

Dear all immersion presenters:

Kci woliwon psiw-te wen! A big thanks to you all!

I apologize for this form letter, as each and every one of you deserves such a special thanks for making our conference so successful!

First of all, I can say without any doubt that all of our goals for the conference have been achieved, and then some! Just getting you all together and having you all carry it forward was our number one objective, and that has definitely happened in a most amazing way. Bringing academics such as Tove, Robert, and David, together with immersion activists and educators for mutual benefit and support was another one of our goals. Though that is ordinarily difficult to achieve, it was extraordinarily effective at this conference. Another goal achieved beautifully was having you all share the stories of your struggles and successes with conference participants from communities still without immersion programs. The inspiration you have all provided was tremendous, and I am told the fire has now been lit under many more people, especially here in New Brunswick, and that is personally gratifying to me! Bringing immersion educators together with The Assembly of First Nations Language Committee in order to speak directly to each other was yet another goal that has been successfully achieved thanks to the wonderful support and cooperation of the AFN. Finally, we are particularly pleased that a committee has now been established to work for the cause of immersion. That means that there will be many more hands to share in the work that lies ahead in the struggle for immersion programs in all of our languages.

Had we achieved only one of these goals we would have considered the conference a success; that we achieved them all is remarkable, and a credit to you all! Thanks again.

We would also like to mail out some materials and will need everyone's mailing address, if you have not already provided it to us. We wanted every one of the presenters to get a T-shirt, but found out afterward that some did not get one. Please let us know if you are one of those people so that we can mail them out when we get the next batch in a couple of weeks.

Another request of you all--We have been asked to see what we could do to obtain copies of the various CDs, videos, and power point presentations that were shown at our conference, and with people's permission, get copies out to others who would like them. Tove has offered to make hers available through us, and we will pass that along digitally very soon. If you can possibly forward a copy of your power point presentations and/or videos, we could do up an order form making copies of your materials available to others, if you are willing to have them copied and

passed on to others. (We'll do the copying.)

We also have a problem-- to date we have not located the flip chart pages that had the names of everyone who volunteered to be on the Immersion Working Committee (or whatever we are going to call it!) If any of you know what happened to that list please let us know. And in case it does not turn up could you also please let us know if you volunteered for that committee so that we can type up the list. So sorry about that!

For those of you who missed the final wrap-up day on Thursday, it resulted in a number of recommendations for the new committee--

1. Establish a website for conference proceedings, immersion research and information, and work of the committee, to share information with both immersion educators and individuals wishing to establish immersion programs. (I will look into establishing it to get the proceedings of this conference out, but it should become the website of the committee.)
2. Provide support for all First Nation immersion programs, and especially for programs struggling to survive, as in the case of one now operating but in danger of closing (at Hobbema, the Nipisohkopahk School).
3. Sponsor (or encourage some national organization to sponsor) a national curriculum plan/project to prepare a template (in English) of curriculum materials for immersion programs, perhaps one level a year, to be made available for translation into different languages.
4. Play an advocacy role for immersion--spreading the word about existing immersion programs and the benefits of immersion, speaking at important conferences, sponsoring ad campaigns, in order to reach First Nations people primarily, but also politicians and government agencies.
5. Sponsor an annual meeting--
  - a. Ask each participant who wishes to speak in his or her language to bring an interpreter to do simultaneous translation.
  - b. Involve the National Native Youth Organization
6. Support, promote, and participate in other language conferences such as the Sweetgrass Conference on August 6-7, 2006 in Cornwall, Ont., The Gift of Language and Culture Conference in Saskatoon, November 23, 24, & 25 hosted by SICC, and the Ojibway Language conference in March of 2006.
7. Promote the importance of our own stories in our languages, vs. stories written by non-Aboriginals;
8. Promote and disseminate accurate information on our

languages, our histories; our syllabaries, etc.;

9. (My recommendation) Become involved in promoting legislation recognizing First Nations linguistic rights (and/or push for other agencies to do so);

10. (My recommendation) Become involved in holding the government to its obligations to fund immersion programs, (and/or push for other agencies to do so);

11. (My recommendation) Sponsor (and/or encourage other agencies to sponsor) research on immersion, particularly on outcomes relevant to language acquisition and educational achievement.

In addition to these suggestions for the committee we (in our department) will begin addressing the following ASAP:

1.) We will summarize each of the talks into a paragraph or two, to be appended to a summary report on the conference with the main recommendations.

2.) We will compile and send out all of the recommendations from the break-away sessions, and try to summarize of them;

3.) We will make audio (and maybe video) versions of the conference proceedings available to everyone who wants to order them at cost.

4.) We will publish the list of volunteers with addresses, (once we find it or can put it together again!);

5.) We will try to get shirts out to people who did not receive them.

6.) We will try to make available all cds, power-point presentations and videos that any of you are willing to send us and have copied.

I have also been asked to begin doing up a short paper or list of rationales for immersion drawn from the conference presentations and from research (more theoretical) sources for the use of communities and individuals wishing to develop immersion programs. I see this as something I am willing to start, but would want input and feedback from the committee before finalizing it.

Have done up this list without reading all the recommendations as of yet. I apologize if some important ones are not on this list. We will add them to this list as soon as we can get through all the recommendations. And please feel free to suggest new ones that come to mind.

Hope you all had a chance to relax after the conference. You deserve it. And once again, many thanks!

Andrea