



# Sharing Our Pathways

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A newsletter of the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative

Alaska Federation of Natives ♦ University of Alaska ♦ National Science Foundation ♦ Rural School and Community Trust



## 2005 HAIL Celebration

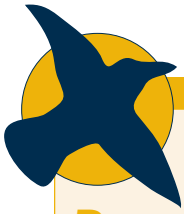


*HAIL Award recipients: Katherine Peter, Rita Pitka-Blumenstein, Alisha Drabek (holding son), Marie Olson and Kari Johns accepting for Katherine Wickersham Wade.*

Slowly rising and moving forward with the aide of her walker, 87-year-old Katherine Peter made her way to the podium while the presenter recited a long list of Katherine's accomplishments. The elder Gwich'in woman can barely see anymore, but she flew to Anchorage to receive a 2005 Honoring Alaska's Indigenous Literature Award. During her acceptance speech she told the audience that she wanted to sing them a song. It is a song made by her mother for the Alaskan "boys" serving in World War II. She only heard her mother sing it two or three times. The Gwich'in lyrics call for the boys to come home and be happy. As she sings, the audience sits mesmerized, thinking of our present and our past, the strength of our Alaska Native Elders and the beauty of our language and experience. *(continued on next page)*

### Contents

2005 HAIL Awards Celebration .....	1
Alaska Native Superintendents: New Faces in School District .....	5
Students Learn Unangan Art .....	6
Southeast Place-Based Academy .....	7
Forming Nallunirvik: Yup'ik Literary Review in Action .....	8
<i>The Hungry Giant of the Tundra</i> ....	8
ANKN Curriculum Corner .....	9
Developing Culturally Responsive School Practices in New Zealand .	10
Language Revitalization in the Inupiaq Region .....	12
Perspectives from a Lingit Language Instructor .....	13
Hands on Banking Teaches Money Management .....	16



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(continued from front page)

The first celebration of Alaska Native literary work took place in 2001 following a recommendation in the *Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge*. The goal was to establish a prestigious award to honor indigenous Elders, authors, illustrators and others who make significant contributions to the documentation and representation of Native knowledge and traditions. Later the celebration was renamed to Honoring Alaska's

Indigenous Literature or HAIL.

Last month the HAIL Working Committee presented literary awards to six individuals representing a range of talents, knowledge and life experience that spread across Alaska's regions. When Alaska Native people share, write and publish their work, which is grounded in layers of generational and cultural knowledge, they validate the indigenous perspective and underscore the value of traditional knowledge.

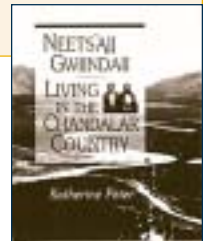
## 2005 Award Winners



### Katherine Peter

**Publication:** Neets'aii Gwiindaii: Living in the Chandalar Country

Published by the Alaska Native Language Center  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  
1<sup>st</sup> Edition 1992, 2<sup>nd</sup> 1993, 3<sup>rd</sup> 2001



Katherine was born in 1918 in Stevens Village located on the Yukon River in Interior Alaska. Koyukon Athabascan was her first language. After Katherine's parents passed away at an early age, Chief Esias Loola and his wife Katherine from Fort Yukon, adopted her. In Fort Yukon she learned the Gwich'in language and grew up in the rich Gwich'in culture. She periodically attended the one-room Bureau of Indian Affairs school where she learned English. In 1936 she married Steven Peter and moved to Arctic Village. She worked briefly as a schoolteacher in Arctic Village and later in Fort Yukon.

In 1970 she moved to Fairbanks with her family and worked for the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. There she taught Gwich'in and worked extensively with the language. Katherine

has composed and transcribed the largest body of Gwich'in writing in this century. Her involvement in more than one hundred works include translating and transcribing: texts told to Edward Sapir in 1923 by John Fredson; *Dinjii Zhuu Gwandak*; *Shandaa/In My Lifetime* by Belle Herbert; *Khehkwaii Zheh Gwiich'i: Living in the Chief's House*; and numerous other stories, narratives, legends, schoolbooks and a dictionary. She's retired now but still provides help with the language.

"The contributions she has made are absolutely amazing. Sometimes she calls early in the morning and tells me words no longer used – archaic words," says Kathy Sikorski, her daughter and Gwich'in language instructor.

## Alisha Drabek Alutiiq/Native Village of Afognak

**Publication:** *The Red Cedar of Afognak: A Driftwind Journey*

**Published by the Native Village of Afognak, 2004**



Alisha Drabek is deeply connected to Kodiak and its surrounding islands and people. She utilizes her talents of writing, communicating and facilitating to bring people together, share knowledge and work towards a common good for Kodiak's people. Writing is her passion—she has authored many grants that have brought thousands of dollars to the Kodiak region. Her real desire is to write stories. *The Red Cedar of Afognak*, co-authored with Dr. Karen Adams with guidance from Elder John Pestrikoff and illustrated by Gloria Selby, is her first story. She is a talented writer and a dedicated educator, who works endlessly to share what she has learned.

Born and raised in Kodiak, Alisha Drabek is an assistant professor of English at Kodiak College. She has an English and American literature degree and a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing, from the University of Arizona in Tucson. She is a former tribal administrator for the Native Village of Afognak and the founding coordinator of Kodiak's "Esgahluku Taquka'aq" or the Awakening Bear cultural celebration. She is now an apprentice learning the Alutiiq language. Alisha is married to Helm Johnson and they have two sons.

## Christopher Koonooka (Petuwaq) St. Lawrence Island Yupik

**Publication:** *Ungipaghaghlanga: Let Me Tell A Story Qoutmiit Yupigita Ungipaghaatangit Legends of the Siberian Eskimos*

**Published by the Alaska Native Language Center University of Alaska Fairbanks, 2003**



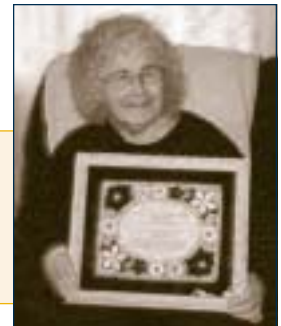
Christopher Koonooka, from the community of Gambell on St. Lawrence Island, transliterated the work of the late Georgiy A. Menovshchikov, a Russian educator and linguist. The book, originally published in Russian in 1988, was written in Siberian Yup'ik (with Russian characters) and the Russian language. It features a number of storytellers from the Chukchi area telling over 30 stories. The Siberian

Yup'ik Language is spoken by 1,000 people on St. Lawrence Island and about the same number of people in Russia. Mr. Koonooka "worked mostly from the original Yup'ik and made an English version," says Steve Jacobson, linguist from the Alaska Native Language Center. "He made these stories from the Russian [Siberian Yup'ik] side available to Yup'ik people in Alaska."

## Katherine Wickersham Wade CIRI Region, Chickaloon Village

**Publication:** *Chickaloon Spirit*

**Published by the Athabascan Nation of Chickaloon Chickaloon Village Traditional Council, 2004**



Katherine Wickersham Wade is 81 years old. She was born up the Chickaloon River, where her aunts and grandmother delivered her. In *Chickaloon Spirit*, readers learn about the adventures and challenges this remarkable woman had in the communities of Southcentral Alaska—Chickaloon, Sutton, Palmer, Wasilla and Anchorage—and the Matanuska River Valley. Katherine shares what

it was like to be a half-breed—not enough Indian to be fully accepted by some of her Ahtna Indian relatives and not enough white for some folks coming to the Valley. Through the narrative, readers learn about mining, railroad and highway history, along with racist encounters and Katie's resilience and a sense of humor in meeting life's difficulties.

*(continued on next page)*

## 2005 HAIL Winners, continued

### Kaayistaan Marie Olson Eagle Moiety Wooshkeetaan Clan of Auke Bay



**Publication:** *Tlingit Coloring Book*

*Published by Card Shark Consultant, Juneau, AK*

**Publication:** *Wild Edible & Medicinal Plants, Volumes I and II: Alaska, Canada & Pacific Northwest Rainforest*

*Author: Carol R. Biggs. Published by Carol Biggs Alaska Nature Connection, January 1999*



Marie Olson of the Eagle Moiety Wooshkeetaan Clan of Auke Bay, Alaska, provided the Tlingit names and identified the use of a number of plants in the *Tlingit Coloring Book* and *Wild Edible & Medicinal Plants, Volumes I and II*.

Marie works in education and is president of Alaska Native Sisterhood Camp #2. She is a former Elder in Resident for the Juneau School District and instructor for the University

of Alaska Fairbanks. She shares her love of art, writing and gardening in the book *Tlingit Coloring Book*. Marie was born in Juneau and spoke Tlingit in her childhood. Her Tlingit name is Kaayistaan, which is her maternal grandmother's name. Marie attended school in Juneau, Seattle and San Francisco. After raising a family she returned to school and graduated from the University of Alaska Southeast. Marie is widely respected for her knowledge of the Tlingit language, culture and history.

### Rita Pitka-Blumenstein Calista Region Yup'ik

**Publication:** *Earth Dyes: Nuunam Qaralirkai*

*Published by the Institute of Alaska Native Arts, 1983*



Rita was born on a fishing boat on the ocean and raised in Tununak, a village in Western Alaska. Rita is Yup'ik, Athabascan, Aleut and Russian. Her mother taught her to gather food and to use resources from the environment for arts and crafts. She is an expert Yup'ik basketmaker. In *Earth Dyes: Nuunam Qaralirkai*, Rita shares her wealth of knowledge and experience in making natural dyes. Rita now lives in Anchorage and works for Southcentral Foundation as a traditional healer. In her HAIL acceptance speech, she emphasized the importance of publishing, writing and contributing to indigenous literature saying, "Even it [my book] is thin, it had a lot of healing impact." ✨

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# Alaska Native Superintendents: New Faces in School District Leadership

by Frank Hill

What's it like to be an Alaska Native school district superintendent working with your own people? Two Alaska Native superintendents, Joe Slats from the Yupiit School District and Chris Simon from the Yukon-Koyukuk School District, recently shared their experience with participants attending the 2005 Bilingual Multicultural Education and Equity Conference.

Joe and Chris think their cultural connection to the communities they serve gives them opportunities, expectations and challenges other superintendents may not face. Unlike many superintendents, Joe and Chris attended and worked in the schools in their cultural region before being hired



Joe Slats and Chris Simon

as superintendent. Each advanced professionally through the school district system beginning as a teacher, next as a principal and then to district office administration. With this experience, training and the completion of their graduate education, they qualified for the Alaska school superintendent credential.

Joe Slats is Cup'ik and from Chevak, a village located on the Niglikfak River near the Bering Sea in Southwest Alaska, and superintendent of the Yupiit School District serving three communities on the Kuskokwim River. He is fluent in the two dialects of the Central Yup'ik language: Cup'ik and Yup'ik. School

board meetings are sometimes held in Yup'ik so those attending understand the issues discussed.

Chris Simon is Koyukon Athabascan from Huslia, an Interior Alaska village located on the Koyukuk River. As former Huslia School principal, Chris remembers how he felt while walking home from work one day. He was so happy to be serving his people he felt like he was "walking on air."

Joe and Chris think their district communities and people give them a greater degree of trust than previous administrators. They have earned this trust through their work, their family and their knowledge of the culture. This trust has its advantages. They are able to address issues without having to constantly check back with their communities.

Both expressed other rewards. People are proud and freely discuss issues with them. They work with Elders and have confidence they can find solutions to the problems facing their students and schools. They also like being a role model for Alaska Native students.

Native superintendents not only need to satisfy their job requirements as other superintendents do, they must also meet the high expectations their communities and culture place on them. When school boards work with someone from their own region, mem-

Frank Hill is Dena'ina Athabascan born in Iliamna, and for years worked in the school system in his cultural region. He retired after 19 years working for the Lake and Peninsula Borough School District as a curriculum developer, program administrator, area principal, assistant to the superintendent and as superintendent the final 10 years.

bers are able to take on policy and leadership roles quickly and consistently. Board members and district communities know Joe and Chris are not going to permanently leave after they retire. Getting things done right is important. As Chris said he will live with his successes and failures for the rest of his life.

All rural Alaska superintendents face similar issues: inadequate funding to operate schools, dealing with government mandates, unsatisfactory student achievement, high teacher and administrator turnover and other issues that take up the bulk of their time. Dealing constantly with these issues without seeming to make much headway, may be some of the reasons rural superintendents leave their job after a few years. Alaska Native superintendents may get discouraged at times, but they are already home, which means they will continue to work on these issues long into the future.

By example, Alaska Native superintendents are demonstrating the cultural and administrative leadership required to help rural communities take responsibility for Native student academic performance. Rural Alaska's students, parents, and communities need more dedicated people like them. ✨

# Students Learn Unangan Art and Beliefs

by Moses L. Dirks and students Elliot Aus and Frank Nguyen

Students at Unalaska School are busy this year not only learning to say *Aang* (Hi, Hello) or *Slachxisaadaꞌ malgakuꞌ* (Is it a nice day?) but they are also working on Unangan culture projects. Thanks to the late Andrew Gronholdt, who reintroduced a traditional art to the Unangan people, students are making bentwood hats. Andrew mentored Patricia Lekanoff-Gregory and Jerah Chadwick in this art form. Occasionally you will also see a beautifully painted bentwood hat by Unangan artist Gertrude Svarny.

While students work on their hat, they are given the freedom to express their artist side. But they are told to respect Unangan art form and keep within the patterns established by our Unangan forefathers. Students learn that patience and meticulous work can bring out products they can be proud of.

Here is what the students had to say about their projects:

## Elliot Aus' Full Crown Bentwood Hat

My name is Elliot Aus and my Unangan name is Quchuqiꞌ. I am a 12th grader at Unalaska High School. I am taking Mr. Dirks' Aleut Culture class. This year I made a full crown bentwood hat. I have come a long way with this hat and am proud of it. I start with a single piece of 24" x 24" flat Sitka spruce wood. Then I cut the hat out from a pattern designed for the style of hat I

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**"This year I made a full crown bentwood hat. I have come a long way with this hat and am proud of it."**

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Elliot Aus' full crown bentwood hat

want. Next, I chisel out the contours and bring the thickness down to approximately 1/8 of an inch. It takes weeks of careful carving and chisel-

ing to get to this point. Once done, I boil the hat at a certain temperature to be able to bend it just right. This is a hard procedure. One mess-up and the hat will break in two. After it is steamed I put it into the jig, which is a wooden form shaped like the hat, and let it dry. Once it's dried, I sand it down and apply oil to it. Then I put



Frank Nguyen's Unangan bentwood hat. Unalaska City School District

several coats of paint on it and design it using line forms found in Unangan art. I attach the chin strap and then it is done.

## Frank Nguyen's Unangan Bentwood Hat

My name is Frank Nguyen and my Unangan name is Qiigaꞌ. I made a short visor Aleut bentwood hat. It isn't made from driftwood but from Sitka Spruce milled in Fairbanks, Alaska. Beginning hunters used this type of hat. The purpose of the visor is to keep the sun and rainwater out of the hunter's eyes.

The colors represent the water. The chin straps are made of sinew. Sinew is originally made of braided animal tendons. The whiskers on the hat represent the prominence of the hunter. Longer sea lion whiskers on a hat identified a better hunter. The carved ivory amulet on top of the hat helps bring luck to the hunter. ✨

# Southeast Place-Based Academy

by Andy Hope

The Southeast Alaska Native Educators Association will sponsor a Place-Based Education Academy in Juneau, June 27–July 2, 2005. Information on the academy location and credit options will be available on the ANKN events calendar. For further information, contact Andy Hope at fnah@uaf.edu or phone 907-790-9860.

The Academy will offer the following courses:

## Place-Based Native Education Resources

**Instructors: Andy Hope, Dr. Ted Wright and Sean Topkok**

This course provides hands-on training in the use of the Southeast Alaska Tribal Resource Atlas, the Southeast Alaska Tribal Electronic Mapping Project and the Axe Handle Academy resources.

This course relates to the University of Alaska Southeast Center for Teacher Education Conceptual Framework goals:

**Goal 3:** Teachers differentiate instruction with respect for individual and cultural characteristics.

**Goal 4:** Teachers possess current academic content knowledge.

**Goal 7:** Teachers work as partners with parents, families and the community.

**Goal 9:** Teachers use technology effectively, creatively and wisely.

## GIS Workshop

**Instructors: Dr. Ted Wright and Dr. Ronn Dick**

This workshop is intended for teachers and other educators to connect curriculum to the culture and the community in more than superficial

ways. Participants will learn to use GIS mapping software and related resources to help students create place-based projects. Participants will practice community-based data collection that will engage students. They will learn how to place the information in databases that will appear as links on GIS-based maps, create curriculum and learn to guide their students through it.

By the end of the workshop, participants will have prepared a GIS based unit and lesson outlines. They will have the technical and pedagogic tools to implement a place-based curriculum in their classrooms. They will be prepared to work with their students to engage in projects that meet Alaska Content Standards and the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools.

## Introduction to Tlingit Storytelling

**Instructors: Dr. Richard Dauenhauer, Nora Dauenhauer and Ishmael Hope**

The focus of this course is on the style, content and function of Tlingit oral literature. Participants will gain an appreciation for the basics of Tlingit storytelling — traditional and contemporary — and will consider ways of applying these concepts in their personal and professional lives. The

course will include classroom reading, followed by discussions with Tlingit storytellers of texts: *Haa Shuká, Our Ancestors: Tlingit Oral Narratives* by Nora and Richard Dauenhauer; *Masterworks of the Classical Haida Mythtellers*, edited and translated by Robert Bringhurst; *Wisdom Sits in Places*, by Keith Basso and the working draft of *Aak'wtaatseen* by Deikeenaakw.

## Math in Indigenous Weaving

**Instructors: Dr. Claudette Engblom-Bradley, Teri Rofkar, Janice Criswell, Nora Dauenhauer and Steve Henrikson**

This course explores mathematics in Tlingit basketry, Chilkat blankets and Raven's Tail weaving through hands-on work with master basket weavers. Students will learn weaving techniques, obtain first-hand experience with the traditional patterns and learn to use Ron Eglash's Weavework Internet Software to model and explore mathematics inherent in traditional basketry and weaving patterns. Students will look at the Alaska Performance Standards for Mathematics as they apply to the weaving and technology in the curriculum. Appropriate pedagogy and assessment strategies will be explored. Students will design, implement and assess lessons incorporating the mathematics in Tlingit art form. ✨

For further information, contact Andy Hope at fnah@uaf.edu or phone 790-9860.

# Forming Nallunirvik: Yup'ik Literary Review in Action

by Esther Ilutsik

Annie Blue's face glows. Her eyes dance and twinkle with delight. Her mouth is tight, holding back laughter. Any minute the elderly Yup'ik woman is ready to explode as retired principal John Mark translates *The Hungry Giant of the Tundra*, a children's book written in English about the hungry giant of the tundra. She begins to laugh when the story is finished saying, "Oh, so great to hear a story that I heard as a child — it brings me to that moment of my childhood when stories of this nature were told." Such stories had many versions. "You must remember that the Yup'ik region is VAST," she adds. "So the story that is told depends largely on where it is heard within the region and may vary slightly." Then she closes her eyes and begins to tell the version of the story she heard. Occasionally she opens her eyes and gestures with her hands and body to emphasize a point.

This began our first Yup'ik literary review. We have formed the Nallunirvik (A Place of Elucidation) Literary Book Review — "we" being

a team of Yup'ik Elders and educators. Our purpose is to read and analyze literature written about our people. Many authors of books about

Yup'ik people and life are not part of the Yup'ik cultural region, so we carefully analyze their work to make sure that the descriptions accurately and positively reflect the Yup'ik culture. At our first meeting, we reviewed 20 books within a short time span of one and one-half days, working hard through the evenings. These reviews can be found at the Honoring Alaska Indigenous Literature (HAIL) webpage on the ANKN website at: <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/hail/>. There you can access information about the Nallunirvik Literary Book Review mission and members. We welcome donations to help us meet again to review more books. *Quyana!*

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## The Hungry Giant of the Tundra

### Publisher:

Dutton Children's  
Book, 1993  
ISBN # 0-525-  
45126-9

**Grade Level:** Primary K-3

**Theme:** *Quliraq* / Traditional Yup'ik  
Legend

**Status:** Recommended

**Season:** Fall

### Author and Illustrator:

Retold by Teri Sloat, based on a  
Yup'ik tale told by Olinka Michael, a  
master storyteller in the village of  
Kwethluk.

Illustrated by Robert and Teri Sloat,  
who are married and taught in  
Nunapitchuk, Kotlik, Kalskag,  
Oscarville and Bethel.

## Book Review

by Nallunirvik Literary

The tale retold in this book is a *quliraq* or traditional legend widely known in the Yup'ik region. It is about a giant named *A-ka-gua-gan-kak* (the correct Yup'ik written form is *Akaguagaankaaq*) who ventures

out at night looking for children wandering about. The illustrations in the story accurately depict the landscape where the oral tale was shared, which is the community of Kwethluk, but the clothing the children are wearing do not reflect the modern wooden homes shown in the background. Instead of wearing a *qaspeq*, the children should be dressed in T-shirts and windbreakers. The story flows well and different versions of it are known throughout the Yup'ik region.

Elder Annie Blue of Togiak has heard a different version of the story. In her version the youngest child of the group is the one able to help them escape by untying the pant legs of the giant and calling for the crane. She yells at the giant and encourages him to drink from the



# ANKN Curriculum Corner

by Sean Topkok

Following is an annotated list of cultural and curriculum resources recently added to the ANKN website. If you have questions about any of these materials, please contact ANKN at the e-mail address listed below.

## Atkan Birds by Moses Dirks

<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/AtkanBirds/>

In *Atkan Birds* Moses identifies birds from Atka in the Unangam Tunuu and English. Unangam Tunuu, or Atkan Aleut, is the Western dialect of the Aleut Language. The name, description, behavior and details about specific bird species, along with learning activities, are provided.

"I hope that through reading this book and doing some of the activities that are suggested in 'A Note to Teachers' the students of Atka will be able to know more about the birds that come to their island, and to other islands of the Aleutian Chain throughout the year either for the purpose of nesting or simply to avoid the long winter months of the more northern regions of Alaska."

— Moses Dirks in *Atkan Birds*

river and has the crane stretch his legs. As the giant attempts to cross the river by walking on crane's legs, the crane's legs begin to shake and the giant falls off. He bursts as he hits the bottom of the river. Annie emphasizes that other versions of this story should be investigated at the site where the story is being used.

## Suggested Teaching Topics:

### Behavior

- ◆ Teaches children the importance of listening to parents
- ◆ Teaches us how to be problem solvers, and indirectly, how to behave

## Observing Snow

sponsored by the Denali Foundation and the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative with help from Interior Alaska Elders <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/ObservingSnow/>

*Observing Snow* is a collaborative effort between Western science educators and Athabascan Elders. The curriculum is available online and can also be ordered as a booklet with a student journal, or on CD from ANKN.

"*Observing Snow* is intended as a journey to bridge the gap between the old and new, the traditional and the scientific, Native and Western approaches to education. ... *Observing Snow* is an attempt to teach basic core subjects, especially science, and listening and reading comprehension, using materials that make sense to the Alaska Native student. Snow is a

- ◆ Shows that everyone makes mistakes but we that can correct our mistakes by listening to stories

### Significance:

- ◆ The small bird signifies that help can come in many forms (sizes)
- ◆ All birds are helpful, from the small songbird to the crane
- ◆ Everyone can find a way out of a tough situation by problem solving
- ◆ Children are well taken care of
- ◆ Be aware of what others are saying even if they appear to be small and insignificant (even the smallest member of the group can contribute to solving problems) ✨

natural choice. Everyone who lives in the Interior subarctic has a personal and intimate knowledge of snow."

— *Observing Snow*, page 5.

## Pauline and Albert Duncan's Tlingit Curriculum Resources — Tlingit Language

<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/Tlingit/PaulineDuncan/>

Pauline and Albert have recorded a handful of phrases, stories, early childhood songs and rhymes. Viewers can listen to the audio recordings on the site. A Tlingit to English quiz is now on the page. Albert speaks Tlingit and the listener is given four English answers to choose from.

## Introduction to Atkan Aleut Grammar and Lexicon

by Moses Dirks and Knut Bergsland

<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu:591/Atkan/index.html>

This resource includes the Elements of Atkan Aleut grammar and a junior dictionary searchable with 4617 entries. The fonts to display the site need to be downloaded from a website listed on the page. A pronunciation guide and an Aleut to English quiz are included. The quiz displays the Aleut word or phrase with four English answers to choose from. The questions and answers on the quiz are random.

## Sitka National Park Borhauer Basket Collection

<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu:591/FMPro?-db=baskets.fm&-format=baskets%2findex.html&-findall>

This page has pictures of the Doris Borhauer Basket Collection by Helen Dangel and copyrighted by the Sitka Tribe of Alaska. Individual baskets are photographed showing details of each basket. The written descriptions are from the Doris' notes.

The ANKN website is updated continuously. To contribute to the site, please contact the Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 907-474-5897 or [fyankn@mail.ankn.uaf.edu](mailto:fyankn@mail.ankn.uaf.edu). ✨

# Developing Culturally Responsive School Practices in New Zealand

by Emma Stevens, Bilingual Coordinator  
Southwest Region School District

Five years ago the New Zealand Educational Authority (NZEA) embarked on a radical educational initiative to address special education concerns surfacing in New Zealand's schools. A disproportionate number of Maori were classified as special education students. Concerns included the apparent alienation of many Maori students from their learning environments. A response to that concern was the idea that many of these students would not be classified as special needs if they could be taught within a learning context that included Maori beliefs, values and practices.

The New Zealand government initiated Special Education 2000, a call for change that recruited 750 teachers nation wide and naming them Resource Teachers of Learning and Behavior (RTLB). These RTLB were trained through a two-year intensive program to work alongside teachers, administrators, outside agencies, parents, *whanau* (extended families) and *iwi* (tribes) to support a change in current teaching and learning practices that would help address the growing special education concerns.

A consortium of three New Zealand universities developed the RTLB program. The program included intensive training in culturally responsive and innovative models of learning using methods proven successful through research. The resource teachers were to retrain New Zealand educators in the classrooms and schools. The changes that took place through these interventions had an immediate and positive impact on teaching practices and student outcomes.

The main elements developed to promote culturally sensitive schools, classrooms and practices were:

## 1. Ako (reciprocal teaching, peer tutoring, modeling)

This term describes active learning experiences and the sharing of power within the learning process, which results in "knowledge in action." Peer tutoring is an example of reciprocal learning. Peer tutoring follows traditional Maori practice for learning. It is common for older siblings to teach younger siblings. Such teaching strategies are effective in engaging reluctant students since students feel culturally comfortable in the learning environment. There are benefits to peer tutoring. Studies have shown it often leads to academic gains for the student being tutored and the student tutor.

Modeling is where students learn by watching, imitating and then joining in when they feel comfortable. It

was encouraged as an important traditional tool that was educationally useful for acquiring new skills. Teachers using this less confrontational teaching model often find that shy or reluctant students are willing to try a new skill and join in to learn something new. It is a context where skills are practiced within a peer group and no special attention is given to the

Emma Stevens was born and raised in Wanganui, New Zealand. She attended Christchurch Teachers College and spent her five years teaching in New Zealand before traveling to England and America. Later she returned to New Zealand and became involved in teaching during the Maori language revival or *Kohanga Reo* (language nest) movement. Her involvement in this movement sparked a teaching passion for inclusive methodologies in education that continued to grow when she moved to Sydney, Australia in 1988. There she worked as an Aboriginal education representative for a school district that introduced culturally responsive educational initiatives in schools. Emma completed her Masters of Education at Victoria University when she returned to New Zealand to be trained as a resource teacher of learning and behavior. In 2002 Emma moved to Alaska with her husband and began teaching in New Stuyahok. She is now the bilingual coordinator for the Southwest Regional School District in Dillingham.

individual. Students quickly join in and develop a skill with little if any oral direction. The students teach each other effectively and this promotes self-esteem and confidence in a learning environment that is culturally familiar.

## 2. Group Learning (cooperative learning)

Maori traditional knowledge is based on sharing and co-operation, not individual acquisition and competition. Maori prefer groups and easily incorporate learners at different levels. Contribution to the physical and social well being of the group means having individual rights and responsibilities to the group. This translates to positive interdependence and individual accountability, which are key components to effective cooperative learning.

Maori traditionally have rights and responsibilities to *whanau* (family) and *whanaungatanga* (extended family/community). Students who become members of groups such as *kapa haka* (traditional dance groups) have been shown by research to improve schoolwork and increase academic success, self esteem and self control. If Elders assess the effectiveness of group work, students strive to achieve mastery. Students are not threatened by familiar Elders observing them and are often more willing to join in. Elders use culturally appropriate criteria for assessment such as quiet observation ensuring all members receive care and help by others then they give oral feedback to the group as a whole. Humor is often gently used as a tool for more boisterous individuals to develop humility and diminish a sense of self-importance. If such a culturally appropriate tool is used for assessment, students are more likely to excel as an integral and skilled member of the group.

## 3. Behavior Self-Management (storytelling, power sharing, active listening, modeling)

Sharing power allows student autonomy in developing self-managing strategies. If students believe they are valued as an important part of the process, they can be empowered to make choices for which they know they are responsible. When students feel disempowered in the management of their own behavior, there is much less motivation to strive for improvement, especially long term. Student groups are effective in managing group and individual behavior when they are given specific guidelines and included as a vital part of the process. Such self-management strategies are often more lasting and positive than those given by authority figures.

Involving Elders and family as members of a behavior management team can have an impact on students. *Whanau* (family) involvement can help reconcile student behavior problems through collaborative meetings with family, Elders and the school. Students build bridges between home and school cultures when there are reinforcements that are consistent and meaningful to them across both contexts.

Storytelling remains a powerful tool for transmitting sophisticated and complex information. It allows the storyteller to define what knowledge is created without cultural bias, and gives the listener the ability to synthesize personal meaning. This creates a critical link between the context and the child's background, building personal and powerful bridges to learning. It is through storytelling that much of the wisdom of the group is passed down. In a listening and oral

culture the resonance of visual images and personal interaction with the storyteller can bring meaning that remains elusive when presented through the written word or textbook.

## 4. Authentic Learning Contexts

Learning embedded in the life of the community such as narrative pedagogy or storytelling and cultural activities, provides practice for a variety of behaviors. It can prompt student motivation and have a powerful impact on them. It validates students' existing knowledge and allows it to be recognized as acceptable and official. Such positive recognition can be built upon as a student starts to see the importance of the learning with his/her "real" life. Access to texts and resources that reflect a student's life experience build literacy skills through strong connections to self and to the larger world. Going to school can finally become a meaningful and engaging experience.

## 5. Collaboration with Parents/Families (power sharing)

Increasing Maori participation in schools is a requirement that can result in huge gains for all students. New Zealand's National Achievement Goal 1 (v) states, "in consultation with the school's Maori community, develop and make known to the school's community, policies, plans and targets for improving the achievement of Maori students."

When parents and/or extended family are incorporated into the life of a school, students recognize themselves as an integral part of the learning environment, and education can take on a new and profoundly personal meaning for them. ✨

# Language Revitalization in the Inupiaq Region

by Igluġuq Dianne Schaeffer

“Uvaŋa Igluġuq” = “My Inupiaq name is Igluġuq”

“Qikiqtaġruġmiunuruŋa” = “I am from Kotzebue, now living in Nome.”

There are many language revitalization efforts in the Inupiaq region—from Barrow to Nome. Some people think, “Why learn Inupiaq? Isn’t that taking a step backward?” Learning our first language is actually a step forward. There is a movement across many indigenous communities nationally and worldwide to learn our first languages and bring them back. When you learn who you are and where you came from and you have a strong sense of yourself.

## Barrow

In Barrow, Inupiaq immersion classes are held at the elementary

school. Due to the No Child Left Behind Act and performance standards, the classes are now to be offered in both Inupiaq and English. There are

plans to start an immersion school. Two Maori individuals from New Zealand recently visited Barrow to share on their successful shift back to their Native language. They were inspirational and validated Barrow’s commitment to start their own school.



*Nikaitchuat Iḷisaġviat 2004. Front Row: Iḷiḷtiġvik Greene, Kaliksun Kirk, Igauqpaq Fields, Avraq Erlich and Alġivak Hanna. Second Row: Qupaaq Schaeffer, Aġġutuk Schaeffer, Qutan Lambert, Uyaana Jones, Anaullaqtaq Hyatt and Aana Aġnik Schaeffer. Third Row: Aana Taiyaaq Biesemeier, Atanauraq Fields, Asaqpan Hensley, Qaaġaġlik Henry, Kunuyaq Henry, Aġnaqin Schaeffer and Tusaġvik Savok. Back Row: Kunuk Lane and Nauyaaq Baltazar*

these informal meetings with Elders to develop a dictionary and encourage conversational Inupiaq in the Wales dialect. The group meets Tuesdays 5–7 p.m. at Kawerak, although the date sometime changes.

The Eskimo Heritage Program produced a 2005 teachable calendar, which is geared for parents and teachers and promotes a cultural aspect to daily home and school life. Pictures from the Eskimo Heritage collection are showcased. Activities for parents to do with their children are listed throughout the year. Names of the months and days of the week are listed in the three languages of the Bering Strait and several Inupiaq dialects. Quotes from past Elder’s conferences, traditional place names, memories of growing up traditionally, and names of plants are shared. The Teachable Calendar is available from the Eskimo Heritage Program. If you would like one please call (907) 443-4387.

The Eskimo Heritage Program in Nome is planning to host the Third Inupiaq and Bering Straits Yupik Education Summit to be held April 25–26, 2005. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. We want to continue to strengthen the ties within the Inupiaq region and to share what we are doing in each of our Inupiaq areas! We hope to see you here!

## Kotzebue

Nikaitchuat Iḷisaġviat is midway through its seventh year. Nikaitchuat is an Inupiaq immersion school in Kotzebue started by parents and concerned community members. Nikaitchuat translates into English as “all things are possible,” and Iḷisaġviat translates to “place of learning.” The doors opened in September 1998.

Two dedicated teachers, Aana Taiyaaq Biesemeier and Aana Aġnik started with the school. This is Aana Taiyaaq’s last year; she is retiring at

## Nome

In Nome there is a group of 15 people that meet weekly to document and learn the Wales dialect of Inupiaq. Austin Ahmasuk initiated



*Esther Bourdon, speaking in the Wales dialect, tells about the intestines that her mother prepared to make a rain parka. It's in its original bundle.*

the end of the school year. Kunuk is the teacher in-training under the guidance of Lead Teacher Aana Aġnik. Agnatchiaq Lulu Chamblee is the current administrator and Nauyaq Wanda Baltazar is the administrative assistant.

Currently Nikaitchaut is developing a pre-K to first-grade curriculum. Curriculum developer Jackie Nanouk and evaluator Michael Bania plan to have it complete by the end of the school year. Community members assisting with the curriculum are: Qutan Goodwin, Paniyavluk Loon, Aluqtuq Sours, Aliiqataaq Norton and others. During the school day Elders visit regularly to talk Inupiaq with students.

The Inupiaq Language Task Force in Kotzebue began meeting last spring. It is made up of individuals from each organization in Kotzebue: Maniilaq, NANA, Kotzebue IRA, Nikaitchuat, the Northwest Arctic Borough and School District and the Elder's council. The main planners behind the task force are Siikauraq Martha Whiting, Maamaq Linda Joule and Salaktuna Sandy Kowalski. The task force discussed reasons why Inupiaq isn't spoken daily and what can be done about it. They have recommended strategies to the Northwest Arctic Borough School District to encourage the use of the Inupiaq language. ✨

## Perspectives from a Lingít Language Instructor

by Vivian Martindale

The following narrative with Yéilk' Vivian Mork was conducted and transcribed by Vivian Martindale in 2004 and edited for *Sharing Our Pathways*. Yéilk' is a twenty-seven-year-old Tlingit woman from the Raven moiety and the T'akdeintaan clan and is a full-time student at the University of Alaska Southeast majoring in Alaska Native Studies. She is an instructor in the Lingít language in the Dzantikí Heení Middle School in Juneau, Alaska, and has taught at the 2003 and 2004 Kusteeyí Lingít Immersion Camps sponsored by Sealaska Heritage Foundation.

### Yéilk' Vivian Mork Narrative

I decided to learn the Lingít language when I was living in Washington State. My mother called and asked me when I was going to return to Alaska to go to college. My mother was living in Hoonah and learning the Tlingit language with local high school teacher Duffy Wright. She was excited about it. My mother would call me and tell me something in Lingít. She was persuasive, so I decide to come back home. I realized I wanted to be a part of the revitalization effort. Growing up, I was told that the language is dead. When I found out the language wasn't dead and that you could learn it, I was amazed because I come from a family of non-speakers.

In the beginning [learning the language] was important because I knew that people weren't learning [it]. No one in my family spoke Lingit fluently despite the fact my grandfather heard Lingít when he was younger. When you come from a family with no fluent speakers, you really don't have

too many choices about where to go in order to learn. I soon found out that they were teaching the Lingít language at the University of Alaska in Juneau. I decided to incorporate learning the Lingít language into my studies. And after a couple of years of

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***We need to return to a language that is given to health and healing.***

— Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley

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learning the language, it has taken on a whole new life. A lot of us new speakers feel that when we speak, we are waking up the ancestors by using the language, giving them respect and calling on them. When we introduce ourselves, we are telling someone in the room who we are and calling our ancestors to stand with us.

It wasn't an easy transition to go from a learner to an instructor of the Lingít language. As college students, several students and I got better at

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speaking the language, and suddenly we started to get job offers. We learned that the school system has a difficult time hiring Elders because often an Elder doesn't have a degree or the skills to teach in a public school. As students we had the credentials to offer the school, so we paired ourselves with Elders and entered the system in that way. I've taught 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, 4- and 5-year-olds, and college students as well as at the community level, including Elders. It's scary to teach. As a learner-teacher you are aware that you don't know everything. You know you make mistakes, you pronounce things wrong, and that sometimes you are going to be judged and criticized for it. But it is important so you do it anyway. You take the criticism and the judgment; you take it with a grain of salt and keep going. Fortunately, when pairing a student-teacher with an Elder to teach the language to others, we find that we learn along with the children. In fact, we learn a lot quicker. We learn to have conversations and we understand learning is more than memorization and commands; it is communication flows in that environment and spills into other areas of life. Everything becomes a teaching environment: the home, the street and grocery store — it isn't limited to the school system.

For example, at the grocery store when the cashier hands you your

change, you say "Gunalcheesh." If they want to know what you said, you tell them that means "thank you" in Lingít. In fact, I was once at the Fred Meyer in Juneau when I said "Gunalcheesh" to a cashier and she said, "Yaa xaay yatee," which translates loosely to mean, "You're welcome." She was blond-haired, blue-eyed and white-skinned. I never would have guessed she was Tlingit, but it made me smile all day long. This illustrates that you can make any ex-



*The Tlingit class was held during the Sealaska Heritage Institute's Tlingit Immersion Retreat in Hoonah last August. Yeilk' was one of the teaching interns during this program. The group ranged from pre-school to middle school. Yeilk' Vivian Mork holds the ball. Students are left to right: Sophia Henry, Karoline Henry, Harlena Sanders, Rachel White, Donnita White, Chauncey White and Louie White.*

perience a learning one. Most of my teaching and learning experiences, although they have been challenging, have been rewarding.

When I taught at the middle school I had 33 kids and 90 percent of them were boys. In the beginning, they were rambunctious and disrespectful. But the one thing that comes with teaching the language is the culture; you can't teach the language without teaching the culture, if you want it to stick. In teaching the Tlingit language you teach people about respect. It wasn't long before my class became well-behaved and even some of the

most difficult kids started being respectful. We taught the children introductions, about their clans and the clan system, how all the Ravens and Eagles are brothers and sisters, and the proper way to interact with one another. I had a student who is a Teikwiedí, a brown bear. Because the Teikwiedí is my grandmother's people I had to address her as my grandmother, which would make her giggle and, more importantly, it made her interested. She listened and a level of

respect emerged between us. This young girl was 13-years-old. Later in the summer, at [Juneau's] Celebration, a teacher asked this young girl what her best experience in school was. All she talked about was the language program. She said that learning the language is important because she felt keeping the language alive depended on her and her fellow students. At a young age, this

girl knows the value of learning the language. She knows who she is and her place in the web of life. I'm proud she is one of my students.

The pride in learning your Native language is a big change from past generations. We've come a long way from the boarding-school generation who were forbidden to speak their languages. American boarding schools were a main contributor to the loss of language, not just in Alaska, but also for Native cultures throughout the United States. When you look through old government documents regarding the boarding schools' progress,

you find references that the government knew that in order to get rid of the “Nativeness” in Native people, they had to remove children from their homes, out of the culture, out of the influences, and take away their customs and their language. Because language and culture are intertwined, the government schools had to take it away to assimilate them. It was almost successful.

Unfortunately, because of past policies, there is a huge loss of the language and the knowledge that comes with the language. It wasn't just the boarding-school experiences that created the loss; it began with epidemics such as small pox and tuberculosis. These diseases wiped out entire villages including their traditional knowledge and language. In no time at all, whole dialects disappeared with no possible way of getting them back. Each Elder, being a life-long library, was gone in an instant.

There is another reason for language loss. There were entire generations of people who decided that the language was dead and let it go. This came after the push to assimilate Natives into mainstream American society. There were reasons why people went to the schools and reasons why people sent their family members to get educated. Native peoples knew there was a lot of change coming. They needed to be ready and one way was to educate leaders within the Western system. But it didn't have to be done in such a traumatic way. If only the American government would have known how much better off they would have been if they allowed Native people to keep their culture. You have groups of people living around each other whose entire life is about taking care of each other and they use a language system that had been indigenous to the land for thousands of years. There is so much knowledge within the system, and it is ridiculous to just throw it away.

Intruding cultures could have learned so much about this land, about the people. It could have made Alaska a better place.

But we still have hope. Now though, when we look at old videos and recordings, we hear the Elders speak and note the differences in the language. We realize that people who learn languages today in a university setting differ in dialect and pronunciation from the language learned in the villages, which is the difference between a natural acquisition and a rather “fake” acquisition. Despite those differences, however, it is all right to pronounce words incorrectly when you are first learning. You have to think of each language learner as a “child of the language.” When they are six months into learning the language, they are six months old.

Although the process of re-learning the language is difficult, you notice that through learning, the students, both young and old, have been changed. There are people who have decided to dedicate their lives to learning the Lingít language and have devoted themselves to making sure it will never die. It has changed how we language-learners relate with one another. Knowing we are going to interact with each other for the rest of our lives, we treat each other with respect.

When you learn the language, you begin with a basic introduction. You learn what moiety and clan you are, what house you are from, and who your grandparents are. When you give that introduction in a room full of speakers, every Elder in that room knows who you are without having met you. This introduction can be basic and take a few minutes to recite, but a real Tlingit introduction can be from 10 to 20 minutes long. This is an important aspect of the Tlingit culture. When we teach children the basic introduction, we are teaching them who they are, who their ances-

tors are and how their names and clans connect them to this land and to each other. We teach children that they have a bigger family than the typical nuclear American family and that we have a larger family and a responsibility to the people around us.

Despite the lack of natural settings to teach the Lingít language, teaching in the school system is important. It instills a sense of pride for Native students, especially in Juneau, since we experience cases of racism. When children start to learn the language, they realize where their pride can come from. We tell them daily that they've been here since time immemorial and this land is theirs—they belong to it. Another thing occurs. People in the classroom who are not Tlingit start to ask questions about their own ethnicity. We've had Yup'ik and Aleut students in the classroom. Even a kid with Norwegian heritage was excited about looking into his history.

We teach them they are genetically half of their parents, and part of their grand parents and great-grandparents. This way, children learn that inside of them, they are literally their ancestors. By speaking the language and by introducing themselves in Lingít, they are respecting their ancestors by respecting themselves. The idea of respect is something a lot of Native children don't have today. Gangs, media, television and music have a profound influence on them. They are reaching out and searching for something; they are lost. When you can teach children in their language, however, they start to find out who they are. When they really *know* who they are in the language, no one can take that away from them. This is amazing to hold on to. It lifts their spirit and it makes them happy and excited to come to class. They usually like the language classes more than their mainstream classes. It makes their spirits stronger. ✨

# Hands on Banking Teaches Money Management

In an effort to provide critically needed financial education to students and adults nationwide, Wells Fargo & Company has launched its newly expanded on-line financial literacy program, Hands on Banking.

Available free of charge in English or Spanish on the Internet ([www.handsonbanking.org](http://www.handsonbanking.org)), CD-ROM and in printed curriculum, Hands on Banking teaches the basics of money management geared to four age groups, from children to adults.

Lack of basic financial information is a serious problem among students in public schools, which rarely offer education on personal financial management.

"Today's financial world is very complex compared to what it was even ten years ago," says Richard Strutz, Regional President for Wells Fargo in Anchorage. "Consumers used to maintain only checking and savings accounts, but today they have to understand a wide range of banking,

investment and lending products. In addition, young people too often leave high school with no working knowledge of basic money management concepts. Hands on Banking provides both students and adults money skills they need for life."

In a recent speech to the Congressional Black Caucus, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan stressed the pressing need for financial education, particularly in our public schools. "Children and teenagers should begin learning basic financial skills as early as possible. Indeed, improving basic financial education in elementary and secondary schools can help prevent students from making poor decisions later, when they are young adults, that can take years to over-



come," he said.

Designed for self-paced, individual learning, as well as classrooms and community groups, Hands on Banking includes topics such as budgeting, the importance of saving, bank accounts and services, borrowing money and establishing good credit, and investing. The lessons are narrated, animated, colorful and contain no commercial or promotional content. The adult curriculum includes special sections on managing credit, buying a home and starting and managing a small business. The student curriculum meets or exceeds national education standards for math, literacy and economics and also meets the standards of the highly respected JumpStart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy.

For more information, contact Asta Keller, Wells Fargo Community Development, at 907-265-2903 or [kellera@wellsfargo.com](mailto:kellera@wellsfargo.com). 

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