?

### What supplies are needed?

- Do the consumable supplies come with the equipment?
  - Batteries, memory discs, cds, dvds, digital video tapes, paper, flip chart paper, felt pens
  
- Is a microphone needed? Amplifier? Large screen? LCD projector?
  - Computer speakers? Extension cords?

## Pre-Event Checklist continued

Who is responsible for providing the recording equipment?

- Are they donated or rented?
- If rented, who pays? Is a deposit needed?
- If borrowed from off site, who is responsible to delivering and returning?

Food

- What level of food service?
  - No meals supplied and people bring their own lunch
  - No meals supplied but coffee, tea and light snacks?
    - Who makes coffee and tea?
    - Who buys cups? Sugar? Cream?
    - Who cleans up?

Meals provided

- Who will provide?
- Paid caterer? Do they have food handling qualifications, "Food Safe"
  - Who will write up the caterers contract? And make menu selection?
  - Is clean up included in the contract?
  - Is serving the food part of the contract? Looking after "leftovers"?

Pot Luck?

- Will there be a food list where people can sign up to make specific dishes?
- Who is responsible for plates, cups and utensils?
- Volunteers prepare food?
- Volunteer clean up?

Transportation for field trip

- Who is responsible for securing transportation? Van or bus
  - Does the driver have a Class 4 Drivers License?
  - If there is no transportation, who will coordinate car-pooling?
  - Are private vehicles subsidized? (gas cards)
  - Will participants need directions or maps?

## Planning Timeline (calendar)

Planning a successful event takes time. There are always other events happening in peoples' lives. It is important to avoid dates where people already have made a commitment. If the language event co-insides with another activity, then sometimes several sessions can be offered, or a new date must be selected.

Long term planning is advisable. If the language event is set well in advance, people can commit to it first and put it on their calendar.

All the different aspects of the language event have deadlines.

3 months prior to the event

- Confirming the coordinator and names of the language teachers
- Develop event description
- Confirming event helpers
  - Names of volunteers or paid staff
- Confirm facility: usage or rental agreement form
- Create event notice and start to advertise
  - E-newsletter, Facebook, email mail-out, community posters, band website coming events

2 months

- Confirm food arrangements
- Confirm equipment and supplies sources
- Confirm travel arrangements for field trips

1 month prior

- Write contracts
- Submit cheque requisitions

## On Site Tasks

### On site coordinator

- Ensures doors unlocked on arrival and locked after departure
- Confirms that the people helping with the event are ready.
- Confirms the room set up.
  - Table configuration (U shape, classroom, theatre, banquet, open area)
  - Tests microphone and amplifier if they is being used
  - Checks that all the supplies and equipment are there
- Confirms food service
  - Coffee ready
  - Checks with the caterer so that the food is being prepared on time
- Confirms that the language resources are there

### Registration

- Set up registration table and chairs
- Registers people or takes attendance
- Option: Give out door prize tickets

### Coordinator duties

- Welcomes people
- Introduces language resource person.
- Coordinates the event
  - Explains the agenda
  - Explains that everyone is in control of the level of their participation
    - No one will be “put on the spot” or be forced to participate.
- Hand out evaluation forms if they are required
- Collects evaluation forms
- Thanks people (immediately at the event, not 6 months later)

## Post event tasks

- Review evaluation sheets and writes a brief summary of successes and lessons learned
- Thank people

## Event Planner Template

Event name and description: \_\_\_\_\_

Event Team Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff (list):

\_\_\_\_\_

Event name: \_\_\_\_\_

Event Date/Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Event marketing and promotion

Paper Newsletter: \_\_\_\_\_

E-newsletter: \_\_\_\_\_

Facebook: \_\_\_\_\_

FN or community website current events: \_\_\_\_\_

Door to door flyer: \_\_\_\_\_

Email list: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteers: List names with roles and responsibility

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Facilities rental/ access agreement/access keys:

\_\_\_\_\_

Equipment

Supplied in the facility: \_\_\_\_\_

Rent/ borrow equipment: \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation

Bus or van rental: \_\_\_\_\_

Car pool/other: \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation for guest presenters: \_\_\_\_\_

Event Template (cont'd)

Registration

Paper: \_\_\_\_\_  
Online: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone/ Face Book/email: \_\_\_\_\_

Food

Level of service, menu: \_\_\_\_\_  
Service provider; volunteer or caterer: \_\_\_\_\_

Janitorial

Clean up Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Paid janitorial service: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cost, part of rental or additional charge: \_\_\_\_\_

Budget

Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_  
Language Resource people: \_\_\_\_\_  
Support Staff: \_\_\_\_\_  
Facilities: \_\_\_\_\_  
Food: \_\_\_\_\_  
Transportation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Equipment: \_\_\_\_\_  
Supplies  
Language resource costs: \_\_\_\_\_  
Prizes: \_\_\_\_\_

Post event

Pay bills: \_\_\_\_\_  
Thank you letters: \_\_\_\_\_  
Evaluation: \_\_\_\_\_

\*For external funding, complete project report/ financial report

## Budget Considerations

Coordinator: Paid from an existing organization or by contract  
Example \$250 - \$300 per day

Language Resource People, Elders  
Example \$200 per day honorarium

Support Staff/ supervisors/ chaperones  
Example \$150.00 per day

Facilities: Facilities will have a rental rate  
Example \$150.00 per day, includes janitorial

Food: The costs depend on the number of people and the type of food served  
Usually priced per person and the type of meal  
Caterers will usually give a quote based on the number of people

Transportation Options  
Costs could include bus rental and driver, gas  
Mileage  
Subsidized travel by gas cards

Equipment  
The facility rental usually includes P.A System, screen and speakers  
Usually schools have recording equipment that can be rented

Supplies and Prizes  
Each project will have specific requirements

Language resource costs  
Example 25 song books at \$5.00 = \$125.00

## **Singing Event**

(Example from Chief Atahm School event)

Goal: The goal is to teach Secwepemc songs from the Chief Atahm Song Book.

Activity: The vocabulary in the song will be reviewed.

3 Fluent Elders will model the language by singing.

Participants will be given a songbook and a chance to join the singing

Target audience: All ages, all language skill levels

Location: Adams Lake Band Spiritual Centre

Date: Feb. 5, 12, 19

Time: 1 to 3 pm

2 Language singing instructors

Coordinator

Contact and confirm singers.

Responsible for paying language instructors through a cheque requisition from the school.

Coordinate building access, keys, janitorial service, sign Building User form

Design event poster

Communication: Chief Atahm School, Kim Dennis

Responsible for distributing the poster: email list, Facebook, eNewsletter, Web current events poster, posters on billboards 1 month before

Transportation: participants provide their own transportation

Equipment: The session will not be recorded

Language Resources: Chief Atahm School will supply Secwepemctsin songbooks and Hymn books

Food: No food at this event



## Language Storytelling

(Example from Chief Atahm School)

Goal: To have a gathering where fluent and advanced language speakers can maintain their language

Activity: Storytellers will be given an opportunity to share traditional and contemporary stories in Secwepemctsin

Target audience: Fluent speakers and people learning Secwepemctsin, community

Location: Adams Lake Recreation and Conference Centre.

Date: Saturday

Time: 1:00 pm, no time limit

Storytellers: Advertising posters will be sent to all 17 Secwepemc communities

1 Fluent Speaker MC

1 Coordinator

Contact and confirm key storytellers, thank guests  
Coordinate building access, keys, janitorial service, sign Building User form  
Design event poster

Communication: Chief Atahm School Admin. Assistant,

Responsible for distributing the poster: email list, Facebook, eNewsletter, Web  
current events poster, posters on billboards 3 months in advance

Transportation: Storytellers will have their travel subsidized. People who travel under  
1 hr will receive a \$50 gas card, people who travel further, will receive \$100.

Equipment: The session will be recorded by Chief Atahm Curriculum technician with  
CAS equipment and supplies

Language Resources: no resources are needed

Food: Potluck supper, using the ALIB Centres kitchen and supplies, cost \$150.00

Sponsor: Secwepemc-Ka, Chief Atahm School parents

## **Cultural Field Trip**

(Example from Chief Atahm School)

Goal: To teach important place names

Activity: A day camp will be set up at Steqstete (Brennan Creek). Lawrence Michel will point out the 4 places with Secwepemc names that can be seen from that spot. Community members will hear the story of Selecwe ( Muskrat).

Target audience: Families

Location: Steqstete, 30 miles from Chase on Cstelen

Date: Saturday, July 30

Time: 10:00 pm to 3:00 pm

1 Storyteller

Coordinator

Coordinate site access

Create poster

Communication: Chief Atahm School Admin. Assistant

Responsible for distributing the poster: email list, Facebook, eNewsletter, Web current events poster, posters on billboards 1 month in advance

Transportation: Each person with a vehicle will receive a \$20 gas card

Equipment: The session will be recorded by Chief Atahm Curriculum technician with CAS equipment and supplies

Language Resources: no resources are needed

Food: Potluck lunch, people bring their own utensils

Sponsor: Secwepemc-Ka, Chief Atahm School parents

## **Language Bingo**

(Example from Chief Atahm School)

Goal: To introduce common Secwepemctsin words

Activity: Participants will play Secwepemctsin Bingo. Participants will be given a bingo card with 9 illustrations on it. A caller will call out words in Secwepemctsin. Players match the word with the illustrations on their card and play until someone wins.

Target audience: Age 6 years and up, no speaking skills needed

Location: Adams Lake Recreation and Conference Centre

Date: Jan. 30, Monday

Time: 7 to 9 pm

1 Fluent speaker

Coordinator

- Contact and confirm Secwepemctsin Bingo caller, thank guests, pay bills
- Coordinate facilities
- Design event poster

Communication: Chief Atahm School Admin. Assistant

- Responsible for distributing the poster: email list, Facebook, eNewsletter, Web current events poster, posters on billboards 3 months in advance to CAS parents, Neskonlith and Little Shuswap Band

Transportation: Participants will supply their own transportation

Equipment: The event will not be recorded, but participants are encouraged to record with their own devices.

Language Resources: 5 Different sets of Secwepemctsin Language Bingo will be borrowed from Chief Atahm School

Food: ALIB C&R Centre provides coffee as part of their \$150 room rental

Sponsor: Secwepemc-Ka, Chief Atahm School parents

## **Project-Based Language Event**

(Example from Chief Atahm School)

**Goal:** To introduce Secwepemctsin by making a Red Willow stick game set

**Activity:** Participants will be introduced to the Red Willow word list by language games then go on a field trip to make a stick game set. They will cut the red willow into 13 pieces about 10 inches long. They will make two sets of 6 sticks by peeling the bark off with a knife. They will make 1 unique stick. They will make 4 (bones) short sticks about 2 to 3 inches long. They will peel the bark so that 2 sticks will have a dark strip in the middle,

**Target audience:** Age 10 years and up

**Location:** Chief Atahm School for pre-trip language games, then walk to the point of land on Little Shuswap Lake to find red willow.

**Date:** Saturday                      **Time:** 10:00 to 3 pm

1 Fluent Language Speaker

**Coordinator**

Contact and confirm language instructors, thank guests  
Coordinate building access, keys, janitorial service

**Communication:** Chief Atahm School Admin. Assistant

Responsible for distributing the poster: email list, Facebook, eNewsletter, Web current events poster, posters on billboards 1 month in advance to CAS parents, Neskonlith and Little Shuswap Band

**Transportation:** Participants will supply their own transportation

**Equipment:** Participants will bring their own knives or CAs will provide them. The event will not be recorded.

**Language Resources:** A vocabulary list will be available

**Food:** Participants bring their own lunch and CAS provides coffee

**Sponsor:** Secwepemc-Ka, Chief Atahm School parents

## **Language Feast**

(Example from Chief Atahm School)

### **Description**

A Language Feast or Word Feast is a brainstorming session by fluent speakers in their First nations language. The session starts with a selection of a theme, usually 1 word. It is written on a flip chart. The fluent speakers are invited to brainstorm as many words, phrases or stories on the theme. As they come up with related words, and phrases, these are written down on the flip chart paper. The fluent speakers are invited to discuss the pronunciation and spelling of the words.

The Language Feast is video and audio taped. When a person tells a story related to the theme word, it is recorded. There are usually 2 people coordinating the word feast. One fluent speaker directs the brainstorm session. The second person writes down the new words.

After the Language Feast, the new words and phrases are keyboarded then added to the language dictionary. The select word list is useful when teachers are teaching a related theme.

The target audience is fluent speakers and active language learners. This activity is a good way for fluent speaker to maintain and enjoy their language skills.

### **Event Staff**

- 1 Fluent speaker
- 1 person who can write the language
- 1 video cameraman

### **Administrative Staff**

- Coordinator

### **Facilities**

- 1 classroom at Chief Atahm School

### **Equipment**

- 1 Flip Chart and paper
- Video camera, tapes

### **Food**

- Coffee and snacks

**Time** 2 to 3 hours

For more information contact Chief Atahm School

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