

## LDTTC Workshop #8



### Revitalization

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## What is Language Revitalization?

- “The attempt by interested parties, including individuals, cultural or community groups, governments, or political authorities, to reverse the decline of a language”
- Also called:
  - Language Revival
  - Reversing Language Shift

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## What are the goals of Revitalization?

- Increase **speaker numbers**
- Increase **language use**
  - Within and between different sections in the population
- Increase **domains of use**
- Increase **language prestige/valorization**
- **Primary goal: Get children learning and invested in the language (intergenerational transmission)**

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## Domains of Use

- Where, when, and in what contexts the language is used
- Places
  - At home, at church, in weekend schools
- People
  - With grandparents, with friends
- Activities
  - praying, playing certain games, gossiping


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## Levels of magnitude

- Large Scale
  - Country or community wide efforts to reverse language shift
    - Revitalization of Hebrew in Israel
    - Revitalization of Cherokee
- Small Scale
  - Individual or small group efforts
    - Encouragement of language use in the home
    - Small community gatherings in which an effort is made to speak only the threatened language
    - Small “daycare” centers for young children in which only the language is spoken

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## Successful revitalization efforts usually include:

- Language immersion for at least the younger children
- Competent, qualified, fluent speakers willing to act as mentors and teachers
- Community commitment and enthusiasm for revitalization
- Expansion and creation of threatened language specific domains (language use outside of just the school and home)
- A well thought out plan and step by step achievable goals

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## Types of revitalization programs

- Language Nests
- Immersion schools
- Master-apprentice programs
- Community-based programs

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## Language Nests

- A preschool /kindergarten like setting
- Childcare providers are elders, adults who speak the native language with the children.
- Example of a successful program: Maori language nests, in New Zealand:  
Te kōhanga reo



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## Immersion schools

- Post- kindergarten level
- Some to all academic subjects taught in native language from native-speakers
- Example: Hawaiian Language Immersion Program



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## Master-Apprentice Program

- All participants are adult age
- An apprentice is paired with a master (native speaking elder) to meet regularly and converse in the native language
- Example: Chickasaw, a Native American language spoken in Oklahoma.

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## Community-based programs

- Can be any age; there is no real connection to school
- Usually a summer camp or weekend activity
- Revolves around community activities, but only using the native language.



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## Other ideas...

- Not all revitalization plans need to be so large, language revitalization can start small with a few changes:
  - Creating “domains” in your everyday life where you only speak your native language (for example: Only in the kitchen)
  - Finding, or serving as, a mentor and speaking only your native language for a few hours a week
  - Creating a small group of people who do culturally relative things (crafts, activities) once a month where only the native language is spoken
  - Your ideas?

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## Your Turn!

- With your mentors, think about steps you could take in your community to revitalize, or maintain your language. Things to consider:
- Where your language is, in terms of vitality and revitalization needs
- Do-able programs and activities that you feel you could complete with a small amount of resources

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## Only the beginning

- LDTTC is only the beginning. There are a lot of things you can do with the skills and knowledge you've learned here
  - Create a small-scale revitalization project
  - record more stories, poems, songs from speakers of your language
  - work on your dictionary more
  - Find out if there are linguists working on your language
  - Take Advanced LDTTC!
- Thank you!

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