

Aboriginal Languages Curriculum

Jurisdiction: Manitoba

Contact: Aileen Najduch

Level: K-12

Theme: Curriculum/materials

Description of Practice: *Curriculum to guide the teaching of Aboriginal languages in the public school system*

Work is currently underway on the development of a curriculum to guide the teaching of Aboriginal languages in the public school system in Manitoba (second language instruction). This work will result in a *Manitoba K-12 Framework of Outcomes for Aboriginal Language and Culture* and additional support materials. Led by an Aboriginal staffperson, the project includes close participation of Aboriginal language teachers, from Northern and Southern Manitoba, as well as Aboriginal Elders. It is grounded in the work of *The Common Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Culture Programs, Kindergarten to Grade 12* (2000, WNCP).

Background:

There was a lack of comprehensive, provincially developed materials to guide the teaching of Aboriginal languages in Manitoba and language instructors are often community members, but not certified teachers. In order to ensure consistent and high-quality Aboriginal language instruction throughout Manitoba it was necessary to begin development of a framework of student learning outcomes, K-12. The extensive work already done at the WNCP level provided a starting point.

Development:

This project was initiated under the leadership of an Aboriginal staffperson. In addition to the WNCP material, this project also drew on local projects, such as the work done to support Aboriginal language instruction in Winnipeg's largest school division, as well as in a newly emerging Cree-Bilingual school in Northern Manitoba. A project team was identified and included both Northern and Southern subgroups. The team members were a combination of Aboriginal language instructors and consultants, and Aboriginal elders were consulted at various points in the project.

Evidence:

This project is still under development and so its quality or success cannot yet be measured.

Adaptability:

This approach, as well as the framework established, may become models for other jurisdictions. The types of support materials that accompany the Framework of Outcomes have yet to be determined and will play a key role in the success of the project. The project team had a depth of understanding in teaching cultural components of language instruction, but many lacked formal training in language instruction. Because of this, expertise outside of the initial development team was utilized.

Further information:

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Date:

May 25, 2006