

## Dene Drumming Activities

Jurisdiction: Northwest Territories

Contact: Andy Norwegian DDEC

Level: K - 12

Theme: Culture and language/Community-based practices

### **Description of Practice:** *Language Development based on Key Experiences*

Regional Language Instructors participated in a community sponsored drumming workshop for students at the Charles Yohin School in Nahanni Butte. The workshop began with a Fire Feeding Ceremony followed by lessons in Drumming, Drum Songs, Drum Dancing and Hand Games. The instructors able to observe and participant in the lessons taught where allowable. This gave the participants an opportunity to experience the protocol involved in going to a different community to participate in certain cultural activities.

**Background:** Regional Language Instructors are at times uncertain about the meaning of utilizing key cultural experience in teaching the Dene Language. The Language Instructors who participated in this workshop were exposed to five authentic cultural experiences in which Slavey was the language of instruction. This gave them first hand experience as to the vocabulary involved in teaching these topics and gave them further understanding as to the protocol involved in having female participation in these events.

**Development:** Following the workshop Language Instructors gathered in Fort Simpson to develop unit plans and language development exercises for each of the five components of drumming; fire feeding ceremony, drumming, singing, dancing and playing hand games. The language development exercises included the use of music, replacement exercises, and dialogue. The instructors had an opportunity to teach micro lessons using the materials they developed and copies of the materials developed were sent to regional instructors who were not able to attend.

**Evidence:** Language Instructors felt this was a positive experience where a school initiative involve the whole community and to some extend the region. There wasn't much community participation in the workshop when it started out but this changed when the facilitators organized a community drum dance at the recreation centre in the evening. There was a good turn out for the community feast at the end of the workshop. At the community feast, students were given an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to drum, sing, dance and play hand games.

**Adaptability:** This event could be adapted to demonstrate the use of key experiences in other cultural activities. It also demonstrates that some topics in Dene Kede are interrelated and could easily be integrated under one theme.

**Further Information:** Please feel free to contact Andy Norwegian at the Teaching & Learning Centre at the Dehcho Divisional Education Council.