

**NA MI K'ANATSUT TA SKW̓WU7MESH SNICHIM CHET:  
SQUAMISH LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION: FROM THE HEARTS AND THE  
MINDS OF THE LANGUAGE SPEAKERS**

by

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## ABSTRACT

*Skwxwú7mesh snichim*, Squamish language was declared the official language of the *Skwxwú7mesh-ullh Uxwumixw*, the Squamish People, in 1990. As of 2006, the Squamish language is a critically endangered language with fewer than 12 native speakers.

For this thesis, three generations of Squamish language speakers were interviewed. These speakers include fluent language speakers who were raised hearing the Squamish Language as their first language until they were sent away for formal schooling, as well as re-emergent language speakers who were also exposed to the language within the household as a child, but less frequently. The fluent speakers continued to speak the language, while the re-emergent speakers stopped speaking the language for many years. The other co-participants are primarily adult learners of the language who either teach the Squamish language in the public school system or are actively learning the Squamish language through family and adult language evening classes.

The historical context and the endeavours of these community members are critical to guiding the Squamish language revitalization efforts. This is what the first part of the thesis addresses. The second part of the thesis states how the Squamish language affects their identity in being Squamish persons. The Squamish language is central to the culture and identity of Squamish people. The importance of learning and speaking *Skwxwú7mesh snichim*, and the essence of the Squamish language differs for each generation of language speakers and language learners. However, fundamental values to the *Skwxwú7mesh* culture and the *Skwxwú7mesh* language remain the same, and I will argue are fundamental to the core of Squamish people and are at the heart of Squamish language revitalization

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The language teachers who have spent so much of their lives learning the language and passing it on to hundreds of our people. –wa7u men. I hope that the words of our elders and teachers are an inspiration to language learners and to speakers of the language yet to be born. If their words speak to you, then I believe you have a responsibility to move forward in our shared direction towards language revitalization.

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## PROLOGUE

### *Swat kwi a sna?*

*Swat kwi a sna?* The most natural translation of this into English is, “what is your name?” Literally, however, it means something closer to “Who is your name?” There are two types of “Indian names”: *niná7men*, (nicknames) and *kweshámin*, (ancestral names).

Nicknames are personalized, and, like English nicknames, the names may be given because of a mishap, habit, or characteristic that person has. An ancestral name is a formal name, and requires spiritual, cultural, and societal preparations on behalf of that person and their family in order to receive that name. The name is traced through their hereditary lineage to that individual. It is a name they “carry” during their lifetime, but they do not “own”.

This is unlike the English tradition, where a name is given to a person at birth. In this case, the individual then owns that name, forming a part of his or her own individual identity. Although surnames have distinguishing characteristics, they link the individual to their historic or contemporary wealth class, or notoriety of the individual. Yet the individual can still “make a name” for him or herself in his or her lifetime, perhaps improving his or her economic status or bettering the world in some other way. However, the name and reputation associated with its identity usually dies when the individual does.

An ancestral name carries a different type of identity - it traces and binds the ties to the ancestors who carried the name beforehand. An ancestral name distinguishes its

place of origin, the village that name comes from, and it defines how that person is tied to that name.

A name is handed down during a Naming Ceremony. Upon receiving a name, respected people from multiple communities are called forward to talk to the person receiving the name. The person is given words of advice and teachings that enable the person to act in responsible ways, hold the name in high regard, and pay respect to the ancestors who carried that name beforehand. The name will be handed down to another family member either during or after the person's lifetime and will be used generations upon generations after that person is deceased. The ancestral name does not die. The identity of the name exists, and the individual that carries that name becomes a part of the collective history.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the colonization and assimilation of a First Nations people, the Squamish Nation of British Columbia. In particular it examines their struggle to maintain and revitalize their spoken language. This thesis studies the desire to keep Squamish as a living language, despite the processes of assimilation. This research contributes to finding ways to alleviate and to counteract the current crisis of Squamish language decline. Urgent action is needed to halt this decline. This thesis summarises some of the specific revitalization initiatives that the Squamish people are taking to protect their language and recommends ways to advance these efforts.

The purpose of this study is as follows:

- 1) to document the value that the Squamish-speaking elders place on speaking their mother tongue,
- 2) to show why language revitalization is necessary to the community,
- 3) to provide the Squamish community and future generations of Squamish language learners with written and oral testimony of three generations of language speakers: fluent language speakers, re-emergent language speakers, and language learners,
- 4) to encapsulate the Squamish ways of knowing and show how this knowledge will help to enhance a successful language revitalization program, and
- 5) to identify and improve methods for the Squamish Language revitalization programming.

The following elements are discussed in this thesis. CHAPTER ONE lays out the premise of the thesis and the objectives of the study. It describes the research collecting and data analyses methods. The methodology subscribed to in this thesis is a *decolonizing*

methodology, which includes both the formulation of the questions and the act of researching.

CHAPTER TWO is divided into three parts. It attempts to frame the Squamish Nation into the social-historical and contemporary context. In Part I, I describe the specific elements of colonialism and its impact on Squamish society, as well as the effects it had on the maintenance of the Squamish language. The effects of colonialism forced the Squamish to rebuild our society and language as discussed in Part II. In Part III, I describe the key events and specific projects related to Squamish language status and acquisition. Despite decades of language programming, very few people have reached a high level of fluency in the language. What steps need to be taken to reverse this? This chapter provides part of the information base that is analyzed later in the thesis and outlines ways to further build language capacity through the speakers' interviews.

CHAPTER THREE reviews an array of different language revitalization interventions in other selected Indigenous contexts. This review provides another information stream of what is possible with respect to language revitalization initiatives. For example, a feature of some of these communities is that they utilize "language nests" and "immersion schools".

CHAPTER FOUR contains interviews with three generations of Squamish language speakers. These data provide a further information stream, in particular related to the 'readiness'/'consciousness' of the community to make the necessary commitment to language revitalization. The responses from these interviews are explored within two separate clusters consisting of nine distinct themes:



Cluster One: *Xw'nixw* "The Upbringing"

- i. Wanáxws – respect
- ii. Strength/Discipline

Cluster Two: *Nilh telhtim' a-chet*, "Those are our Ways"

- iii. Identity
- iv. Pride
- v. Ways of Knowing
- vi. Humour
- vii. Teaching Methodology
- viii. Texture

The themes are articulated by language speakers as underpinning the distinctive elements of Squamish ways of knowing and world-views. These elements are embedded in the epistemology which stems from the language.

CHAPTER FIVE contains a synthesis of the various information streams in order to make recommendations for shaping the language revitalization projects of the Squamish. It integrates the interviews with the elders, the literature overview, and the interviews with the language speakers together with some of my own personal observations made during my employment as a curriculum writer for the Squamish Nation Education Department. This chapter makes some specific recommendations that will assist Squamish efforts to develop a more meaningful and effective form of language revitalization.

## **Methodological Issues**

I have used a range of methodologies to gather information. The variety of approaches was dictated by the different sites and groups from which the information has been taken.

### **Different Information Streams:**

- **Literature Survey**  
Cross-cultural comparisons  
Historical Review
- **Interviews with Squamish Language-speaking elders and second language learners**
- **Personal observations as a Curriculum Developer for the Squamish Nation Department of Education**

During this process I developed a critical overview of the contemporary situation and provided a platform for possible strategies of Squamish language revitalization.

A qualitative design was used as the overall research method in this study. I interviewed three generations of language speakers. First generation language speakers were raised hearing and speaking the language regularly in their homes prior to their time spent in residential school. They are classified as highly-proficient or fluent speakers. The group classified as re-emergent language speakers heard and spoke the language in their homes, but spoke it less frequently, and perhaps rarely after leaving residential school. Finally, I interviewed second language learners, a new generation of speakers who may or may not have had language exposure as children, but since have learned it as

adults. For this last group, I interviewed two language speakers who have obtained a high level of language fluency and have become language teachers. Finally, I interviewed one language student, who considers herself a lifelong learner of the language.

Before beginning the project, I presented my project proposal to Chief and Council for their endorsement to work within the community, and to interview Squamish language elders – both fluent and re-emergent speakers and adult learners of the language. With their approval, I approached each elder individually. All of the elders I asked agreed to participate in the study. In total there were three fluent language speakers and three re-emergent language speakers.

Next, I circulated an invitation to participate in the study to the language teachers and to the students who were enrolled in an adult Squamish language evening course. I waited for two weeks to allow people time to respond, and interviewed those who expressed an interest to participate in the study. These adults are either highly proficient second language learners or are students of the language. Originally I intended to interview two people from each category. However, only one language student was interested in participating in the study.

The interviews were either conducted in the co-participants' homes or at some other mutually agreeable place. The set of questions were different for language elders than those for the language learners. These questions were used as a guideline for the interview process. The co-participants were given a choice of whether to be audio taped or not; one co-participant did not agree to be audio taped. A copy of the interview was available upon request to all of the co-participants. They were also able to donate the

interview to the Squamish Nation Department of Education archives. Only two did not wish to have their interview archived. In writing this thesis, I checked with each co-participant to make sure that their quotes were not used out of context, and that their voice was properly represented.

After these interviews were finished, I listened to each interview again, writing research notes to assist in the writing process. As I am a part of the community and the language revitalization process, I have included my own “voice” in the writing process.

All co-participants of this study were presented with a draft copy of CHAPTER FOUR, *The Study*. The second language learners were presented with a copy individually, while the elders received a copy of the thesis as a group. I received feedback from the Elders’ Language Advisory group as a whole. I was very pleased that I was able to receive feedback from them as a group, as the Elders’ Language Authority. In the language and education work, they make recommendations and decisions as a collective group.

### **Limits of the Study**

A limitation of this study was the limited time allowed per question. I was able to spend about an hour with each elder. As it is in our practice with our Elders’ Language Advisory meetings, information and knowledge is shared more than once, and in different ways. I felt that some of the people I interviewed might have been uncomfortable because there was only one opportunity to respond to the questions. The nature of this methodology is less true to the way we would normally teach and learn from each other in our language group.

The interviewing process I used was the best method to include the voices of different generations of co-participants. Almost all of the co-participants are a part of the *Nexwniw'n ta a Imats*, Elders' language advisory. Although the voice of each person is heard, the elders are used to use speaking about language in a different meeting structure. Typically, we meet in one group in one of the elder's homes. Memories, teachings, ideas, and knowledge are shared with each person. The ideas and narratives of each individual tend to support one another. More memories arise as each story is shared. The knowledge shared can be incredible.

However, interview techniques in a group setting would not have been effective for this study. Oftentimes, the eldest of the group is the first one deferred to by the rest of the group in answering the questions posed. Individual interviews guaranteed that each voice was heard.

Explaining the language of the consent forms to the elders was an uncomfortable process. I felt like an outsider coming into the community to study them. Within our community, there has been a history of outsiders coming into research us, sometimes with positive results. However, in some instances, the results have been extremely negative. It was the intrinsic trust that was given to me as a person, not as a researcher, that made the interviews possible. When I was given permission by the elders to interview them, I really began to feel the responsibility that was entrusted to me.

## **Indigenous Methodologies**

As part of the methodology overview, I also explore specific aspects of “Indigenous methodologies”. In particular I examine aspects of decolonization by other Indigenous researchers (e.g., Smith, Battiste)<sup>1</sup> to also show that Indigenous ways of research differs from mainstream research methodology. Indigenous researchers have become engaged in a critical way with the types of history and methods of imperial research. They dissect the methods of collection of Indigenous knowledge by non-Indigenous researchers:

It is important to remember that colonialism was not just about collecting. It was also about re-arrangement, re-presentation and redistribution.<sup>2</sup>

I focus on the following research points. The colonial history and scientific intent of research is the gathering, stealing, and observing the ‘other’. Academic and decolonizing specialist, Linda Smith, refers to this as the ‘research agenda’. This agenda disregards the community’s own knowledge and does not question the validity of the research used to observe the ‘other’.

## **Colonial History**

Worldwide, many Indigenous communities have been turned upside down by the exploration and “discovery” by European nations such as England, Spain, and France. Exploration and discovery led to the colonization of territories. Desired lands, resources, or trade routes were procured. Forms of colonization included the following: slavery, massacres, genocide, disease, conquest, theft of resources, overthrowing of established

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<sup>1</sup> Indigenous Researchers Linda Smith and Marie Battiste assert that colonialism and imperialism control knowledge

<sup>2</sup> Smith, from Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. p. 62: 1999.

governments, religious indoctrination, creating reservations, and otherwise imposing restrictions of movement and Indigenous practice.

In Indigenous methodology, the terms commonly used to describe these facets of control include colonization and imperialism. The colonization and control of knowledge is more subtle and less bloody. The average Canadian has been lead to believe that the forms of colonization are historic. Like tools, baskets and masks that are featured under glass cases in museums around the world, colonization, as an act, appears to have been committed in the past, and seems to be consigned to history as something that happened long ago and is no longer occurring. As Graham Smith has often stated, “Colonization has not gone away, in many instances it has simply changed form.”<sup>3</sup>

People may not realize that the control and validity of Indigenous knowledge is still a lived experience; it is ongoing, for peoples everywhere.

Smith correlates knowledge and colonization in the following way:

The nexus between cultural ways of knowing, scientific discoveries, economic impulses and imperial power enabled the West to make ideological claims to having a superior civilization...For many Indigenous peoples the major agency for imposing this positional superiority over knowledge, language and culture was colonial education.<sup>4</sup>

Battiste also describes the effects of their knowledge :

Colonization brought disorder to Indigenous peoples' lives, to their languages, to their social relations, and to their ways of thinking about, feeling, and interacting with the world... Cognitive imperialism is the hierarchical and patrimonial monologue that has been created by Eurocentrism.<sup>5</sup>

Eurocentrism is defined as the “the imaginative and institutional context that informs contemporary scholarship, opinion and law...that is built on a set of assumptions

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<sup>3</sup> Graham Smith. Personal Communication – lecture. 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p.65 .

<sup>5</sup> Battiste, from Protecting Indigenous Knowledge p. 13. Also see Fanon, Frantz, (1990), The Wretched of the Earth, Penguin New York.

and beliefs that educated Europeans and North Americans habitually accept as true, as supported by “the facts”, or as reality.<sup>6</sup> This can also be called the “the voice of truth”, as “progress”, “historical accountability”, the “dominant agenda”, and “the writing of the other”.

For Indigenous researchers and writers, the challenge is to write truthfully. One way of deconstructing the colonization of knowledge is by undoing the work of imperialism and colonialism done via the academy. Smith notes that this critique draws on two major strands:

one draws upon a notion of authenticity, of a time before colonization in which we were intact as an Indigenous peoples. Second strand of the language of critique demands that we have an analysis of how we were colonized, of what that has meant in terms of our immediate past and what it means for our present and future. Colonized time and decolonized time. Decolonization encapsulates both sets of ideas.<sup>7</sup>

Smith argues for research methods and projects that begin the process of decolonization and are consistent with the needs of Indigenous peoples as we move forward into the next century.

One such project is *Revitalizing*. This project attempts to bring the disrupted community language and cultural practices back. In many communities, such as British Columbia, languages are on the brink of extinction with very few speakers left. The Squamish language is a critically endangered language, given that all of the native fluent speakers are elderly. However, there are second language speakers who have obtained a high degree of fluency in the language; unfortunately, the language is not being passed on inter-generationally from parent to child. Revitalization of the Squamish language is the goal of several committed people who are backed by the community. The aim of this

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p.21.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 4.



thesis is to document a 'collective voice' on language revitalization and suggest further ways to implement programming objectives and strategies to reach this destination.

### **Decolonization through Revitalization – Respectful Research**

The first researcher to enter the Squamish community was Charles Hill-Tout in the 1897. He interviewed Melkws, who spoke no English and was one of the last trained oral historians. The following excerpt is from Hill-Tout:

I sought to learn his age, but this he could only approximately give by informing me that his mother was a girl on the verge of womanhood when Vancouver sailed up Howe Sound at the close of last century. He would, therefore, be about 100 years old. His native name, as near as I could get it, is "Mul'ks". He could not understand any English, and as his archaic Squamish was beyond my poor knowledge of the language, it was necessary to have to resort to the tribal interpreter. The account will, in consequence will be less full and literal. Before the old man could begin his recital, some preparations were deemed necessary by the other elderly men of the tribe. These consisted in making a bundle of short sticks, each about six inches long. These played the part of tallies; each stick representing to the reciter a particular paragraph or chapter in his story. They apologized for making these, and were at pains to explain to me that these were to them what books were to the white man. These sticks were now placed at intervals along a table round which we sat, and after some animated discussion between the interpreter, who acted as master of the ceremonies, and the other old men as to the relative order and names of the tallies, we were ready to begin. The first tally was placed in the old man's hands and he began his recital in a loud, high-pitched key, as if he were addressing a large audience in the open air. He went on without pause for about ten minutes, and then the interpreter took up the story... The old man recited his story chapter by chapter, that is tally by tally, and the interpreter followed in like order.<sup>8</sup>

The oral historian had a distinct way of marking the world. The job of reciting history was not done in isolation. Years of training were involved in order to become a historian. People worked together to ensure that the work was done correctly. Melkws

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<sup>8</sup> Hill-Tout, from Notes on the Cosmogony and History of the Squamish Indians of British Columbia p. 85: 1897.

was supported by the people, marking the chapters of the story with tallies. Hill-tout described this research as difficult:

The story was either beyond the interpreter's power to render into English, or there was much in it he did not like to relate to a white man, for I did not unfortunately get a fifth of what the old man had uttered from him, and it was only by dint of questioning and cross questioning that I was enabled to get anything like a connected narrative from him at all.<sup>9</sup>

Hill-Tout's description of the situation is from an outsider's perspective coming into the community. Not only was he attempting to interpret a narrative through an interpreter, but he also needed to understand the social context in which it takes place.

For Indigenous communities, research does not occur in isolation, or from an outsider perspective of research. For example the Squamish methodology begins with *Wanáxws*.

Vanessa Campbell, one of my teachers and colleagues, gave this account of *wanáxws* during her interview:

One of the things that was interesting was when I was part of the evening class with adults, Uncle would talk to us about us, about our own lives, about our cultures, history, about the point of view. We would have a word, um I remember the first time we sat down with him, and he said *wanáxws*. And that was, that's the first word, he said. That's the most important word, that's what all of our elders taught, and all of our elders lived and it means respect. And he said if you're going to understand our language, and understand our people then you have to begin with that *wanáxws*, with respect. And we learned so much about our relationship to the world, even when we came to talk about things like time. And, for example, we learned that we have names for the days of the week and we learned that they're based on Western-European concept of time and it wasn't original to our way of thinking, but it helped understand a way that something changed, and the way our language adapted to that. He always shared stories about things that actually happened connecting these things with ideas and concepts in the language, and history, legends, cultural traditions, all of those things were shared...

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p.86

Vanessa wasn't the only one who spoke of respect. The need to show respect arose again and again in this study. As much as this is necessary to fully grasp the language, it is also an integral component of Indigenous methodology for the Squamish Nation: "If you're going to understand our language, and understand our people then you have to begin with that *wanáxws*, with respect."<sup>10</sup>

In this chapter I have examined two things:

- 1) how colonization has generally been perpetuated through research,
- 2) how an Indigenous method specific to the Squamish community is with *wanáxws*, a way of showing respect.

I am aware that I am no expert on the Squamish language and culture. I am, however, involved in the language revitalization movement both personally and professionally. It is more than a choice, it is a responsibility to come to each person with *wanáxws*.

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<sup>10</sup> Uncle Louis as restated by Campbell

## CHAPTER TWO: THE DISRUPTION, RESISTENCE AND REBUILDING OF *SKWXWÚ7MESH UXWUMIXW*

This chapter summarizes three different periods of time that impacted the Squamish social structure, relationships and transmission of the language:

Part 1. *The Historical Placement of the Squamish* traces settlement and early colonization of the Squamish lands,

Part II. *The Contemporary Placement of the Squamish* examines the role of colonization in the interference of social, educational, and economic relationships. The Squamish people have begun to recover and rebuild from being socio-economically marginalization, and

Part III. *The Revitalization of Squamish* examines the language revitalization efforts of the Squamish Nation to date.

This chapter examines the impact of colonization on Squamish society and Squamish language decline. Despite the societal and economical impacts on the Squamish, the language is being rebuilt, as I show below.

### **Part I. The Historical Placement of Squamish**

*Nilh swa7s ta Skwxwú7mesh tiwa,  
Eyks ta S7elken, ta swa7s ta Skwxwú7mesh,  
Ta7kswit kwi tiná ta schichem ayks ta Shisha7lh,  
nam ta Schenk,  
Nilh swa7s ta Skwxwú7mesh k'aymin.  
Hawk wa mi iniwilhem Xwmetskwiyam,  
Ey  
Hawk wa mi iniwilhem iytsi Skwxwú7mesh.  
Wa swa7swit k'aswit wan am kwis wes yelxlhalemwit.  
Nilh welh-timáswit, syetsems iytsi kwekwin selsi7l.*

This belongs to the Squamish,  
From here (North Vancouver) to Point Grey,

belonged to the Squamish,  
Up to this side of Sechelt, to Gibson's Landing.  
These are the campsites of the Squamish.  
None of the Musqueam crossed over  
and  
None of the Sechelt crossed over into  
The area belonging to the Squamish.  
They had their own places to go food gathering.  
That's the way the old people of long ago described this.

Senhaliya

Aunt Lizzie, Lizzie Jacobs, Skwxwú7mesh Elder born at *Xway'xwiy* (Stanley Park) in  
1873 Exhibit at the Vancouver Museum

### **Captain Cook and Naverez: Contact and Confusion**

In a race to find the Northwest Passage, the English and their historic rivals, the Spanish, explored British Columbia at virtually the same time. Captain Vancouver led the English party, and Captains Galiano and Valdez led the Spanish. In June 1792, they assembled at the southern portion of Skwxwú7mesh territory, around Point Grey. Under the guise of camaraderie, the two parties hesitantly agreed to share their accounts of exploration with each other. Evidently they were wary of relying upon each other's conclusions as they surveyed the area separately anyway. Despite producing separate journals and maps, the Spanish made very few observations of their encounters with the Squamish. Their maps are all that remain.

Captain Vancouver's initial contact with the Squamish was described in his journal. On June 13, 1792, near the 200-foot bluff at Prospect Point, and into first narrows at Burrard Inlet Vancouver, his log states:

Here we were met by about fifty Indians, in their canoes, who conducted themselves with great decorum and civility, presenting us with several cooked fish....These good people finding we were inclined to make some

return for their hospitality, showed much understanding in preferring iron to copper.<sup>11</sup>

The Squamish describe their first encounter with Vancouver further north in Howe Sound at Watt's Point, a place named by the *Skwxwú7mesh, Xwexwlit'n*, first known as strange spirit-people place. Vancouver, the only captain to explore Howe Sound, recorded his account of the Squamish at Watt's Point:

Possessing a more ardent desire for commercial transactions; into the spirit of which they entered with infinitely more avidity than any of our former acquaintances, not only in bartering amongst themselves the different valuables they had obtained from us, but when that trade became slack, in exchanging those articles again with our people; in which traffic they always took care to gain some advantage, and would frequently exult on the occasion. Iron, in all its forms, they judiciously preferred to any other article we had to offer<sup>12</sup>

Interestingly, Vancouver's first documentation of the Squamish describes their persistence for trade. This was the distinguishing quality of the Squamish.<sup>13</sup>

The late Uncle Louis Miranda narrated the following version of contact from the Squamish perspective to linguist Aert Kuipers. The story was first told in Squamish and translated into English.

One morning an old man at *Sta7mes* got up. He looked out at the sea and saw what he thought to be a floating island with trees on it. Then he aroused his fellow villagers. Then messengers were sent upstream as far as Cheakmus. Then the people from upstream came down, and there gathered who knows how many canoes full of people. Then they went to have a look at what they fancied to be an island. Then they circled around this would be island. Then there appeared walking beings (on it) with really white faces. One Indians said: Maybe these are the dead, those

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<sup>11</sup>Hull, Soules, and Soules, from Vancouver's Past p. 13: 1974.

<sup>12</sup> Meany, from Vancouver's Discovery Of Puget Sound p. 193: 1957.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Band, a late mentor and educator within the Squamish nation would always joke that we were the Ferengi (the shrewd traders from Star Trek) of the Northwest Coast.

must be their shrouds, only their faces are visible". For a long time they were invited to come aboard the fancied island' finally they consented. Then they all went aboard; one white man extended his hand, and the Indians thought: Apparently he wants to play the *kelexw* game. Then one Indian from *Sta7mes* stepped forward, readied himself and spat on his finger in order to play *kelexw*. Then the white man moved his hands, as if to say, "No!". The Indians said: "He seems to consider you no match". Then they called another one, and again the white man declined. So it went on until it became the turn of the strongest of the Cheakmus people, who stepped forward. Then the white man gave maybe he thought that this was how the Indians shook hands. Then he extended his finger, the Indian got hold of it, and the white man's middle finger was pulled out of its joint. After these proceedings it became time for the Indians to leave and go home. They put aboard for them a barrel full of molasses. They also received biscuits to take along, and furthermore they were given silver dollars, and rum. Then the Indians went home to *Sta7mes*. They opened the barrel with the molasses in it' when they saw it they rubbed it on their heads. The Indians thought it was hair-oil. Then when the molasses dried up their faces became tight, and their hair became stiff. Finally they started to wash their heads until all the molasses came off. Then they approached the next barrel, with the rum in it, and they drank it as they had been shown by they white men. Then when they got drunk they thought that everything was spinning around and that the ground was moving in all directions. Then they decided that the stuff they had drunk was bad. Then they threw all of it out. There remained the biscuits, which the children used as toys, and some of the girls used them for spinning-discs. But the silver dollars, they were pierced and they made buttons of them.<sup>14</sup>

This story has been handed down less strictly than the way that traditional oral histories are normally described (see CHAPTER ONE). Individual elders include different details and interpretations of this story. One version of this story describes the horrible smell of the vessel that reached the people before it was seen. This contributed to the belief that these people were from the spirit world. Another interpretation correlates the noxious odour with the two-headed sea serpent. In Squamish mythology, the giant serpent's smell reaches the people before this creature does, and this pungency

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<sup>14</sup> See Kuipers.

knocked a person unconscious, if not dead. Nevertheless, both of these detailed interpretations denoted that something powerful was approaching the Squamish people.

Both the Squamish and the English descriptions include elements of trade, social observation and interaction. Vancouver's portrayal of the Squamish people is that they were accomplished in trade. In subsequent accounts by Vancouver, the Squamish men were afraid to fire rifles, but were not directly afraid of the explorers themselves. Vancouver's scant empirical records of the people he encountered contributed to the classification of societies like the Squamish as simple or primitive. This was part of the imperial "collecting" frenzy of information about the flora, fauna, and people of the world: no more, no less.

The Squamish history of contact focuses primarily on the unknown people, whose arrival was *stl'alkem*. The Squamish word *stl'alkem* is defined as something rare, or supernatural like the two-headed sea serpent. The interaction with these strange spirit-people was ineffective and farcical, perhaps even foreshadowing events to come. Misunderstood intentions and interactions would continue as explorers turned into settlers, outside goods would make their way into the community, and problems with alcohol would exacerbate. Dark times in Squamish history would settle in for the better part of a century.

### **Colonization: Devastation, Conflict, and Confinement**

Disease was the first disorder of colonization. This occurred prior to the explorers sailing into Squamish waters. Epidemics, primarily small pox, swept through traditional trade routes and decimated the Squamish population. The population of Squamish people



was estimated to be between 10,000 (conservatively) and 30,000 prior to contact.<sup>15</sup> By the mid-1800s, the Squamish population fell, numbering between 300 and 600 people.

Oral tradition, as told to Hill-tout by Melkw̓s, recounts an epidemic:

A dreadful skin disease, loathsome to look upon, broke out upon all alike. None were spared. Men, women and children sickened, took the disease and died in agony by hundreds, so when the spring arrived and fresh food was procurable, there was scarcely a person left of all their numbers to get it. Camp after camp, village after village, was left desolate... Little by little the remnant left by the disease grew into a nation once more, and when the first white men sailed up the Squamish the tribe was strong and numerous again.<sup>16</sup>

The cause of the smallpox epidemic is debatable. In Melkw̓'s account, the salmon swimming upstream were riddled with oozing sores, and the people avoided eating them until they were forced to by starvation. The account described suggests that the epidemic originated from the Fraser River, which was the main source of sockeye salmon and a major trade centre between coastal First Nations.<sup>17</sup>

The epidemic brought despair into every Squamish household. The old knowledge-keepers and the young died first. Oral historians, prophets, the ritualists, the Indian doctors – the strongholds in the traditional society - dwindled.<sup>18</sup> The bodies of loved ones were abandoned. Ancestral names could not be passed on fast enough; lost in this transition was the history associated with each name. Names were given to

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<sup>15</sup> Although there were no specific studies done with epidemics in the area it is estimated that the epidemics occurred in the late 1700s. Wilson Duff refers to the effect of the smallpox epidemic that "swept across the continent to the Pacific in 1782".

<sup>16</sup> Hill-Tout, from Notes on the Cosmogony and History of the Squamish Indians of British Columbia p. 88: 1897.

<sup>17</sup> It is plausible that an overland trade route epidemic moving from east to west could have hit the Squamish well before Vancouver ever dreamed of exploration. Dentalia and other shells originating from British Columbia were used for regalia within the Plains culture. Items of value originated at the ocean, around the Northern section of the Rockies, extending into the Plains culture. Epidemics could have just as easily spread from coast to coast.

<sup>18</sup> The Vancouver Museum exhibit defines the sacred rights and powers of the ritualist, the prophet, and the Indian Doctor.

individuals with lower status or less direct ties to that ancestor. In spite of the devastation, traditional Squamish life continued.

Before the colonial economy, the Fraser River had always been a major trade centre for coastal people in British Columbia. The sockeye runs, the oolichan, and the Wapato brought First Nations from as far as Vancouver Island to exchange resources.<sup>19</sup> In 1827, the Hudson Bay Company established their trading post on the Fraser River at Fort Langley. The Squamish traded at the fort within the year: “200 canoes of Whooms stopped along side of the wharf” as cited in 1828.<sup>20</sup> Alongside the burgeoning economy, rape, degradation, despair, and murder developed as a part of the trade culture. Fort Langley and major centres such as New Westminster were known for the violence that ensued.<sup>21</sup>

The economic boom that reached the Vancouver area created further troubles for the Squamish. The Hastings Sawmill, formerly known as Stamp’s Landing, was founded in 1865, at the foot of Dunvley Street in Vancouver. Pioneer Mills was established a couple of years earlier in 1863, and became the logging town of Moodyville. The initial site for Stamp’s landing was a spot near the Skwxwú7mesh site of *Schilhus* and village of *Xway’xway*, which are located near Prospect Point and Lumberman’s Arch in Stanley

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<sup>19</sup> Suttles, from *The Ethnographic Significance of the Journals The Fort Langley Journals 1827-1830* p. 172: 1998.

<sup>20</sup> McMillan and Donald, from *Journal Kept by James McMillan and Archibald McDonald, The Fort Langley Journals 1827-1830* p. 75:1998.

<sup>21</sup> In letters to the Colonial Government, Julius Voight claimed that in 1859 he has saved New Westminster from Indian attack, “that trough (sic) my influence over the Squamish Indians and with the help of their Chief Kleaplannah last summer I did prevent an attack of those Indians on New Westminster when several of them were taken prisoners for an outrage on white men near Westminster”. 1860s – *Excerpts from Letters of A.T. Julius Voight to the Colonial Government: originals in the B.C. archives* from Major Matthews False Creek Collection. It was communicated to me that the outrage was regarding the rape of a Squamish woman.

Park, respectively. A letter by J.B. Lauanders to the Colonial Secretary written June 3, 1865 states:

In accordance with your orders of the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, I proceeded to Burrard Inlet arriving there at 3 p.m. and marking out Captain Stamp's Mill the same evening (June 1<sup>st</sup>). On referring to the sketch appended it will be seen that the NW corner occurs in the centre of an Indian village to clear which would only give the sawmill about 90 acres. By the appearance of the soil and debris this camping ground is one of the oldest in the inlet. The resident Indians seemed very distrustful of my purpose, and suspicious of encroachment on their premises.<sup>22</sup>

Khaltinaat, Mary Ann Walker, Navy Jack's daughter was interviewed by Vancouver Archivist Major Matthews. She describes her memories of the longhouse at *Xway'xway*:

When we got near there were thousands of Indians. "Thousands" of them, from everywhere, Nanaimo, Cowichan, everywhere, and I was frightened. I don't know who gave the potlatch but I think my grandmother's brother, and I think Supple Jack' yes...They held the potlatch in a great big shed a huge place, the Indians built it themselves long ago...you could put this house inside it.<sup>23</sup>

Despite evidence of a large village, the settler's verdict was that the Squamish had no right to the land:

I have the honour to state that a Squamish Indian called Supple Jack has squatted for the last three years on the land in Question...Capt Stamp has no objection to their remaining where they are. They can at any time be removed, the ground does not belong to their tribe.<sup>24</sup>

The "land question" heightened the racism that was percolating throughout British Columbia towards First Nations.

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<sup>22</sup> Barman, from Stanley Park's Secret The Forgotten Families of Whoi Whoi, Kanaka Ranch and Brockton Point p. 32:2005 Barman also describes the shell middens that were discovered in 1888 when a road was being built near the site of *Xway'xway*: "a large deposit of broken and crushed clam shells, as well as skulls and other body parts, about 8 feet deep and 4 acres in size" was unearthed.

<sup>23</sup> Matthew, from Conversations with Khahtsahlano p. 212: 1955.

<sup>24</sup> Barman, from Stanley Park's Secret The Forgotten Families of Whoi Whoi, Kanaka Ranch and Brockton Point p. 33: 2005.

## **Interracial Marriage**

The newcomers were initially welcomed by the Squamish. From the 1860s until the 1880s interracial marriages were common. Noble daughters of Squamish families married non-native men to secure familial ties with those that came to live on the land, and therefore to secure economic resources and peace. As Minnie, granddaughter of Eihu Nahanee, states:

A lot of white men had Indian wives. There was Joe Mannion, Tomkins Brew, Navy Jack, Gassy Jack (Deighton), Portuguese Joe, Jean Beatty, the Cummings -his family are living in Stanley Park now – and Johnny Baker who had his little house just where the Nine ‘O Clock gun is, and Capt. Ettershank the pilot, and, of course, my own father.<sup>25</sup>

Several of the important founders of Vancouver quickly married Squamish women; many of these men later abandoned their Squamish wives for white women. Interracial relationships were frowned upon as the population of Vancouver exploded at the later part of the nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup> Many of these Squamish women returned to their extended families or were left to make their own way in the shifting world. Not only was this act of abandonment degrading to Squamish women, the Squamish people’s perception of familial obligation and reciprocity with the newcomers was severed.

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<sup>25</sup> Barman, from Stanley Park’s Secret The Forgotten Families of Whoi Whoi, Kanaka Ranch and Brockton Point p. 68: 2005.

<sup>26</sup> In 1886, Vancouver grew from a community of 500 people into a large a metropolitan centre with almost 124,000 people.

## Racism and Reserves: Sorting the Christians from the Pagans

Colonel Richard Clement Moody of the Royal Engineers threatened to wipe out the Squamish Indian community by gunfire due to a murder that took place in New Westminster. It was this threat that impelled the missionaries to come to the aid of the Squamish people. There are two different accounts of what happened:

In the catholic version of the story, the priest was invited to *Eslha7an* at the behest of a chief “determined to save his people from annihilation” caused by newcomers’ vices of alcohol and prostitution. More likely, the Squamish accepted Christianity in exchange for the Oblates’ support in resisting the newcomers’ who were increasingly determined to usurp their land and resources”.<sup>27</sup>

To receive protection the Squamish had to “leave their evil ways and become civilized and Christian”.<sup>28</sup>

The sorting of Christians and pagans by the church took precedence over family ties when the reserves were created. Chief Snatt, a church-appointed chief, was the Squamish leader behind the selection and construction of the church at Mission reserve:

Skwatatxwamkin, the uncle of Chief Snatt, was the first recognized chief at *Eslha7an*. His people had originally come down from the Squamish River to Capilano, then after some local difficulty he and a few other families moved to Ustlawn. Because his wife was a spiritual dancer, chief Skwatatxwamkin and spouse were asked by Father Durieu to leave Ustlan and returned to Capilano. Snatt, the chief’s nephew, was then chosen by Durieu to replace his uncle as chief.<sup>29</sup>

The Squamish people who did not convert to Catholicism were banned from Mission Reserve and moved to the village of *Xwmech’stn*.

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<sup>27</sup> Barman, from Stanley Park’s Secret The Forgotten Families of Whoi Whoi, Kanaka Ranch and Brockton Point p. 35: 2005.

<sup>28</sup> Paull, from untitled article Oblate Missions (Dec. 1950 – March 1951), 7-10. Oblate Archives, Vancouver Box 47 – “St. Paul’s Church” file 4 -history

<sup>29</sup> Lascelles, from Mission on the Inlet p.9: 1984.

Oral narratives portray a much more divided and painful account. In contemporary times, we are reminded by Sxwaliya, Aunt Sally's song, known today as *Greeting of the Day*. This song was initially a *seyuwen slulum*, a person's spirit song. She began to sing this song within earshot of the church. The priest came from the church down to the house she was visiting and banned her from the *Eslha7an* reserve. In the morning, the people of the reserve went down to the beach to watch her leave by canoe. She sang this song one more time before leaving her extended family standing on the shoreline.

### **Language Decline**

In some cases of genocide or natural disaster, language decline is immediate. For the Squamish, the demise of the Squamish language use was gradual. The main culprit was the residential school system. The mandatory residential school experience began in the early 1900s, and housed Squamish children in institutions like Saint Paul's in North Vancouver and Coqualeetza, initially a tuberculosis hospital in Sardis. Residential schools for the Squamish extended into the late 1960s, until they were allowed to attend public school. As is well known, residential schools disrupted the emotional and cognitive development of the children.

The extended family unit was the traditional social unit. Economics, reserves, and the influx of outsiders to the Skwxwú7mesh territory weakened this relationship. Residential schools severed family ties, as parents, grandparents, and extended family were no longer the primary caregivers to their children. Sibling groups were not encouraged in residential schools, and brothers and sisters were often intentionally sent to

different schools. It was this *intentional* break-up of the family, along with the banning of the mother tongue, that was the primary agent of language decline.

The majority of the co-participants in the study experience severed family ties and language loss or interruption due to the residential school experience. Each co-participant was exposed to the language for different amounts of time, even if they were similar in age. One co-participant of the study, Margaret Locke, learned the language from her grandfather. Her mother had also gone boarding school and therefore spoke English to her as a child. Margaret also heard her grandfather speak Chinook to the priest, a trade language that is no longer spoken.

The eldest co-participant, whom I interviewed at 94 years of age, Kwitelut, had the following to say about the negative impact of residential school. "That was our mistake because when we went to that school. Saint Paul's school, we were forbidden to speak our language. We couldn't, otherwise we got punished. So a lot of the students, they lost our language, they forgot".

Late Frank Miranda relayed his first experience of attending Saint Paul's residential school:

We were told not to speak Squamish. So I met a friend, George Harry from Squamish the first time I went to school I seen him and I started talking Squamish to him. I said "What, What's the matter? I said what?" He says we're not supposed to speak Squamish. "What for," I says, that's our language", I said. We'll get punished, so I had to shut up. Cause you couldn't speak Squamish in the school. Cause, he says, we'll get punished if they hear you talking Squamish. Oh gee, I says. But, I don't know, my father never said nothing about it. Didn't do nothing. I guess that's the only school we could go to.

His resilience was strong. “When I got out of school I’d talk to them like anybody else.” He also continued to speak Squamish to his father, Louis Miranda, his mother, Jessie Miranda and all of the other elders in the community.

The re-emergent speakers of the Squamish language heard and spoke Squamish as children, but residential school took away their parents wish to speak to them in Squamish so they wouldn’t face the same punishment they did. In the interviews with them, most of the focus was on their childhood experiences with their grandparents and other elders of the community. They also spoke about the kind old people around them and the values instilled in them, as I discuss in CHAPTER FOUR.

Vanessa Campbell, a student of Uncle Louis, describes her memories of community life and the decline of Squamish language within her childhood, in the early to mid 1950s:

When I heard the language it was my grandmother talking to my aunt who lived in the same house, and my uncle who worked in logging camps and would come home and my grandmother spoke to them in Squamish. Um, quite a lot but always when they didn’t want us to understand what they were talking about. And every time we went to visit, any of the elders there were a lot of elders still alive at that time, and my grandmother, like a lot of the different ladies would take turns, or they’d go and visit them and bring them food they prepared or help them do things at home because these people they were probably, this was in the 1950s and early sixties. They were already say eighty years old or older, and people would make a point to always go and visit them. We all had wood stoves and oil stoves and just everybody made sure they were okay. When we went to visit them, they only spoke in Squamish. And um, I visited with them with my grandmother a lot and I don’t know if it was because I wanted to or just because one of us or more than one of us always went with her, and we just sat in the warm kitchen and had tea and listened to them talk.

Vanessa didn’t just hear language used in conversational settings, but in political venues as well:



I guess this would probably be in the, maybe early sixties, a few times, maybe two or three times - I went to our Council Hall which was up on what was called Third Street and Forbes. And I'd go into the Council Hall with my grandmother and there would be a meeting and the people from the Chief and Council would be sitting on the stage and there would always be a Indian Affairs agent, he was always at the meetings, but in the meetings the people who always spoke first were Squamish language speakers. So the chiefs would talk, and um one of the younger men who were on Council like Tim Moody who was their secretary or Uncle Louis (sic) chief for the record and the speakers would stand and talk about the issues and they always spoke in Squamish. Interpreters again would relate what was being said in English and um, later on it got to be that a lot of the older people weren't going to as many of the meetings and there was more English being spoken in these business meetings, they're called the general meetings, even at that time the respect for the language and the freedom to express concerns was always in the language.

As the speakers passed away, the business of the day wasn't communicated bilingually, but in the English language. Leanne Hinton describes this as involuntary language shift. "Even when a family continues to use a threatened language in the home, the outside environment may be so steeped in the majority language that the child unconsciously shifts languages around school age and no longer speaks the minority language even at home."<sup>30</sup> This is the nature of domination. Even though the demise of the Squamish language was assisted by the residential school process, the economic, political, and social environment of English was so pervasive that Squamish was rarely spoken daily, except by the elders who only spoke Squamish and by their children who were still able to communicate with them.

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<sup>30</sup> Hinton, from The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice p.4: 2001

## **Part II. The Contemporary Placement of the Squamish**

The amalgamation of the Squamish in 1923 was the major political determiner for the rebuilding of the Squamish Nation. The Squamish have always recognized themselves as one people, but the Provincial government, coupled with developers, treated each extended family residing on each reserve as small bands. Parcels of land were expropriated and sold to the interests of the Province. The eating away of lands and dislocation of families led to the signing of Amalgamation on July 23, 1923. The sixteen hereditary chiefs of each village signed the "Prayer of Amalgamation" to ensure better dealings with the Provincial and Federal governments and equality for all of the Squamish people.

### **Rebuilding: Social Issues of the Squamish**

At present, the total population of the Squamish Nation is 3,292 members, with a total of 1941 members living on reserve. The Squamish have maintained ownership of 0.4230% of the entire traditional territory. There are a total of 23 reserves that vary in size and development potential.

To live on these lands, one has to wait. Only fifteen new homes are built each year for membership. As of 2002, there were 900 Squamish members on the housing list, with one major residential lot remaining in the Lower Mainland capable of holding 310 houses. The lack of power and control over the traditional land base has contributed to the social problems of the Squamish Nation.

The last employment study of the nation was conducted in 1989. At that time, the total membership population registered was at 2050. Employment rates were low: 44%

for the on-reserve population, and 50% for the off-reserve members. In 1989, 48% percent of the population lived on-reserve. Almost the entire Squamish population, 96%, participated in this survey. No statistics have been conducted since this time. However, as of 2005, the employment rate for off-reserve Aboriginal people living in British Columbia was still incredibly low, at 57.2%.<sup>31</sup>

Educationally, we are faring slightly better. High school graduation rates are slowly improving, but are nowhere near keeping up with our non-Native counterparts. According to the 2001-2002 statistics for the North Vancouver School district (which services 76% of the Squamish K-12 population in BC) the graduation rate was 35% while the non-Aboriginal population has stabilized at 81%.<sup>32, 33</sup>

In spite of this, there are a number of Squamish people who have received their Provincial General Equivalence Degree or Dogwood Diploma through adult education or continuing education programs – this is not accounted for in the statistics. From the period of 2000-2002, there were a total of 43 Squamish Nation members who had graduated with diplomas in this way.<sup>34</sup> The 2002 data, compiled by Dr. Shirley McBride, showed that there were 56 nation members enrolled in continuing education programs.<sup>35</sup>

The Squamish Nation's post-secondary rates fare much better. In 1986 there were only 23 members enrolled in post secondary education; by 2000 this number had jumped

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<sup>31</sup> Statistics Canada, from "Aboriginal peoples living off-reserve in Western Canada". p. 6:2005.

<sup>32</sup> British Columbia Ministry of Education, from "Aboriginal Report – How are we Doing 2004/2005 SD 44 North Vancouver". p.6:2005.

<sup>33</sup> McBride, from "Report the Squamish Nation Education Long term Plan to Address Squamish Learner Special Needs Final Report 2003. The Squamish population is 60% of the total Aboriginal population for that district.

<sup>34</sup> Compiled from Squamish Nation Education Department Records.

<sup>35</sup> McBride, from "Report the Squamish Nation Education Long term Plan to Address Squamish Learner Special Needs Final Report p. 85: 2003.

to 136. However, these figures do not include the trades program, where many additional Squamish nation members are enrolled.

### **Economic Growth**

The Squamish Nation has been resourceful, and has demonstrated successful business planning to generate its revenue. The Department of Indian Affairs contributes approximately 25 cents for each dollar of own source revenue for the Squamish.<sup>36</sup> The main source of revenue is derived from 70 leases, such as the Park Royal Shopping Centre, and from the ownership of businesses, such as the Mosquito Creek Marina. Squamish Nation has primarily obtained income as landlords. They are now looking into other avenues of income.

Squamish Nation is examining the entrance of major partnerships such as the Seymour Development. This proposal includes the building of a major retail/entertainment centre. The encroachment of the cities onto the traditional land-base has, ironically, created the possibility of generating economic revenue. Squamish Nation recognizes this irony and does not shy away from companies, such as the forestry giant Interfor. In December 2005, Squamish Nation purchased a tree licence from them for \$6.5 million to gain timber-harvesting rights, much to the dismay of environmentalists. This move assures some revenue and secures control of sustainable management of the forests. One member of Squamish band council stated that, “we will be looking 100 years down the road in planning”.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Personal Communication with Council member (wishes to remain anonymous).

<sup>37</sup> Personal communication 2006.

Within these relationships, Squamish Nation has always strongly asserted Aboriginal title over land:

The Squamish Nation has existed and prospered within our traditional territory since time immemorial. We are Coast Salish people. Our language is the Squamish language. Our society is, and always has been, organized and sophisticated, with complex laws and rules governing all forms of social relations, economic rights and relations with other First Nations. We have never ceded or surrendered title to our lands, rights to our resources, or the power to make decisions within our territory.<sup>38</sup>

There already have been some political successes. After a long court battle, a portion of the Kitsilano Indian Reserve was reclaimed in 2005, originally expropriated by the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1886 and in 1902. The BC Rail Agreement, another settlement, allows for co-management, land transfer, and opportunities for the Squamish to purchase land back.

The Squamish Nation was praised by Greenpeace for the *Xaay temixw* plan published in 2000. This comprehensive plan outlines land use and management in the wilderness areas of the Squamish traditional territory. Certain areas need to be protected, like the remaining old-growth forest in the territory, or animal habitat. The Squamish Nation realizes that development will occur in their traditional territory, regardless of their interest, and remain seated at the table with government and corporations securing a role in decision making.

Although social issues need to be addressed, the Squamish Nation is planning for the future. Economic growth and political will has been a major determiner in the visioning to preserve and continue using the traditional lands for hunting, gathering, fishing, and spiritual uses.

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<sup>38</sup> The Squamish Nation Assertion of Aboriginal Title as submitted to the British Columbia Treaty Commission. p. 1.

### **Part III. The Revitalization of Squamish**

Culturally, the Squamish people have remained steadfast, holding onto the traditional teachings. After years of being banned by law, the longhouse culture resurfaced in the 1960s. Furthermore, traditional sports such as Lacrosse and the canoe racing have endured, community gatherings and celebrations have increased, and the ocean-going canoes have been revived. Despite endurance and growth, the revitalization of Squamish cannot fully take place without the revitalization of the language – this encompasses the heart, mind, and spirit.

The reclamation of the Squamish language began in the late 1960s, with community classes being offered as a part of cultural enrichment grants in the early 1970s. Squamish Nation has been successful in many revitalization strategies of language use, language status, and pride within the community. Five major implementations of Squamish language revitalization are outlined in this section: a) documentation of language, b) language status-building, c) school and community programming, d) preparation for a Squamish language immersion school, and e) the Elders' Language Advisory Group – *Nexwniw'n ta a Imats* – Teachings for your Grandchildren.

## Language Documentation

The language was first documented by Franz Boas in the mid-1880s. He was followed by Charles Hill-Tout in the late 1890s. Homer Barnett studied Squamish in the late 1930s. Aert Kuipers was in the community in the 1950s and 1960s. Finally, the anthropologist Randy Bouchard recorded the elders in the 1970s. Initially, the language was studied for research, but by the late 1960s it became a part of Cultural Enrichments grants.

Louis Miranda began working with Randy Bouchard circa 1968 with the BC Native Language Project. This was a cross comparison study aimed at recording conversational First Nations languages, legends, interviews, and history. The Squamish Language orthography was developed by Bouchard based on Kuipers' own "phonemic inventory". Due to the efforts of Louis Miranda, this was the start of the curriculum materials for community and schools.<sup>39</sup>

The 1990s marked a different recording era with the beginnings of the Skwxwú7mesh Language Dictionary Project, with a Squamish linguist who had recently received his Master's of Arts in Linguistics, Peter Jacobs. This enhanced further collaborative research efforts beginning in 1995 between the UBC Linguistics Department and the Squamish Nation Education Department. The benefits for the Squamish Nation included providing more researchers to document and record the remaining speakers, and assisting in the development of a standardized grammar for the language program.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Language Curriculum has been developed by numerous people since this time.

<sup>40</sup> Information from the Squamish Language team's presentation, "Ta na wa nwxwniw'n ta a Imats" at the Stabilizing Indigenous Language Symposium in Victoria, BC 2005

All language research work with the Squamish Nation Department of Education has been recorded since 1993, and all the recordings were digitized in 2002 ensuring quality and security for future generations.

### **Language Status Building**

Although the number of Squamish language speakers' numbers has been declining over the past twenty years, the Squamish language speakers and supporters have made major headway in language programming and status. Many of these points are covered in other sections of this chapter. There are two points I want to highlight here: the official language status of the Squamish language and two surveys that demonstrate the importance of the language to the community.

In 1990, the Squamish language became the official language of the Squamish Nation through the Squamish Nation Chief and Council resolution:

Whereas the Skwxwú7mesh Uxwumixw is a distinct First Nation with a unique language and culture, and

Whereas the Squamish Language has been our first language from the beginning of time, and

Whereas the Squamish people have declared our intention to preserve, protect and enhance our language,

Therefore it be resolved that the Squamish Language be accorded full protection and enhancement as an official language of the Squamish Nation.

The fact that the Squamish council, our government, has declared Squamish an official language of the Squamish Nation ensures continued program funding by the Squamish Nation and provides a measure for language revitalization activities.



The first language survey was conducted in 1975 by Vanessa Campbell. She went from house to house to determine if members wanted the Squamish language taught in the public schools. Although all data was lost in a fire, only two households had negative responses to the language being taught in the public school system.<sup>41</sup>

In 2005, on behalf of the Squamish Nation Department of Education, Peter Jacobs and Kirsten Baker-Williams conducted a survey on the community's language use, and gauged community interest in taking adult language classes.

The survey methods used were both interviews and mail-outs to individual homes. There were 176 responses. Approximately 9% of the on and off-reserve Squamish Nation members responded (based on the 2001 census of the Squamish Nation at 3,150). The majority of the respondents (99%) believed that the Squamish language was important, with 86% of those were interested in taking adult courses. There was a high response of off-reserve members living throughout British Columbia and the United States who still felt that language was important, despite the fact they no longer live in the community.

Both of these surveys conducted 30 years apart indicate that the community's view of the importance of speaking the Squamish language has not changed, and is important to the Squamish people.

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<sup>41</sup> Vanessa Campbell 2006, Personal Communication.

## School and Community Programming

The first Squamish language program was given at Saint Thomas Aquinas in 1972, and was taught by Louis Miranda. Louis Miranda began teaching at 82 years of age with Vanessa Campbell as his co-teacher. Vanessa summarizes the beginning of this experience:

So, we started going into the school and I think the first year we had something like maybe five or six students. And it turned out, well, the school was built where our residential school was. So the school's purpose when it started was not only for the Catholic education, but for the Native children, and a lot of our young people went there. And there were other Native people from around the Southern coast, but as time went on the students stopped going to the Catholic high school. By offering the language at the school they were also drawing in more young people from our own community which suited their purposes because they were supposed to target our community, but they were losing that draw, and the language helped to get it back.

Ironically, the site of this school was built on top of the residential school that contributed to the erosion of the Squamish language. This was the first place it was taught again to the children. The school was the venue provided for language classes, but all costs of teaching and materials have always been incurred by the Squamish Nation. This included public schools as well.<sup>42</sup>

By 1984, as a result of the community's attitude demonstrated in the survey, the Squamish language was taught in eight educational settings – nursery school, daycare, elementary school, and high school. More Squamish language teachers, both elders and students, entered the classroom at this point. The Squamish language is currently being taught in *Xwmelch'stn' Estimiaw'txw*, the Littlest Ones School, four public elementary

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<sup>42</sup> The language is still being taught at one nursery school, five public schools, and one high school.

schools, and one high school. Squamish language classes in educational institutions have reached hundreds of the Squamish members."

Although the language has reached a large portion of the Squamish Nation, and public institutions provide a site for the language to be taught, the schools do not contribute to salary, curriculum or the material expenses of running the program. Further, no fluent speakers of the language have been produced this way. In order to jumpstart the revitalization efforts, the Squamish Nation Department of Education has turned towards the development of a Squamish Language Immersion school.

### **Squamish Language Immersion School**

The Squamish Nation Department of Education is in the development process of the Squamish Language Immersion School. *Xwmelech'stn' Estimiaw'txw*, Capilano Littlest One's school, opened in 2002. Currently there are three classrooms that service three and four-year old students. Kindergarten is being implemented in the fall of 2006.

Although the school is open and runs early childhood programs in English, human resource capacity needs to be developed for Squamish Language immersion. The certified teachers that are Squamish either need to be trained in the Squamish language or the Squamish language teachers need to be certified.

The Squamish Nation Department of Education has started developing human capacity. Squamish language courses were developed by the Squamish Nation Education Department and articulated through the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology located in Merritt in 2005. The first Squamish Language 100 pilot course ran in June of 2006, and the course is scheduled to be offered to the general Squamish membership later this year.

Despite the fact that the Squamish language courses have been developed, the Squamish Nation Department of Education is still in the process of securing partnerships with a post-secondary institution for the Developmental Standard Teaching Certificate. A University needs to back the specialized program that offers courses to meet the content needs of the Squamish Nation community while allowing transferability options to other Universities. The Squamish Nation has entered discussions with faculty at Simon Fraser University and the University of Victoria.

### **Elders' Language Advisory Group – *Nexwniw'n ta a Imats* – Teachings for your Grandchildren**

The Elder's language advisory group was first known as the "God Squad", a group of elders that got together as a prayer group. At the encouragement of Louis Miranda, they used the language in prayer and song. The remaining members of this group were approached to be advisors on the Squamish Language Dictionary Project and other language projects. Many Squamish language elders have joined this group since its inception. At the time of writing this thesis, all Squamish Language elders who are in good health and reside in the communities of North Vancouver and in Squamish are an active part of this group.

They are the Squamish Language Authority. They are the "teachers of the teachers", as the language team of the Department of Education likes to say. Any of the curriculum or resource material for the classroom is vetted through this group. They are the authorities for the Squamish Nation's collaborations with outside organizations and institutions.

Vanessa Campbell has identified three main purposes for the *Nexwniw'n ta a*

*Imats*:

<i>Nichimstway</i> :	talking to each other
<i>Chenchensway</i> :	supporting each other (this includes curriculum development)
<i>Ts'itsaptway</i> :	working with each other (this incorporates the vast knowledge and experience that everyone brings to the group)

In a political sense, the Elders' Language Advisory group re-affirms the continuity of the Squamish Nation's working relationships inside and outside of the communities and secures of the *Skwxwú7mesh Uxwumixw* (Squamish Nation) mission statement:<sup>43</sup>

The *Skwxwú7mesh Uxwumixw* will protect the amalgamation and enhance the *Uxwumixw* cultural values and traditions through respect, equality, and harmony for all.

Language revitalization is political and involves the support of the community. Most importantly, the revitalization effort needs a group of willing language learners and involves the knowledge and efforts of the Squamish elders who are willing to contribute to the Squamish language revitalization vision. It is these key people that will bring revitalization to life.

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<sup>43</sup> Information from the Squamish Language team's presentation, "Ta na wa newxwniw'n ta a Imats" at the Stabilizing Indigenous Language Symposium in Victoria, BC 2005.

## **Summary**

Colonization, encroachment on the land, and massive urban spread have impacted Squamish society. The history of colonization brought disorder to the Squamish traditional way of life through disease, dislocation from traditional lands, and disruption of tradition life. The relationship with the newcomers was not initially hostile, although the “land question” made it so.

The Squamish have always remained open to the possibility of partnerships with corporations and government to secure economic growth. Despite this, the Squamish have always been politically grounded and have never ceded Aboriginal title.

The transition from colonial life to modern life has affected Squamish Language use. The Squamish have been proactively promoting the Squamish language through several facets, but now must find more ways to utilize the language and create intergenerational transmission in order to revitalize the language. In order to begin this process we must investigate other communities’ attempts at language revitalization.

### **CHAPTER THREE: REVITALIZING LANGUAGES: STRATEGIES IN SELECTED INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES**

In this chapter, I briefly outline the stages of language status, making reference to Bauman and Fishman. I review different language revitalization interventions in selected Indigenous contexts in order to provide background on the possibilities available for language revitalization initiatives. A feature common to many of these communities is that they utilize “language nests” and immersion schools. The communities whose revitalization initiatives I outline are the Maori, the Hawaiians, and the Master-apprenticeship model of California. Each of these communities has reversed language shift as measured by Fishman’s stages of language status.

The linguist Michel Krauss estimates that, out of the 6,000 languages in the world, more than half of these will be dormant languages by century’s end, succumbing to the dominant tongue in each community.

Although the situation looks bleak, there are many successful language revitalization projects within the world that have altered this course of action. Where there are willing people there is hope.

**Question:** Why revitalize a minority language?

**Answer:** The language is valued by the community members.

During my years of language learning, research, and commitment to the language revitalization process, I have observed that the communities which have successfully

reversed language shift (speaking the Indigenous language, rather than the dominant language) “just do it”.<sup>44</sup>

The steps to a successful language program as advised by Darryl Kipp in *Encouragement, Guidance, Insights, and Lessons Learned for Native Language Activists Developing Their Own Tribal Language Programs* are as follows:

- 1) never ask permission; never beg to save the language. Never;
- 2) never debate the issues. Never;
- 3) be very action oriented – just act;
- 4) show, don’t tell;
- 5) use your language as your curriculum – botany, geography, political science, philosophy, history are all embedded in the language.<sup>45</sup>

These points pack a punch in terms of language revitalization “know-how”; however, I find it is important to illuminate some of the pillars that support the process of language revitalization. I have included some quotes that have personally moved me in my own language revitalization work. The following quotes show the types of struggles encountered during language revitalization attempts; they also demonstrate *what is lost* when a language dies.

- **Land forms the basis of Indigenous languages**

Language was given to us by the land we live within...My own father told me that it was the land that changed to language because there is special knowledge in each different place. All my elders say that it is land that holds all knowledge of life and death and is a constant teacher. It is said in Okanagan that the land constantly speaks. It is constantly communicating. Not to

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<sup>44</sup> Kaunona Kaunoe. A language revitalization activist from Hawaii, has been notoriously saying this to other Indigenous groups beginning their language revitalization process for years. (Personal Communication)

<sup>45</sup> Kipp, from in *Encouragement, Guidance, Insights, and Lessons Learned for Native Language Activists Developing Their Own Tribal Language Programs* p.1: 2000.



learn its language is to die. We survived and thrived by listening intently to its teachings -- to its language -- and then inventing human words to retell its stories to our succeeding generations. It is the land that speaks N'silxcn through the generations of our ancestors to us.<sup>46</sup>

- **Ways of knowing stem from Indigenous Languages**

In the beginning when the Mi'kmaq people awoke naked and lost, we asked our Creator how we should live. Our creator taught us about the constellations and the stars, how to make our way in the darkest of nights, and about the Milky Way which was the path of our spirits into the other world. Our Creator taught us all that was wise and good and then gave us a language, a language in which we might be able to pass on this knowledge to our children so that they could survive and flourish.<sup>47</sup>

- **World view is inherent in Indigenous languages**

Does it confuse you when I refer to animals as people? In my language, this is not confusing. You see, we consider both animals and people to be living beings. In fact, when my people see a creature in the distance, the thing they say is: Awiiyak (Someone is there). It is not that my people fail to distinguish animals from people. Rather, they address them with equal respect. Once they are near and identify the creatures' shadows, then they use their particular name.<sup>48</sup>

- **Identity of the people is constructed in Language**

In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was made flesh. It was so in the beginning, and it is so today. The Language, the Word, carries within it the history, the culture, the traditions, the very life of a people, the flesh. Language is people. We cannot even conceive of a people without a language, or a language without a people, or a language without a people. The two are one and the same. To know one is to know the other. To Love one is to love the other<sup>49</sup>.

- **Aesthetics of Language**

I think the Navajo language is important. When you speak it, it creates a different reality. Language lets us seize the earth as a living vital force. We understand more. English is not that

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<sup>46</sup> Armstrong, from "Land Speaking" *Speaking for the Generations* p. 175-176.

<sup>47</sup> Battiste, from *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage* p 10

<sup>48</sup> McKay, From *Royal Commission on Aboriginal People*, Vol 4, Chapter 3: 1992.

<sup>49</sup> Ulibarri, from *New Mexico Public Educational Department: Heritage Language Revitalization. Prologue:2003.*

passionate and beautiful. In our prayers, it (the Navajo language) directs us when we use it.<sup>50</sup>

- **Language is a Human Right**

We have maintained our Freedom, our Languages, and our Traditions from time immemorial. We continue to exercise the rights to fulfill the responsibilities and obligations given to us by the Creator for the land upon which we were placed. The Creator has given us the right to govern ourselves and the right to self-determination. The rights and responsibilities given to us by the creator cannot be altered or taken away by another Nation.<sup>51</sup>

Language revitalization is about more than decolonization (see CHAPTER ONE). Its sole purpose is not to undo, or reverse the damage of colonization; rather, the purpose of language revitalization is to revive the core teachings and world view of who “we are” as Indigenous peoples. And in turn, the language renews itself and strengthens the heart of the people challenging and restructuring the world it is spoken in.

### **Bringing a Language Back: One Step at a Time**

The first tool for measuring language status within the First Nations political landscape in Canada was given in Bauman’s paper, *A Guide to Issues in Indian Language Retention* in 1980<sup>52</sup>:

- **Flourishing Languages** –Intergenerational language transmission still occurs; the language is supported in all parts of community and home life, schooling, and communications
- **Enduring Languages** – There are speakers in all generations; however the communities are becoming bilingual
- **Declining Languages** – Perhaps half of the adult population still speak the language, but only a portion of youth and children speak the language, most communicate in the dominant language

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<sup>50</sup> Makcin Benally 1995.

<sup>51</sup> Assembly of First Nations Charter, 1982.

<sup>52</sup> Information adapted from The Report of the Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures p 34: June 2005.

- **Critical languages** – Only a handful speakers remain, most elderly, and no new speakers are being raised through intergenerational transmission
- **Extinct or Sleeping Languages** – languages have no remaining speakers who learn the language in natural intergenerational transmission

By this scale, most languages in British Columbia are in a critical state; the Squamish language is no exception. Both the Maori and the Hawaiian people have advanced from critical to declining/enduring languages, reversing language shift. The Californian languages are primarily categorized as sleeping languages because many of the languages have either no speakers or else very few speakers left. They have not given up, and instead have constructed language revitalization programs through a linguistic approach and created teams of Master-apprentices.

The model that Canadian First Nations communities follow in judging the health of a language aligns with the methods described by Joshua Fishman in 1991 (Table 3.1). The stages of language status also include steps to reverse language shift for each stage. For example, at the time of writing this thesis, and based on the evidence to date, I would place the Squamish Language at stage eight, as there are only ten known Squamish speakers left. Despite this, the Squamish Nation Education Department is working proactively and is making great strides towards language revitalization through immersion school strategies.

Table 3.1 is used as a tool to determine the status of a language accompanied with interventions to strengthen languages that are no longer flourishing. It helps to determine the health of a language from near death at stage eight describing evidence of language decline up to stage one, where the language is still widely used by the majority of the population.

**Table 3.1 Reversing Language Shift**

<b>Status of Language</b>	<b>Reversing Language Shift</b>
<b>Stage 8:</b> A few elders speak the language. The speakers are few and scattered.	Document, document, document. Use the skills of linguists. Incorporate legends and teaching grammars for adult pedagogy.
<b>Stage 7:</b> Only adults beyond child-bearing age speak the language	Mobilize elders. Follow the Master-Apprenticeship model based on the work in California.
<b>Stage 6:</b> Some intergenerational use of the language	Encourage language at home and promote language use in public. Start classes and support groups for parents.
<b>Stage 5:</b> Language is still very much alive in the community.	Begin offering places for language in the formal education system, such as night or weekend classes.
<b>Stage 4:</b> The minority language is required in the school system	Create immersion schools in the early and primary years with bilingual programming in the later years.
<b>Stage 3:</b> Language is used in less specialized Work forces or places of business to Interact with co-workers	Integrate language into the workplace.
<b>Stage 2:</b> Language is used by the local Government and by the mass media in the minority community	For First Nations these are the band and tribal offices. Create bi-lingual positions for those in contact with speakers.
<b>Stage 1:</b> Some language Is used by higher levels of Government and in higher education It is used in the business sector Language is used in the mass and Specialized media	Create an official language authority, have language offered in places of higher education like colleges and universities.

The fact that Squamish Language is in stage 8 of Fishman's language regression requires a specific response – language documentation. However, the Squamish strategy is more eclectic and it involves multiple sites of language struggle for revitalization – this approach is very similar to what the Maori have attempted to do in New Zealand.

### **Maori, the First to Pick up the Torch**

The Maori are role models for any Indigenous communities attempting to revitalize their languages, as they have reversed language shift. By Fishman's scale, in 1978 the Maori were at stage six, with only 20% of mostly elderly Maori fluent in their mother tongue.<sup>53</sup> The most recent data from the 2001 National Maori Language Survey states that 25% of the population now speak Maori. The Maori have used different strategies to move closer to the goal of stabilizing the language to reverse language shift.<sup>54</sup>

The rise of language shift began at the grassroots level, as all successful language revitalization attempts must. Some of the key successes include the following: in 1987 the Maori Language became an official language of New Zealand, coinciding with the establishment of the Maori Language Commission of New Zealand; the creation of *Te Kohanga Reo* language nests in 1982; the development of *Kura Kaupapa Maori* schools; the creation of *Whare Kura* secondary immersion schools and *Whare Waananga* (Maori

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<sup>53</sup> Maori Language Commission website

<sup>54</sup> According to the Survey, the highly fluent speakers were still beyond the child-bearing years -age 45 and older. However at the time of the survey 54% of all speakers were between the ages of 16 – 34, the first of the batch of the *Kura Kaupapa* immersion students. would be in this category. Half of this 16-34 year-old group reported speaking Maori before six years of age. 86% percent of the Maori, many of them immersion students, were recorded as the highly fluent speakers.

tertiary institutions); and finally, in the late 1980s, the Maori language was incorporated into radio and television programming.

The major factor reversing language shift began in 1981 at the *Hui*<sup>55</sup> *Whakatauirā*, at the inception of the *Te Kohanga Reo*. The primary concept was for the elders and older generations to “feed” the language and knowledge to their grandchildren and children. The idea of elders as teachers in the classroom did not work. The developmental needs and amount of energy required was too overwhelming for the elders.<sup>56</sup> Younger adults with child care or teaching qualifications, who also embraced the philosophies of the *kaupapa*<sup>57</sup> and *whanau*,<sup>58</sup> entered the classrooms.

The *whanau* is traditionally based on kinship ties; however, the binding relationship of the *Te Kohanga Reo* allows the guidelines of the *kaupapa*. The *kaupapa* is based on “the involvement and speaking Maori...all the time and everywhere”.<sup>59</sup> The principles behind language nests include:<sup>60</sup>

- The revitalization of *Te Kohanga Reo*, (the Maori Language)
- The revitalization of the *whanau*, (extended family)
- The revitalization of the concept of *Maori mana motuake* (autonomy)

One of the critical principles of the Maori language nests is that they aren't *just* preschools for the parents to send their children. Rather the parents are responsible to the *whanau*, to the collective, not just to their children. This ideally this includes the parents

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<sup>55</sup> Definition: Meeting.

<sup>56</sup> King, from *Te Kohanga Reo The Green Book in Language Revitalization* p. 124: 2001. Personal communication with Graham Smith 2006.

<sup>57</sup> Definition: *Philosophy*.

<sup>58</sup> Definition: *Extended family or large group who practice extended values and principles*.

<sup>59</sup> King from *Te Kohanga Reo The Green Book in Language Revitalization* p. 125: 2001.

<sup>60</sup> Mead from *Nga Aho Te Kakahu Matauranga: the Multiple Layers of Struggle by Maori in Education*. Thesis p. 76 1996.

taking language classes themselves in order to support their children's language development in the home as well as in the school.

Notwithstanding the above, Graham Smith has warned the following:

The *Te Kohanga Reo* and various efforts have been tremendously successful up to a point – at the moment in 2004 we have only arrested the decline of the language – there is still much to do to get the language to regenerate and rise and grow. Furthermore, *Te Kohanga Reo* – is just one good idea – it has been an excellent intervention, but again we can't stop trying to generate more creative ways to enhance the language.<sup>61</sup>

The success of the language nests, community responsibility, and the *Maori mana motuake* (autonomy) paved the way to the *Kura Kaupapa Maori* primary schools. Like the First Nations in Canada, the graduation rates of Maori children in the public school system were embarrassingly low. The failure of the education system, coupled with the need for Maori language and pedagogy in the schools, set in motion a sweeping educational movement.

The *Kura Kaupapa Maori* school movement was fuelled by the demand of Maori parents and educators for a nation-wide option for separate schooling. This schooling was based on the philosophies and language immersion stemming from *Te Kohanga Reo*. One 'pilot' school in 1985 increased to 54 *Kura Kaupapa Maori* schools by 1997.<sup>62</sup>

The act of educational decolonization of the Maori involved collective resistance. Transformation can be a struggle, and down-right ugly, but transformation always has purpose and a catalyst. *Kaupapa*, the *involvement and speaking Maori all the time and everywhere*, combined with the dissatisfaction with the substandard education system, created an educational avalanche.

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<sup>61</sup> Graham Smith, New Zealand Association for Research in Education Conference Presentation 2004.

<sup>62</sup> Maori Language Commission.

This is what *Kaupapa Maori* strategies have achieved:

- 1) It has changed state structures and state schooling,
- 2) It has re-committed many formerly disenchanted Maori parents to again taking schooling and education seriously,
- 3) It has given hope and developed enthusiasm toward language revitalisation and recovery,
- 4) It has developed a new group of young Maori language speakers,
- 5) It has politicised Maori parents to structural impediments which need to be dealt with in order to overthrow educational crises,
- 6) It has influenced curriculum and pedagogy.<sup>63</sup>

The positive educational statistics and community involvement led to more growth. The opening of *Whare Kura* (immersion secondary schools), and *Whare Waananga* (Maori tertiary institutions) followed. Enrolment in the tertiary institutions rose from 3.6% of the total student body in 1986 to 9.6 % in 1993.<sup>64</sup>

The Maori language has ceased to decline, and the efforts to revitalize are seen as a model that other Indigenous peoples attempt to follow in their own struggles towards language revitalization. Unfortunately, in comparison with the Maori, the Squamish Nation has fewer members to do the work. The lessons that can be taken from this example are as follows: that language revitalization is possible; the highly successful language nests, the initial key to language revitalization programming, are modelled on philosophies that are inherent to the Maori culture; and the language revitalization movement snowballed into educational, political, cultural, and social transformation. However there are still other ideas still to be discovered.

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<sup>63</sup> Smith, from *The Development of Kaupapa Maori: Theory and Praxis*. 59: 1997.

<sup>64</sup> Fettes, from *The Nature and Extent of Maori Control Over Education* 17: 1995.



## **Hawaiian Renaissance and the Immersion Schools**

Education has been used as an agency used to stabilize or reverse language shift. The Hawaiians began their educational resistance modelled on the Maori's beginnings of language revitalization. Although these models are similar, the use of the Hawaiian language is unique on each island and different struggles arise within each island.

The Hawaiian language is also an endangered language, with the majority of the speakers being elderly. In the early 1980s, there were an estimated 2,000 native speakers of Hawaiian, most over the age of 70. There were, however, 50 children under the age of 18 who spoke Hawaiian fluently.<sup>65</sup> Hawaii was unique in the sense that at this time Ni'ihau is a privately-owned island where the Hawaiian language is used in the conversation by the families. Although the language is still endangered, there are children who have been raised outside of the Ni'ihau island with Hawaiian as their first language in the home and in the schools.

The Hawaiian immersion process stems from the political beginnings during the "Hawaiian Renaissance" of the 1970s and 1980s. This was a period of the time when there was renewed interest in Hawaiian language and culture. A small number of educators immersed themselves in the Hawaiian language by speaking with the elders.

In 1983 this small group of educators founded the *Aha Punana Leo*, language nest gathering (named in recognition of the recent work of the Maori). This was the beginning of the reestablishment of the Hawaiian language schools that had been closed 90 years earlier as a result of the "English-only" policies of the United States. The schools operated "illegally" for three years while the group lobbied to remove the

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<sup>65</sup> Aha Punana Leo website: [www.ahapunanaleo.org](http://www.ahapunanaleo.org)

legislative ban on educating in another language than English. In 1986 the schools became "legal". The Kula Kaiapuni elementary immersion schools began with a pilot project in 1987. The schools have since expanded to three model K- 12 schools.

In the summer of 2002, Kauanoë Kamana and Bill Wilson, founders of Aha Punana Leo, and their children were on holidays in the Vancouver area. I had just been hired as the Squamish Language Curriculum Writer for the Department of Education and contacted them earlier that spring inquiring about their immersion programming. While in the area, they visited our community for a couple of days.

At that time, Pila Wilson and Kauanoë Kamana's children were the first to graduate from the Hawaiian immersion schools. Their class performed on par or better than their non-immersion counterparts on standardized testing. Both of their children were either attending or about to attend university. Not only were they educated in Hawaiian, but they were raised in their homes speaking Hawaiian. It was obvious to us that they were raised to know who they are in the world.

The Squamish Nation Education Department, the Squamish speaking elders, and select others went on an educational trip to Hawaii during the following spring in 2003 to examine their immersion models and their curricula as it developed over the past twenty years. Their educational philosophy, *Kuma Honua Maui Ola*, shaped the curriculum and relationships at the *Nawahiokalani 'Opu'u* immersion school in Hilo, Hawaii.

In our travels to the school we were welcomed by the entire school population: staff and students from nursery to grade twelve. We began our day outside of the school by participating in their morning routine of chanting. It was apparent that we were witnessing something valuable. The chants were distinctly "Hawaiian". The boys were

on one side of the doorway and the girls were on the other side. What wasn't apparent to us as "outsiders" is that they order their lines genealogically.<sup>66</sup>

This is a part of the *Mauli*, which translates into English as "culture"; however, it includes their particular world-view as well as the genealogy and relations to the physical world.

A high school student was given the role as an English "translator" for us. A student may take on certain leadership roles, including the role of translator, as they move up the grade levels. They are given the responsibility to formally take the guests through the process of entering the school. They are also responsible for helping the younger students.

These roles of responsibility, a part of the *Mauli*, are geared towards students of all levels as well as to the parents. The parents must commit to mandatory volunteer hours, language training to support the children in the home, as well as paying tuition to the school. This strengthens family commitment to the language, roles, and presence in the schools.

The educational philosophy that we witnessed serve three purposes: it allows the child to learn to importance of their genealogy and relations, it demands responsibility in working and learning together, and it allows for graduated leadership roles.<sup>67</sup>

The school environment was shaped by aspects of the *Mauli* as well. This follows the learning methodology of the proverb, *Ma ka hana ka 'ike*, "in working one learns".<sup>68</sup> Most of the science-based activities occurred outdoors and discussed agriculture, such as

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<sup>66</sup> Kamana and Wilson, from *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice* P161: 2001.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. p. 160.

<sup>68</sup> Yamauchi L. from "The Sociocultural Context of Hawaiian Language Revival and Learning Final Report" p. 20: 2001.

the taro patch. They also taught aquaculture, important to the Hawaiians, by demonstrating the relationship of interdependent sea life in large tanks.

*Kupuna*, “elders”, have been the cornerstone in the immersion school development and curriculum process. Initially they coined new terms for the school.<sup>69</sup> The educators who built this school relied on them for initial language contact and as the cornerstone for building the *Kuma Honua Maui Ola*, educational philosophy.

The Hawaiian language revitalization process is comparable to the Maori in several ways, but has some different elements that are useful to Squamish revitalization.

First of all, the movement began initially with a small group of people. Although the immersion schools are now on a few islands, Kamana Kaunoe stated that each school, for the most part, is “developing independently”<sup>70</sup> from the others. The children from Ni’ihau primarily enter the school system as fluent speakers.

Second, viewing how a school embeds the *Maui* into the school environment and the curriculum was useful to the Squamish to consider in creating its own philosophy and school structure.

Third, the Hawaiians have used the fluent elders in the same way that the Squamish have. There are ways to further advance the immersion cause, such as setting up a process to coin new words.

Although education has been a useful tool in reversing language shift, there are other avenues that must be utilized at the same time. Squamish Nation has very few fluent speakers left. The speakers must be incorporated into the language revitalization movement in as many creative ways as possible. Many of the languages of California

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<sup>69</sup> Kamana and Wilson, from *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice* P168: 2001.

<sup>70</sup> Personal communication 2003.

have very few, if any Indigenous language speakers left. They have employed their own strategy for reversing language shift.

### **California Breath of Life Program**

Many of the Californian languages are considered extinct. Indigenous peoples in California experienced language extinction and language endangerment through widespread massacres, slavery by the Spanish, and dislocation. Today, there are small groups of people who are “waking up” the languages.

The linguist Leann Hinton helped to develop the Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival after being moved into action by witnessing the last speakers of Californian languages come forward during a 1991 Indian language conference.<sup>71</sup>

There are two parts to this organization’s mandate. The first, “The Breath of Life Program”, is for languages with no living speakers. The aim is to begin restoring, or “waking up” a language. Co-participants are trained in elements of research and linguistics. This is exactly what the Squamish language revitalization team is trying to avoid.

The second strategy is the Californian Master-Apprentice Language Learning Program. A fluent speaker is teamed with a member who wants to learn the language. They both receive training and must meet weekly for activity-based immersion sessions for 300 hours a year for a total of three years. The goal is conversational proficiency in this amount of time.

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<sup>71</sup> Tempest, from “A Race to Save Fading Native Languages”. The State San ,Francisco Saturday June 8, 2002 .

In her book, How to Keep Your Language Alive, Hinton outlines the expectations of language comprehension and speaking abilities over the three-year period, the methodologies used, and how to plan for each session. The book is a helpful reference, but running a program in isolation is difficult. The program in California requires that masters and apprenticeships come in twice a year and keep records of their activities. Support is a fundamental part of this process since the program itself is very demanding. Yet the rewards are numerous.

“Learning my language was the hardest and the best thing I ever did in my life”, Nancy Steele stated after learning the Kurak language. L. Frank Mariquez spoke of the power of being able to pray in her language. “The language is still there, just like the land is still there, it may be covered in concrete, you may have to pay to park there, but it is still there”.<sup>72</sup>

The Californian Master-Apprenticeship model is useful because it is usable by those who have few elders. The language is centred on activities, rather than lessons. Re-emergent speakers benefit by using some of these activities to begin speaking the language to each other again in a comfortable setting.

This process, however, is slow. The Squamish Nation cannot afford to train one apprentice every three years. The Squamish Nation is fortunate in that it has second language speakers and members trained in different fields such as education and linguistics.

I am hopeful that with the specialized human resources that exist within the Nation, some of these methodologies can be successfully employed. Peter Jacobs is

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<sup>72</sup> “Language Revitalization in California” Ninth Annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Conference Bozeman Montana, 2002.

receiving his PhD in linguistics and is able to understand applied linguistics as a part of the program that Hinton has developed.

The Squamish-speaking elders of our Nation have indicated that they need alternate venues to begin speaking the language in. Elements of this program have the potential to increase comfort in speaking the language and increase fluency amongst second language speakers.

### **Summary**

In this chapter I have provided various strategies used by selected Indigenous communities which potentially might assist the Squamish Nation in their own language revitalization processes. The key to all of these strategies is that there is a committed group of people who are zealous about their language. Whether these groups are large or small, they also need to collaborate with the elders in the language revitalization process.

In the next chapter I consider those elements which form the foundational components that need to be considered when one considers what is the essence of what we are (as a Squamish Nation) trying to revitalize and preserve within our language struggle.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE STUDY

In this chapter I look at the nuances of Squamish language revitalization and consider what counts as the ‘essence’ of the language. This is done through an interview process with Squamish language elders, second language speakers, and one language learner.

### Introduction to the Study

The two main research questions focused around identity and measures we can take to help revitalize the Squamish Language:

1. Is the Squamish language central to the culture and identity of the Squamish Nation?
2. What do we need to do to revitalize the language?

The first question frames the chapter. This chapter includes the recommendations and strategies for Squamish language revitalization. I summarize their recommendations on Squamish language revitalization and the role of the Elders’ Language Advisory Group.

All of the elders I interviewed are a part of *Nexwniw’n ta a Imats*, the Elders’ Language Advisory Group. They are all fluent, highly proficient speakers, or re-emergent speakers as identified in CHAPTER ONE. The second category includes the second language speakers (also outlined in CHAPTER ONE). They are co-participants of this study. This group of people has specialized knowledge of the Squamish Language that is found no where else in the world.

As stated in CHAPTER ONE, the objectives of this thesis are as follows:



- 1) to document the value the elders place on speaking their mother tongue,
- 2) to show why language revitalization is necessary to the community,
- 3) to provide the Squamish community and future generations of Squamish language learners with written and oral testimony of three generations of language speakers: fluent language speakers, re-emergent language speakers, and language learners.
- 4) to encapsulate the Squamish ways of knowing and show how this will help to enhance a successful language revitalization program,
- 5) to identify and improve methods for Squamish Language revitalization programming.

These objectives are discussed through the interviews and are summarized at the end of this chapter, with the exception of objective five, which is discussed in the following chapter, CHAPTER FIVE.

The questions asked were based on two separate sets of interview questions – one for the elders, and the other for the second language speakers. (See Appendix A). The main difference between these two sets of questions has to do with the choice of the second language learners to learn Squamish as adults. The questions and responses were both in English.

My research questions, framed around identity, invoked “thematic” answers. My hypothesis at the beginning of the study was the following: *I believe that all of those speakers of Squamish language and those learning the language will attest that Squamish language is central to the culture and identity as Squamish people.* My hypothesis was correct; however, the themes, as articulated by the language speakers, are critical to “identity and culture”. They also encapsulate distinct ways of knowing that are necessary to Squamish language revitalization efforts.

The two distinct themes surrounding identity and culture developed from the interview questions. The two major themes are split into two clusters. Each cluster has separate topics that support the themes. The first cluster is *Xw'nixw*, "The Upbringing", and the Second one is *Nilh telhtim'a-chet*, "Those are our Ways". No theme is an isolate, but I have organized them in this fashion for clarity. These themes unsurprisingly overlap. When they are woven together, they form the base for Squamish Language revitalization. Here are the themes:

## **Themes**

### ***Xwnixw*' The Upbringing**

The first cluster, the upbringing, is the traditional way that Squamish children were/are raised. The upbringing includes kindness, respect, understanding one's history and cultural elements of Squamish society.

#### **1. *Wanáxws* –Respect**

Respect, in the Squamish sense, is more than minding one's manners. Respect is a concept that binds the community together. It is also a collective value. *Wanáxws* translates best as "to show respect". This respect is shown to each other as human beings, to the land and to oneself. It is a way of speaking that is inherent in the language.

#### **2. *Timistut/ T'elhk'em* -Exertion/Diligence**

These themes are related to each other. Within traditional society, economics were tied to the land and its resources. Laziness was not an option – the seasons didn't

allow it. These two types of discipline applied themselves in different areas of specialized work, in government practices, and in spiritual training. The co-participants of this study remember this as a virtue that was demonstrated by their elders.

***Nilh telhtim'a-chet, "Those are our Ways"***

The beginning of the second cluster, "Those are our Ways", includes Squamish ways of knowing, identity, and culture, and is summarized by one phrase.

**3. Identity**

One of the main research question focuses on identity. There were several responses that demonstrate that language is tied to Squamish identity.

**4. Pride**

As a part of the reclaiming process, speaking the language invokes a feeling of self esteem.

**5. Ways of knowing**

Part of our ways of knowing is in the Squamish narratives. These include the oral histories, legends, and contemporary experiences. Many of our "lessons" in life are expressed in these narratives, whether it is Mink displaying an unworthy quality in many of his mishaps, or the Sky Brothers transforming a part of our territory. A co-participant gives an example of one of these narratives in our *Ways of Knowing*.

## 6. **Teaching methodology**

The teaching methodology that was explained by a co-participant in this section is specific to language learning.

## 7. **Humour**

The late Ernie Harry, a fluent speaker of the language, commented that the language isn't complete without its particular sense of humour. The sense of humour in the Squamish language is subtle, and is also used to teach.

## 8. **Xen'xen – Reminiscing/ Remembering old times**

Xen'xen means reminiscing or remembering old times, is also the Squamish word for retracing the family tree. All of these aspects are a critical part of relating to one another. It is a part of the collective memory.

## 9. **Texture**

Texture is one of the more complicated themes. It represents how one speaks the language, as there are elements to the language that reflect the distinctly Squamish world view, such as the speed of the language. The Squamish language is spoken at a slower rate than most European languages. The other notion of texture is internal. It is these kinds of intrinsic values that the speakers experience while speaking in Squamish.

There are three distinct sections for the interviews. First, there is the expository writing discussing each theme. The interviews themselves follow, where large excerpts of

text are included, and finally my field notes. This is a post modern approach to the interviews, but this is done for two specific reasons.

First, as a part of maintaining the co-participants' voices, their selected responses to the interview questions are primarily kept intact. Their words are necessary to record as a part of Squamish history, and their collective responses are vital for the strategies of Squamish Language revitalization.

Second, it allows for my 'voice' to be included in the interviews as well. I am a part of the language revitalization efforts, and my thoughts are reflected in the field notes.

The field notes were written in two ways. I made notes directly after the interview, and I listened to the recorded interviews before analysing the data. Listening to the interviews and reading the transcripts are completely different experiences. The pauses, the intonations, the crows in the background, each added element makes the setting of the interview distinct. To capture this oral element, and because I am a part of the community, I have included my own 'voice' in the writing process. My field notes are enclosed by text boxes.

## **The Interviews**

### **Introduction**

The following interview summaries contain selections of commentary from various interviewees. Each person was subjected to an interview/discussion which centred around certain themes, but did not strictly follow a formal question and answer process. Each interview in this sense was free-ranging and followed the lead and interest of the person who was being interviewed.

This technique was designed to be interview-friendly. It also acknowledged that the co-participants were the experts, and that I was a co-participant in the interview process; this enabled me to pursue areas of mutual interest, rather than using an interviewer-dominant approach. All of these points are consistent with Squamish cultural values around respect for elders, respect for those who know, respect for knowledge, and respect for families and history.

### ***Smen'alh*, High Class or Respected People**

All of the co-participants in this study are *smen'alh* - high class and respected people of the community. A high-class person knows where they “come from”. The knowledge of ancestral lineage is necessary to understand the intricate and binding ties that secure familial obligations, responsibilities, and marriage eligibility.

Being a respected person means that the person not only understands his or her place of origin, but that he or she has the “upbringing”. This includes the Squamish-specific cultural knowledge, values and teachings of the *Xw'nixw'*, the upbringing.

The traditional way of introducing a person to someone includes their ancestral names, “who” they come from, and place of origin. Family life and relationships are the cornerstone of Squamish identity. The familial ties of the elders and language speakers overlap. Their places of birth do not necessarily reflect the traditional, or hereditary place they are from. Introducing oneself is also dependant upon the situation at hand. In this thesis, I introduce each co-participant with reference to their language exposure. Each person, except for myself, heard the language from a parent or a grandparent. It is

these people I write about. It is the co-participants' interest and dedication in language revitalization that is relevant to this study. The quote that I have chosen from each interview best depicts the reason why each person has become involved in the Squamish language revitalization movement.

The responses are laid out thematically, beginning with the highly proficient/fluent speakers; the re-emergent speakers and second language speakers follow.

## Introductions

**Kwitelut,** Lena Jacobs  
Highly Proficient Speaker

**It's my language.** And it's just that some words, it evades me, I've forgotten, but it comes back, because we haven't been speaking our language as often as we should. It's better if we speak our language, like if you see somebody that speaks your language, talk to them in our language, what you know. "*Chexw men wa ha7lh?*" "*We chexw yuu*". You know those few words, "How are you and take care.

Kwitelut was 95 at the time of this interview. She is the eldest speaker of the Squamish language. She learned the Squamish language from her mother, Molly John. She was sent to boarding school, but left the school after she became sick with whooping cough early in her education. Her mother never sent her back to school and as a result she grew up speaking Squamish:

...(I)t's the only language I heard was our Skwxwú7mesh language.....She was a good woman. She was a good Christian and she followed you might say the bible. And uh, *Nexwniw'n*. Like they said from the time you're small, they start teaching us our upbringing, *Xwnixw'*, we call it. She started teaching me about a lot of good things in life that I must follow. How I must treat people and you will be treated the same. She was a very good teacher. And then she married my step-father that was another teacher of our language, because it was the only language we spoke when I was growing.



**Nekwsaliya,** Margaret Locke  
Highly Proficient Speaker

I've been teaching roughly eight years lets say... I just wanted to...I enjoyed it. I was glad I was able to come to speak again...Encourage them, talk to them (in the language), explain to them the future. They'll be the next leaders. We're not getting any younger. They'll be the next leaders.

Nekwsaliya has been participating in the *Nexwniw'n ta a Imats* for about eight years. One of her greatest hopes is to keep the Squamish language alive for future generations, like her grandchildren. Her mother went to boarding school, and as a result spoke primarily English to Margaret. Margaret communicated in the Squamish language with her grandfather, Dick Issac:

I'd say I was about 6 or 7 years old. I heard it though our grandfather, he'd speak our language all of the time, heh ...he did teach us a lot, but when your young, you know you don't pay that much attention... he knew a lot our grandfather. We'd hear him talking to the priests in Chinook.

**Telsentsut, Frank Miranda**  
Highly Proficient Speaker

Cause that's something my father wanted to keep going, the Squamish language and culture. (It's important) For the younger generations to know who they are, not just by name, you know, but know their Squamish and their culture. 'Cause lot of other bands have lost their language and their culture and everything.

Telsentsut's father Louis Miranda, fondly referred to as "Uncle Louis" by the community, was the key contributor in the early stages of Squamish language revitalization. He hand-wrote approximately 10,000 pages of Squamish history, legends and language.

Frank Miranda was sent to residential school, as all the elders were, but he continued to speak the language throughout his lifetime to a close circle of friends and to his parents, Louis and Jessie Miranda, after leaving Saint Paul's residential school. He participated in the *Nexwniw'n ta a Imats* for two years until he passed away in October, 2005.

So I finally decided to go (to the *Nexwniw'n ta a Imats*) I went over there when Vanessa asked me. Cause that's something my father wanted to keep going the Squamish language and culture. For the younger generations to know who they are, not just by name, you know, but know their Squamish and their culture. Cause lot of other bands have lost their language and their culture and everything.

**Sxananálh sawt,** Lucille Nicholson  
Re-emergent Speaker

I have heard my grandmother saying the words in the language... *it's slowly coming back to me*, the words. And I feel like if I can share it with the children that would be awesome. I think it's a real necessity to have your language. Everybody else has their language, every other nationality.

Sxananálh joined the *Nexwniw'n ta a Imats* in the spring of 2004. Her late mother, Skwetsiya, the late Eva Lewis, was a founding member of *Nexwniw'n ta a Imats*. As a result of attending residential school, Eva did not speak the Squamish language to her children. Lucille heard much of the language from her grandmother:

My earliest memories are of my grandmother speaking. She spoke part of her sentence in Squamish language and the other part was English, I can recall, I'm not too sure about the age, but I was at home, my grandmother looked after myself and my cousin Ronnie Jo. So we were with my grandmother a lot when I was younger before I went to school. We used to play cards...think I may have been about five or six... I was thinking about it the other day, and I think she was a big, big influence in my life, because I can remember her saying how important family was, etc. She didn't say so much about the language, I think maybe she was a bit afraid of us because we weren't allowed to speak our language in boarding school, and I was in boarding school in my later life, my later years. So I would say she is a big influence in my life with her talking her language, our language, and she used to tell us a lot of stories.

**Chiyalhiya**, Lila Johnston  
Re-emergent Speaker

I feel that the language is so important and it's given myself more self-esteem and being able to speak to anybody. It just overwhelms me in the thought of like *having our language come back*. And it maybe different, a little bit sounding, but it's still our language that's going to be saved for our own children's children.

The late Eva Lewis was also Chiyalhiya's mother. Lila joined the *Nexwniw'n ta a Imats* around ten years ago. She recounts the joy language brought her during childhood:

I was really young, maybe four, five, when my mother and grandmother, well actually the two grandmas, Annie who was Stash Jack and Agnes Joe. I understood most of the language as a little girl; I knew most of the words... grandma Agnes was really the inspiration of my life because I used to run, lived over here near the, my son's in the log house now. About five houses away, and I'd run over there every day and she'd be so joyous, like just gleaming all over... she couldn't speak English. It was really nice to be with her. Also, we used to call Annie my other grandma, used to call her little *ta7a* cause she was just four feet. Yeah. And they'd like four or five of them would gather around mom's place and have tea all day, and just talk nothing but their language. That was a lot of joy for me to see that.

**Tiyaltelut**, Audrey Rivers  
Re-emergent Speaker

I think it is important to speak the Squamish (language). To me it's a *rebirth* of our Squamish ancestors. Keep it alive.

Tiyaltelut became a part of the *Nexwniw'n ta a Imats* group around four years ago. Her late sister, Sxananálh, Yvonne Joseph was an original part of the Advisory Group as well. Audrey was immersed in the Squamish language until she was sent to attend residential school. Here she recalls a part of her childhood:

... (M)y two grandmothers, as well as my mom and dad who all spoke the Squamish language fluently. Every morning my grandmothers would come to my parent's place for toast and tea in the morning and lunch in the evening and they only spoke the Squamish language while they were in the presence of our family.

## **Shellene Paul**

Life-long language learner

It was a continuance of I what I was trying to, what was being taught to me as a child, because my uncle *always* spoke Squamish, my grandma *always* spoke Squamish, Agnes Ta7a Joe *always* spoke Squamish.

A few of the elders I used to run to the store for *always* spoke Squamish, like Josie Paull. If you went up and down the street, my grandmum took care of Blind George there was a lot of elders that only spoke Squamish that I remember... It was just a way of life.

Shellene is the daughter of Lucille Nicolson. She considers herself a life-long learner of the language. She supports the Squamish language, and has supported the Squamish language programs over the years. I first met Shellene when I was the undergraduate summer student for the Department of Education in 1999. My responsibilities were to help develop a four-day immersion and cultural camp. Shellene attended the camp with her two sons. The Squamish language was a part of her family upbringing:

I have the fortune of growing up with one of the elders of Mission, named *Ta7a* Agnes Lackett-Joe. My grand-mum's brother, Uncle George Lackett-Joe...We'd play cards and it would be half English and half Squamish. . I'm always shy about saying that I learned Squamish language from the first class that Vanessa taught, Vanessa Campbell, and Uncle Louis Miranda. We were the pilot project... There was a few of us that were the first class that got accredited for having taken Squamish language in high school.

**T'naxwtn, Tlh'alhbe'**, Peter Jacobs  
Second Language Speaker

I think every group of people has to make a decision about what they think is important for their community, and we've made our decision. Eventually its going to be out of our hands, and in some sense, a lot of it is out of our hands now, a whole generation of young people coming up who have their own minds made up about what they think is important for our community... What keeps me going then, is that I've made a *choice*.

One of T'naxwtn's strengths is language mastery. He graduated with his Master's of Linguistics in the early 1990s. He is currently working on his PhD in Linguistics at the University of British Columbia. He began to work on Squamish language as a Master's student with his grandmother Kwitelut, Lena Jacobs. Subsequently he found contract and then full-time employment with the Department of Education. He began his work on the Squamish dictionary with the "God Squad" shortly before the *Nexwnixw'n ta a Imats* was formed under the direction of Education Director, Snitelwet, Deborah Jacobs. Peter didn't get much exposure to the Squamish Language growing up, rather he heard the Kwak'wa'la language from his mother's family. His involvement in the Squamish language was personal:

And I found out you know, there was less than fifty people that spoke Squamish as their own language at the time. So then I just, it like became a cause for me. I was thinking other people were concerned about these things and why am I not concerned about my own language...That's how I got interested. That was the initial thing... I think our language is valuable.

## **Vanessa Campbell**

### Second Language Speaker

We have people...at the other spectrum. They don't put any value into the language. They don't think it's necessary, they don't feel it has a place in this time, in this world. And that's fair, but that is very significant because that means *they have a choice, they still have a choice*. I believe the future should still have a choice... The only place to learn our language is here, right now.

Vanessa Campbell was one of late Uncle Louis's first students. She became involved with working for the Squamish Nation under the guidance of Louis Miranda in the early 1970s. They co-taught a Squamish language course at the first Catholic school in 1973. She has taught in the public system for twenty-plus years, has developed teaching and community materials, and is the Squamish language team leader. Few people spoke Squamish to her, although the adults often spoke to each other. She remembers the Squamish language being that of adults. This experience was echoed in residential school when the nuns would speak French to each other so the children would not understand what was being said. Vanessa was exposed to the language in the homes of elders:

This was in the 1950s and early sixties, they (the elders) were already like say eighty years old or older...People would make a point to always go and visit them... When we went to visit them, they only spoke in Squamish. And I visited with them with my grandmother a lot and I don't know if it was because I wanted to or just because one of us or more than one of us always went with her, and we just sat in the warm kitchen and had tea and listened to them talk.



**Kirsten Baker-Williams**

Researcher

*I became interested in learning the language when I was around twenty and attended Squamish evening language classes. Later, I visited a late elder for some language lessons, and attended the Elders' Language Advisory group meetings as an interested language learner. My switch from an anthropology/sociology degree to education was fuelled by the exposure to the language. I felt that a Bachelor of Education would prove more useful to language revitalization efforts than anthropology.*

*I have worked as the Squamish Language curriculum writer for the past four years. The work of developing curriculum and projects includes meeting with Elders' Language Advisory twice a month to review the materials and projects.*

## Cluster One: *Xwnixw*', The Upbringing

*Xwnixw*' is best translated as the 'Upbringing'. It includes the values that are instilled in the children as well as the way of teaching the values. The foundation of *xwnixw*' is love of the people. Love is built through kindness and respect. The roots of these values are embedded in the *Skwxwú7mesh snichim*, the Squamish language.

Like many of her late peers, prayer is Kwitelut's tool and the Lord is her guide. Her Squamish-speaking friends and relatives departed this world during the previous few years prior to the interview. Although she misses them dearly, it is her faith that gives her the inner strength and tenacity to continue her work on the language. The other elders in the Elders' Language Advisory group defer to Kwitelut in our sessions before they speak. She has asked the young ones to listen to what they've been told, to remember what has been taught to them so they can pass it on. By young ones, she meant the sixty and seventy year-old speakers in the room.

(Kwitelut, Lena Jacobs)

I find that being brought up by my mother and speaking our language that she was understanding. I wasn't slapped or anything like that. She made me sit down and she told me if it was the wrong thing I was doing, you know sometimes we do get into mischief. And she'd talk to me and tell me that it was wrong, that it was the wrong thing to do, and advise me, *nexwniw'n*, upbringing. See my upbringing was very good. I guess that's why I'm a loving person. I like to hug people, show them that I love them. That was our teaching to be kind, and speak kindly to your friend.

When I arrived at Kwitelut's bungalow to interview her, I entered her room. She was propped up on her bed with pillows supporting her, a tiny woman with an enormous heart. She has her good days and her bad ones. She was tired, but as always so kind. She was willing to help me on my school project in any way that she possibly could. She does this because we're related, as she's reminded me once or twice before.

### 1. *Wanáxws*, Respect

For this study, in part, I was searching for the fissure between identity and language to assist the revitalization process. I was not entirely sure what that would look like. Kwitelut showed me. Almost immediately she began to speak of the *xwnixw'*. Although she was the only person to identify this term, there are other aspects of the upbringing that are distinct to Squamish: *wanáxws*, or respect, to which Kwitelut speaks:

Like they were very good, very good. I remember my husband's grandfather. In the summertime we used to go and stay there. He used to wake up, you know the daylight's early. About three O'clock, four O'clock, he's uh, he's talking and that's all about the *xwnixw'*, the upbringing, how you must live, what you must do, how you must treat your wife, how you must treat your husband, all of those things, how you must treat your friends, always show them respect. *Siyam*, they were like that in the smokehouse, when the people come in, the visitors, they're from all over, *mi chexw uuys*, *siyam*, come on in honoured one, and they'd go and seat them, you have to show respect, all your life. And people, people are watching how you are, and then they respect you for all the good things that you do. You don't have to boast or

anything you know, no. They always say that people are watching what kind of person you are, so you must, these things you must remember.

Yeah, we used to listen to him, my grandmother she was a good woman, she was a good cook. And we wanted to imitate her because she was a good cook and everything, she makes some cakes you know she used to make, berry, salmon berry pudding. The big pan, oh you've never tasted pudding until you taste what she makes, eh. She used to have raspberries that we used to pick for her, and anything she cooked, I would say that she made the best duck soup that I've ever tasted, if you like ducks eh. I loved the way she cooked it, you know how they used to pluck it. And then they'd burn the little, little feathers, like fluffy feathers, she used to make a big pot of, that's what they made for the people when they have, they have a big time, eh. They had a big smokehouse and they had an orchard, you name it, they had it, trees eh. Cherry trees, plums, oh gee we used to love to go there, and he used to, her husband used to plant his own, the potatoes. They had a big farm and plant the potatoes, all the things that would last, the cabbage and turnips, lots of carrots we used to love to just go there and pick the carrots. We'd just brush it and then it eat. We didn't even wash it. Everything was clean then in those days, eh.

He was chief. They called him Chief Squamish Jacob and that's the Chieftainship that Gibby had now. Yeah. He was, he was quite a man. My, he was a super man. Get all the wood for the winter like they used to have big do, eh, big *milhaxw'txw*. That's what we called the *smilhaxw'txw*, where they danced down here. He had one, a big one. But he was the first one that ever got a stove, and that was the cast iron stove, it was big, eh. And he used to get wood in the summer time, carry all that wood, and that's why I say, my goodness that man's a super man...

Go fishing, my grandmother used to smoke them. They used to smoke it, and they used to have those big barrels, wooden barrel. Fill it up with the fish you know, and salt it. And he was a good hunter, he salted the meat too. They never wanted for anything. They could feed a whole bunch of peoples. Sometimes even a whole week sometimes, they'd stay there.

*Her story placed me there, her voice changed ever so slightly while moving back into a living memory. Kwitelut has the highest level of language proficiency, she grew up with the old people. She was a child when the longhouse was still used as the sole form of government, prior to Amalgamation. She was with the old people before residential school was able to pluck away mother-tongue petals and begin to pull at ancestral root structures. Kwitelut influences all of us. Telsentsut spoke of her:*

(Telsentsut, Frank Miranda)

Because I've heard Lena talk about the teachings, *Xwenexw'*. What she was saying is what my father used to say. Have respect for your people, for all your people, not just certain people, and have respect for yourself, if you don't have respect for yourself, that's worse...Cause I used to hear them, my father say you have respect for everyone, young and old, all people, Squamish people. Lena was telling us that at the last time we seen her down there...keep our language, and the younger people is the one that should be taught to know who they are. Culture, even if they don't practice it, but as long as they know what the culture is. And certain things. That's what the old people used to say, show respect to your people, to everyone, not just the Squamish to the other people, to other tribes. Yeah it was nice to hear Lena talking about that, respect and stuff like that. That's what I used to hear from my father, and he told me that's what he heard from his elders. Yeah it was passed down generation.

*Wanáxws is something "passed down generation". As I sat down to interview Vanessa out on her balcony, she was wrapped up in layers of blankets. A little paradise, created with a chair and side table to comfortably sit on was nestled in a corner. Complete with a lamp on the table, illuminating the pages of the novel she was reading and cast a warm glow on her face. The fresh air was nice, even in the late winter. The occasional melody is given to us by a breeze as the wind chimes lazily respond and the boats in Burrard Inlet move towards their destination, oblivious, encased in Vancouver's winter grey. Vanessa placed the novel on her lap and spoke at great length to issues, concepts, and history within the community. She spoke of Uncle. "Uncle" is man-t ta Telsentsut, late Frank Miranda's father, Late Uncle Louis Miranda.*

Dislocation of the Squamish from the traditional territory first came through the marriage of church and government, creating the reserve system. These are pieces of history which are darker and hidden from public scrutiny. Yet *wanáxws* still allows one to make a decision about value. The values of love and kindness, found in Christianity, matched the values of the Squamish.

(Vanessa Campbell)

I think that it is really clear, you know it's very clear in the world today, some of the great, terrifying things that we are dealing with now is struggling to understand how much we are the same, and how much we choose to express ourselves as the same. The whole idea of global economics, and globalization right now and people are struggling with that.

But as much as sameness we acknowledge each other or recognize each other as human beings, the differences enrich, enrich ourselves and each other. I think sometimes about how our elders

embraced and accepted, respected Christianity. And I understand that values are values, no matter how they're expressed or outward trappings there are. And come back to that main concept Uncle talked about which was *wanáxws*, respect. You recognize and value things that are enriching for your lives and for everybody around you. Um, and in the language each culture expresses that for whatever reason, differences existed in the past and now they have to be as important as similarities if you understand both, I think you can get to that *wanáxws*, to that point of respect. Whether you choose to accept and learn, and practice other differences, or just acknowledge that they're there, and they're valuable to somebody for some reason, but not maybe for you. So, the language expresses that from my point of view in our culture, it expresses that.

*The consequences or action of not showing respect are evident in our oral histories. The great flood as told by Melkws to Hill-Tout was caused by the young ones disrespecting the animals and old people. The prophet warned them to change their ways, but they did not. A great flood occurred with only one canoe full of people surviving to repopulate the world. Despite great hardship, the people **did** survive.*

*As one of our legends with Xaays, the Sky Brothers or transformers, discusses. Hill-Tout records that "Once there were for four brothers named Xaays who went about the country doing wonderful things. It was very long ago, when the animals were human beings."<sup>73</sup> In their journey, they came across an island with smoke from the village rising from the houses, smoke the colour of rainbows, signalling that indeed this was the Village of the Salmon People. The Xaays and their followers met with Kwú7s (spring salmon), the chief of the village and prepared for a feast. Before the Xaays and their followers had arrived, Kwú7s asked four youth to enter the sea and swim towards the salmon trap, they were transformed into salmon*

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<sup>73</sup> Hill-Tout from *The Salish People: the Local Contribution of Charles Hill-Tout Volume II.P.58: 1978*

*and swam as all salmon do during their running season, jumping out of the water and into the traps. The Xaays and his followers were given a great meal of salmon and were advised to save all of the bones of the fish after they finished eating. One of Xaays young followers was curious, as youth often are about the world, and hid some of the bones to see what would happen. Some of the people in the village gathered the bones that each person had carefully laid aside and took them down to the sea to return the bones to the water. These salmon transformed to people. One of the youth, getting out of the water, covered his face with his hands. The youth went up to the Chief to show his disfigured face, missing were his cheeks and nose.*

*As it is with several Squamish legends, it is often the younger generation in all sense of independence, curiosity and rebellion that these teachings are given to as they make their way into the world. Traditionally, the lesson of the salmon people is not only to treat animals with respect. There is more to it than that. The spirit of the animals is equal to our own, and there was a time that we were almost indistinguishable from one another in the living world. The old people referred to the legends and oral history to relay knowledge and consequences of actions in the past. And it is our elders that talk of the old people. This is what I heard the "old timers" say. This is what I saw the old timers do. This doesn't mean the young have to do as the old ones did. However they must have the knowledge to understand their actions and beliefs, actions impact the teachings.*

As much as lived lessons from our elders, legends, and oral histories give an understanding of *wanáxws*, I believe it is something to be learned in the language as well. *Wanáxws* is to show respect through action. I know it is a collective value. How a person behaves, signifies the teaching that they have or haven't received through their family. But there is more to it than that, it is in the language.



(T'naxwtn, Peter Jacobs)

It's very difficult for us to translate a lot of those (words), not just the meaning of the words, but the context of how things are said and taught from one language to another..., a lot more...get(s) lost when you're going from Squamish into English... the ways that you think and talk to one another....

Because a lot of it comes from these, whatever little particles in the language that she(his grandmother) just adds in, which just add a subtle little meaning... So I think that must affect how you interact with people, and how children respond to adults and to elders and stuff like that. Something gets lost when you're going into English, not all of it but some very important stuff I think.

*Elements of respect are shown in the "little words", as the elders often call them. Little nuances that fluent speakers understand, but remain cryptic to me. The way that we show respect in these subtle ways are encoded in speaking Squamish. A code that I am still years away from cracking...*

## 2. *Timitsut/T'elhk'em*, Exertion/Diligence

*Timitsut* means exertion. If the skipper of the canoe yells “*Timitsut!*” It means that everyone paddling exerts himself one step further, breathing harder and finding that strength, if not with you, then from a greater power. This term can be applied to new dancers in the longhouse as well. As it has been pointed out to me, the teachings remain the same, regardless of moving on rough water, or being under the new dancer’s hat.

(Telsentsut, Frank Miranda)

Oh. It’s, I don’t know how you’d say it, they were more polite, or in their way of talking, in their ways. It was like my father was trying to bring back the culture, well he brought it – the Indian dancing. He got Walker and Vincent to come over from Musqueam because we didn’t have nobody here to do that. We got that, he got that going. And that was taught the old way. You know, the culture of the dancing. It was strict. That was to teach you discipline and respect...That’s the best thing that we can do. Is to keep up the way we’re going, teaching our Squamish language. Get younger people to keep on with it...

*I let myself in Telsentsut’s home. The first time I visited him in his home a year earlier, he took great care in showing me old sports photos of him in the war canoe, the Saint Theresa, and several photos of his late wife. His father was “Uncle” Louis Miranda, the man who got the canoe club going, the longhouse started, helped with family namings, started teaching the Squamish language at the schools in his early eighties. Frank saw his father over-extend himself throughout his lifetime. Although people described him as shy, he had a very quick sense of humour, and I was often teased. Fortunately, I had a sense of humour; you can’t be Squamish without one. He was sitting at his arm-chair in the living room waiting for me to get set up. He was always very direct, and like his late father, very kind.*

*T'elhk'em*, or discipline, is another Squamish value. All of the old Squamish people worked hard to support their families, traditionally and in the wage economy. They would spend the better part of a season, away from home, on the road or in a boat. Many Squamish women worked in the canneries or the fields that bore berries or hops.

Many grandmothers in the community were basket weavers.

(Sxananálh sawt, Lucille Nicholson)

I'd say my grandmother because she was so... I don't even know the word for it. Like such a lady. She held herself straight, straight. She was a tall person, and to me it was like she was so proud of her culture, and proud to be (a) Squamish person. That she held herself in high esteem. I can remember her saying that you're, you're, she would tell us about our grandparents, how they were instrumental in the community, helping to build our houses etc. So she left a big, I don't even know the word, she ... she... I often thought I wish I could have been like her, she was such a strong person. Very strong minded. And knew what she wanted. She was happy with what she had. They were very hard working. I can remember my grandmother going down, she was quite elderly already, but she'd go down to my cousin's and pick berries. So their working habits also left a big impression on me. My mom was the same way, she did a lot. She worked in the cannery and picked strawberries, whatever there was she worked for it. She didn't, she wanted to be self-sufficient I guess. She worked hard from when she was very young. I guess that's the impression they left on me, that you work hard for what you get.

(Tiyaltelut, Audrey Rivers)

Um my grandmothers always taught me Indian way whether it was for healing, and they always provided for our needs if our parents could not provide for our needs like I was born in the hungry thirties as they called it. And lot a times my grandmothers had to work like in the canneries, make baskets, sell baskets, to help provide you know, their families and that's what I recall of my grandmothers... They worked hard, my grandmother worked till she was eighty years old, she still chopped wood and she worked in the cannery and she still done canning, it was my grandmother Theresa.

*Tiyaltelut, Audrey Rivers, welcomed me into her home with some fresh fruit. She had looked the questions over the night before and jotted some notes down to move our discussion along. She is also a very busy person and is often whisked away from one meeting to the next to help with opening protocols in Squamish traditional territory. She is also very active at the Aboriginal Vancouver Friendship Centre, a place of gathering for First Nations from all over Canada who have decided to call Vancouver home.*

## Cluster Two: *Nilh telhtim'a-chet*, Those are Our Ways

### 3. Identity

My central question was based on the concept of identity. The co-participants each spoke of how they correlated language to their own sense of being.

(Sxananálh sawt, Lucille Nicholson)

It's your, it's your... it's your identity, every nationality has a language...something they were taught from when they were babies. I worked in daycare and I could hear them talking to the babies in their language. And I think that gives a person a sense of security and a sense of who you are, who you really are.

(Chiyalhiya, Lila Johnston)

I've seen all of the different languages that children were brought up from, a young age, and at times I feel a little bit sorrow in here (indicating heart), like all the way up to like right now as an elder and I think that it is important for us to have another language and for our children that are growing up, that we should be talking our language to them now.

(Shellene Paul)

I benefited even greater because my grandmother's teachings came from Hakstn who was well over a one-hundred years old when she passed away. She was called a centurion on February 9, 1941. I think it was a news article by the Province... And she would talk about the times when contact occurred when the first xweliten came to town. And she remembered the Indian Wars with the Yakweltek people. So I grew up knowing my culture was rich and I grew up with a role reversal, I grew up thinking we were

wealthy, and we did not have everything that a lot of other families had, but I always thought we were wealthy because the church was next door to us. And in the convent all the poor *xwelitn* kids used to come, and we used to have to take care of our non-Squamish friends, so I always thought the Squamish were wealthy, and in terms of culture and monetary wealth. So I didn't grow up thinking I was a second-class citizen. And I'm very fortunate for that, and I'm very fortunate that I've retained my Aboriginal philosophies even though I grew up in the Catholic church.

*Lucille has a plate of homemade chocolate chip cookies waiting for me before our interview. It reminds me of being a child in my own grandmother's house, complete with a glass of milk. Lucille is considerate and sensitive. In our interview together emotion swelled up, leaving us both teary-eyed by the end of it. Listening to the interviews reveals so much more than the printed word does. The hesitant breath, the rise of the voice...the pause.*

*Shellene is Lucille's daughter. She has always been an advocate for the language. She has taken language classes throughout her adult life and brings her sons to language classes as well.*

#### 4. **Pride**

To be "worthy" of one's language is a very powerful statement. In Squamish society, upon receiving an ancestral name, one must be able to wear it well, and not drag it through the mud. One must be worthy of that name. As a part of receiving an ancestral name there comes responsibility. The name has to be held in high regards, as it is tied to the ancestors who carried that name beforehand.

(Chiyalhiya, Lila Johnston)

For my own family I think it would be like the pride that you have in yourself, cause um, gives your self-esteem more, like in your heart that you know you're worthy of this language it would be good to keep it up. And I feel that when I go into celebration, I feel the drum beats in my heart and it sort of lifts me away and I think that part it important for us to keep it up everyday, or at least try. Because when I think of all the different things that happened in my life, even when mom used to tell me all the different stories about the past, I'd say gee, how can you remember like eighty years ago?... It was just, give me goose bumps.

*The movement and intentions. How healing the language has been for you. I caught up to Lila before one of her church-based activities. I literally mean "caught-up". Lila is one of the busiest people I know, and she is extremely hard to get a hold of. She told me that one of the safest times to reach her at home is at 5:30 in the morning; this is before her day really gets going. Even when I catch her at home she is busy, searching for some photos that she must bring to her next meeting.*

## 5. Ways of Knowing

The oral narrative and stories thread themselves within our consciousness. The legends are the base of our curriculum. They are timeless and have survived the centuries because they have purpose. They are a part of our collective education.

(Kwitelut, Lena Jacobs)

Oh yes, Kal' kalilh. You remember Kal' kalilh?

Yeah, they used to tell us that because they wanted us to be home early. Or Kal' kalilh will get us.

Another old man, was Julian.

What was his name now? We called him Julian, anyway. He was my father's cousin. He was a watchman, he used to come around and you know, starting to get towards evening, and he'd tell us, "*Nam' chap t'ukw', nu metwiks tsuns ta sinelhk'ay.*" You know there used to be a tugboat that made a sound, "owwww". It sounded weird and he told us it was a two headed snake, so you better go home, it's coming.

You (claps) seen us run home. We were scared of the two headed snake. Well it was real to them, the two-headed snake, a long time ago, eh. They said it came through in like Squamish eh. There's a place that's kind of like this, heh.

And they said that's where the snake come through there, it took a long time before it got on the other side, that two headed snake. That's the stories we used to hear. We enjoyed their stories. I can't remember them all. One Chixstn' that's Billy Williams' great-great- great grandfather, he was married to Papa's mother. He used to tell us stories, we'd all sit down and listen to him. He was a good story teller. I wish I could remember them, but I don't. He told us so many, yeah. That was great, the old timers used to do



that, you know tell us some stories. It would be nice if you could remember them.

*While telling the story, Kwitelut's hands moved with the narrative. Her hand dipped down and raised suddenly, a rhythm that described the land. Or it paused mid-air. Her laughter indicated that we all remember Kal'kalilh. She never seems to be that far in the distance. A giant cannibal woman who dined on children who were caught alone after dark, eventually found her demise in a fire. Although the people feared her, Peter's young niece Katherine, indignantly pointed out to him that Kal'kalilh had to eat too.*

## 6. Teaching Methodology

A part of traditional teaching methodology is to learn by doing. This is applicable to hunting, weaving, carving, or gathering resources such as cedar bark. For language learning this is included in the stories that come with the language.

(T'naxwtn, Peter Jacobs)

I think uh, you know having been a teacher for a number of years, and you've taught too, you start to think about teaching methodology, eh. And that teaching methodology is important as what you're teaching. You know because it affects how you learn and how you internalize what you are learning. And all of the elders, all the elders that we've worked with were brought up more or less in a traditional way... They started to pay attention to how they were teaching things to me, eh. Like trying to listen to the way they were doing it, like not taking these things asides.

Like Lawrence was great for that, cause he had the most time and was just very patient. But all of the elders were really like that, and realized okay, the way that they're teaching me about

this is the way that it's really going to stick with me, and I'm going to really get it. These little stories and these little asides that's the main thing about the language, eh. They're not like things to keep me entertained or something, or keep my attention or something, eh. That's the encapsulation of our culture.

How that the people taught, and I realized that's like the same way my mom and dad taught me too. About things I learned from them, so, that's something I got from all of the elders. Cause they all do that, "I remember when I was young", and they would say, "so and so used to say this", and they would go on, eh. Cause I asked a question, "Do you recognize this word", you know going in, a methodical way of trying to get translations for all of these words, like that's more accurate or something or a wider range of meaning or whatever.

And instead of them giving me like a translation for this word, like okay here's all the possible English translations for this word, (they'd) come up a story about something, you know. Which didn't seem to have anything to do with the word at first, but really was actually what I really needed to learn, eh. This is how they understood the word, because that's where, that's the situation they remember hearing about it, eh.

*I relate to what Peter said. It was all the asides that the late Uncle Lawrence taught us in language class that helped us to remember. He would give us phrases that we might need to communicate with spirits, or he would focus on nick-names, the source of laughter and cause of blushing for the younger students. There were always stories and anecdotes involved in his classes and in language learning.*

## 7. Humour

Peter relays to me the story of how his Kwaguilh grandfather would teach him with humour. His grandfather's humour would catch him off guard and make him concentrate. Humour was used as the teaching methodology to get Peter to listen and to remember what was being said. He expanded on this point of how knowing his grandmother differs in speaking Squamish.

(T'naxwtn, Peter Jacobs)

When I go visit my grandmother, whenever I happen to see her, I'll speak Squamish. She really likes to speak together. She's very funny eh. Her sense of humour is different when we're speaking Squamish than in English, eh. It's kind of like meeting someone, getting to know someone again, like my grandmother, who I've known all my life, but speaking Squamish to her is like getting to know a side of her that just doesn't come out the same way in English, eh.

It wasn't until after I had transcribed the interviews and went back through them a second time that I realized Kwitelut, Peter's grandmother, had done the same thing to me.

Kwitelut: I'm very happy that you young people are learning our language, and then you're teaching, that's very, I'm very happy about that. You, will be teaching our language some day, 'cause you're good at it.

Kirsten: *Thank you.*

Kwitelut: Yeah. Someday when you have a family.

Kirsten: *(Laughs) Make sure we get that on tape.*

Kwitelut: Teach them from the time they're babies.

*The language is being passed into the younger generation's hands. She used humour to make this point and, with kindness, she urged perpetuation of language use. This wasn't just an interview for my thesis, but also encouragement to keep our language moving.*

## 8. Xen'xen, Reminiscing/Remembering Old Times

Xen'xen, was described by one of our late elders, Yvonne Joseph, to mean reminiscing, or remembering old times. It also means to retrace the family tree. These aspects of memory and family connect ourselves to the ancestors and are a part of our ways.

(Nekwsaliya, Margaret Locke)

It was good. Especially our grandfather and the elders. We understood them and respected them. I remember quite a few elders. A lot of nice ones talked to us. We'd go visit them... We'd go visit them and pack their water and do things for them. I was about 7 or 8. They'd give us an apple. We liked that. It was nice living in the days. Yeah we were happy. No violence around...

(Sxananálh sawt, Lucille Nicholson)

Oh for sure, in the field they always spoke in... they'd ask for a cart or whatever in language, my grandmother. My uncle would be with us also, so... There was always a word to ask if in Squamish, if they wanted a basket, or etcetera. If they wanted help they would say it in the language... Oh yes, there was Theresa Paull. She was another elder, she was, she had to be about the same age as my grandmother and I'm sure they had to be in their eighties, I can't even recall how old they were, but they had to be. They wore long skirts, I can remember they had their knee, to their ankles, and

they go in the fields with these long skirts, and kerchief. Theresa Paull was elderly too and Gatha Moody. She was... had to be the same age as our *ta7a* . We called them *Ta7as* in our age.

*Kirsten: All the elderly ladies?*

All the elderly ladies were called *ta7as*. Sometimes they'd say "*Ta7a*" and ask for one, like I'd be talking to my grandmother, and say "*Ta7a*" and all the other *ta7as* would look. We had a great time in the fields...

*(Tiyaltelut, Audrey Rivers)*

Okay my grandmother Skesi, *ta7a* was a basket maker, and she knew how and when to harvest the bark. She made many different types of baskets: berry baskets, trays, etc. And she also made *ch'metns*, she made the *ch'metns* which is made out of sheep's wool, she made the headbands out of the wool. Which were mainly the colors of red and white. And she also made the *ch'metns* for the baskets, you know she made berry baskets and then she put them, the woven wool on her back.

*Nekwsaliya, Margaret Locke, holds the Elders' Language Advisory meetings in her home. We usually visit with each other after the meetings are finished. Like many Squamish women, she has a wonderful fashion sense and has a youthful vigour to her. Her sense of humour is contagious, and often we find ourselves with the uncontrollable giggles. As a fluent speaker, she also works with UBC students.*

## 9. Texture

*We die. That may be the meaning of life. But we do language. That may be the measure of our lives.* - Toni Morrison,<sup>74</sup>

Texture is one of the more complicated themes - it is both tangible and intangible. It includes the external and internal threading of the language for each speaker. Externally, the language is spoken in a certain way: at a certain speed, with pauses, and with the right words being drawn out. Internally, it is the “feel” of speaking in Squamish versus speaking in English.

(Telsentsut, Frank Miranda)

Like if you listen to the old people, well like me, their Squamish was more slower, like you know. You could understand them, like slower. Like the way Eva, I mean Lena talks. Today's language the younger kids that are trying to, they kind of bite. Like, *chexw man ha7lh*, some “*Che'xw man wa ha7lh*.” So the next generation the Squamish might be different. Like I seen, some, they'd see me and say that didn't say “*Che'xw men wa ha7lh*”. Oh yeah, yeah. You know you're supposed to say, “*Chexw men wa ha7lh*.” But I think, “Well, he's trying anyhow”.

*The way that we speak to each other, slower, not rushed is the way that we show respect. Earlier in the interview I asked Frank if he thought his life would be different if he wasn't raised speaking Squamish. “Like a xwelitn,” he states. But quickly adds, “but I was still raised with the traditional upbringing”. The upbringing that he refers to encompasses the wanáxws, the respect. It is a place where we still have time to stop and to visit with each other, even if we are busy in our own lives, we still are related to each other and still value our time with each other.*

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<sup>74</sup> Nobel Lecture, December 7, 1993.

(Sxananálh sawt, Lucille Nicholson)

I think there is a desire in our community to speak the language because there is so much in the language that you express in Indian that you don't get through English. You can say a word in Squamish and it means, to me it means so much to hear people talking it at meetings or to hear them, how they say it in our language it has so much more... I'm not sure if that's the word, meaning...if you know what I mean. It's like their speaking the language and its like it means so much to hear it and, I guess expression – how they're saying it, it's comforting... Oh for sure. If I'm expressing joy or anger, any expression like if you see something and you say it, it has so much more meaning than in English.

*I can see how the language moves you. Just speaking about the language elicits a response, arising from personal memory. Your desire comes from memory, while my desire comes from want.*

(Chiyalhiya, Lila Johnston)

I think they still see the importance, but when I hear it now it sounds a little bit different from when I used to hear my granny Tal'. Some of the words spoken way back, I hear it now and it's a little bit different. It's because of the length of time that it was not spoken... like when there's certain words that seem to be coming out with a kindness, of whatever you were saying...The emotion was already there with whatever you were talking about. That's what I noticed from the past.

*The French and the Italian may fight over who speaks the language of love, but we have the language of kindness.*

(Tenaxwtn, Peter Jacobs)

You know like Vanessa talks a lot about how the cadence of speaking Squamish, just the way that you don't speak it fast, eh. And how the elders, you know, because when I first started learning, like I was learning the word for the moon, *lhki7ch'*, and I said too fast, I said *lhkaych'* and my grandmother said: "*Haw k'waxw Kémkemin'em k'axw wa nichim*". Don't speak Halkomelem when you're talking. (laughter). So that means like Squamish people in the past, including our speaker today had some kind of awareness just the way you deliver speech, that's the Squamish way of talking, eh... You hear this comment, it's not just Squamish, but people lots of First Nations people they comment on other ethnic groups and how they interact, like they're always interrupting each other when they're talking eh. It's like the number one social sin for First Nations people, it seems like. Other peoples that aren't First Nations are always interrupting each other and they're not giving people the time to talk, and I think that's how that comes through in our language values and Vanessa's the biggest one to talk about it, is not to be rushed when we're talking. ... And that has to do with respect then, eh.

*The texture of our language speaks for itself. It ties itself directly into the Xw'nixw, the upbringing.*

### ***Na Mi K'anatsut Ta Snichim-Chet, Our Language Is Coming Back***

#### **Insights from the Elders from the *Nexwniw'n ta a Imats***

(Tenaxwtn, Peter Jacobs).

Like I really don't believe that you can encapsulate and maintain Squamish culture without the language, but what you get eventually becomes less and less like what it was meant to be, eh. If it's all done in English or if it's all done in some other language even, like people use, whatever Halqumelem or something.



Whatever it is that's Squamish in the world is, starts to get bled out or something, you know becomes like a copy of being Squamish. The thought processes and the ways of feeling and stuff get lost, I think without the language. And I understand this, especially from being a speaker.

And I realized okay what the people are saying in the language is not really, it's not complicated or that's not the idea behind what makes the language different, so abstract or something that English can't say the same things eh. But when you're speaking and you're thinking about, **it's always coming back to you** and you hear the elders say this, **'it's always coming back to you'**. I remember the old people saying this, you know.

So all the thoughts and feelings you had and the way that they lived and everything, that's what you're saying comes through when you speak and that's what gets lost because it just doesn't come across the same in English. And I see that in travelling the world. Like gee, people's way of living and thinking and talking and interacting will get bled out if they also adapt to just like one language whatever that language happens to be in that country. And the people understand that and I've seen that travelling in Thailand or wherever. People implicitly understand that or maybe explicitly, consciously understand that you're going to start interacting differently because they're speaking another language besides their own primarily at home.

This section addresses the second central research question, "What do we need to do to revitalize the Squamish Language?" I am concerned about the elders' point of view in this section. This is because of two reasons. First of all, the Elders Language Advisory group is the nexus of language use for the elders. They have a very strong connection to the group and see this as the start of the language revitalization process for

the community. Second, they speak of the language as “coming back”. They use this phrase for internal language use and for the greater Squamish community. I am also interested in what the elders think is important for language revitalization.

Several of co-participants of this study referred to the language as “coming back”. The language, in its individual words and sentences, was coming back to the individual elders by speaking and listening to each other in the *Nexwniw'n ta a Imats*:

(Nekwsaliya, Margaret Locke)

I was glad I was able to come to speak again...I enjoyed it. It was a little scary, I didn't now how to come out with it (speaking the language). I'm still learning.

(Sxananálh Saw't, Lucille Nicholson)

I think it comes back to you after you've gone for awhile, like words come back, I remember hearing that word awhile ago.

(Tiyaltelut, Audrey Rivers)

A lot of words have come back to me, and I often teach my daughter, Sheryl, when I get home all what I've learned from them, and she is learning well right now.

The *Nexwniw'n ta a Imats* provides a place where all speakers of the language come together to speak, share knowledge, and work with one another. The elders valued this time, and many of the elders stated that they need more time to visit with each other in the language.

The elders also stated that the language was coming back in the sense that there are more people in the community willing to support and to learn the Squamish language.

Many of the elders thanked me for learning the language, and displayed gratitude for the language revitalization work we are doing:

(Sxananálh Saw't, Lucille Nicholson)

It has done great wonders for me, just seeing the desire in the young ones to learn like yourself, Peter, Vanessa, helping. It's just amazing how far it has gone in the last, maybe three years, how much and the group, your group has helped me so much. I think it sort of went on the wayside, you know what I mean, it just sort of went on the wayside when you didn't have anybody to help you with it before, you didn't know where to start. The group has helped me, I can't even put into words how much they've helped me, the desire to continue, I see your desire and it helps me big time.

(Chiyalhiya, Lila Johnston)

I appreciate you coming for my own self, I feel that the language is so important... It just overwhelms me, the thought of like having our language come back. And it maybe different, a little bit sounding, but it's still our language that's going to be saved for our own children's children.

The *Nexwniw'n ta a Imats*, is uplifting for both the elders and the second language speakers of Squamish. In this corner of the Squamish community, the elders, the speakers, and the supporters of the language will be the ones to create the wake of Squamish language revitalization.

## Elders' Strategies for Language Revitalization

In this section I summarize what the elders believe needs to happen to help revitalize language. Their recommendations support further discussion in CHAPTER FIVE.

### Why should we revitalize the Squamish Language?

The two clusters of themes that emerged from the interviews contain qualities that are very rich and make up the heart of the language. It is these themes that come from the speakers of the Squamish language, that are the fundamental reasons *why* we need to commit to language revitalization:

Cluster One: *Xw'nixw* "The Upbringing"

- i. *Wanáxws* – respect
- ii. *Timitstut/Telhkem'*, Exertion/Diligence

Cluster Two: *Nilh Lhtim' a-chet*, "Those are our Ways"

- iii. Identity
- iv. Pride
- v. Ways of Knowing
- vi. Humour
- vii. Teaching Methodology
- viii. Texture

Cluster One, “the Upbringing” relayed the traditional values that were instilled in a child from the time he or she could crawl, and are essential the Squamish culture. The *xw'nixw'* includes the relationship to family, and to each other. They are a part of the relationship to traditional Squamish society, both people and place.

Wanáxws, the way of showing respect, was not determined individually, by one's own actions and behaviour, but it was contingent upon the values of the family. The way one showed respect demonstrated the teachings of the family.

This part of the upbringing is inherent in the language, and to teach the language is to teach these values. The elders spoke of their elders and how they worked hard and practiced discipline, *Timitstut/Telhkem'*. These were qualities that their elders, the speakers of the language, maintained and passed on to the co-participants influencing their outlook on the value of the language. It is these types of values that must be maintained. It is *why* we must revitalize the language.

In Cluster Two, *Nilh Lhtim' a-chet*, “Those are our Ways”, synthesize aspects of ‘culture’ and ‘identity’. Transmission of culture is through the Squamish language and this is lessened when we communicate through English. Instead of giving examples of why the language is important through all of the themes in this cluster, I focus on ways of knowing and texture.

Ways of knowing, transmitted through the oral tradition, are imperative to the Squamish people. Kwitelut recollected the stories of Kal'kalilh and sinelhk'ay from her childhood. She began to hear stories as a young child. She was born in 1910. Melkws, the last trained oral historian, was interviewed by Hill-Tout only 13 years prior to this in 1897. The flood of white people that populated the city of Vancouver coincided with

building of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1886, 24 years prior to Kwitelut's birth. Vancouver is a young city; colonialism did not occur that long ago, but its impact quickly created turbulence, diminishing Squamish ways of knowing with each subsequent generation born.

Kwitelut's responses to my questions in the interview were from her memories and filled with details. She was raised by the "old people", the ones who remembered what the territory was like before it became a major city. She speaks like them.

The texture of the language refers to the "quality" of the Squamish language. It reflects who we are as a people. It is not a rushed language when speaking it to each other; it is spoken slowly giving respect to the person being spoken to. There are subtle nuances to the language giving it humour, or providing information about how one has received information, directly or indirectly. For the re-emergent speakers, like Lucille Nicholson, speaking the Squamish language, feels different internally, "certain words that seem to be coming out with a kindness, of whatever you were saying...The emotion was already there with whatever you were talking about". It is critical that this speech is passed on to the next generation.

### **What Should Be Done to Revitalize the Language?**

The elders suggest that the following steps be taken for language revitalization:

- 1) The children need to learn the language.
- 2) It must be spoken by multiple age groups.

In order to revitalize the Squamish language the elders believe that it is imperative that the children are taught the Squamish language – this needs to occur in the education system and the homes.

The Squamish Nation must ensure that a “language nest” and immersion school, similar to the model of the Maori and Hawaiians have priority in the funding scheme. Tiyaltelut stated that the Squamish Nation should ensure financial backing to “have an immersion school which is strictly Squamish”. Having an education system in the language is not enough. Chiyalhiya, Lila Johnston, said, “I would like to see that happen because I see that when you go into the nursery school and then you come back and we have to continue the language at home also. And that way the little kids can really have respect for their language when they’re growing”.

The language must be spoken in the homes: Young parents need to be targeted, and they will need support in order to learn and speak the language. The parents will need program support, resources, methods, and encouragement. Almost all of the elders indicated that encouragement is one of the fundamental means to language revitalization, and is a necessary motivator to ensure that is spoken in the next generation. Nekwsaliya, Margaret Locke, believes that this needs to occur from support of the extended family, “[e]ncourage them, talk to them, explain to them the future. They’ll be the next leaders. [Encourage them] so that they’ll learn to teach their children when they learn to have a family. To have a generation to teach them, have it go on an on like that”. It is the strength of the extended family that will bind intergenerational transmission of the Squamish language.

Multiple age groups need to hear and speak the language as well. Telsentsut described how important it is to bring the language back into the community:

[S]o you can speak to your people at gatherings, I think that’s the biggest part, speaking in gatherings to speak Squamish and stuff like that. Cause that what’s Lena was saying, she says we should have more speakers speaking in the longhouse, speaking our own language.

The language needs to be spoken at cultural houses, as well as at community events and at meetings. Kwitelut, Lena Jacobs, believes that we should target specific community interests like the lacrosse players:

*Tsexwshit chexw, tsexwshit chexw, texnew' chexw.* And they'd get the white man all confused, they don't know what they were saying. Shoot, shoot, shoot, or throw it to someone that's close to the goal. So that was great to speak our language. I was telling Nathan they should learn how to speak our language, so when they're playing they could speak our language to each other, eh.

Bringing the language back into multiple venues is a way to ensure that it reaches all facets of the community, and it becomes present, again, in day- to-day life.

## **Summary**

The *Nexwniw'n ta a Imats*, the Elders' Language Advisory, is the key to bringing the language back. The elders are committed to the vision of language revitalization. The Advisory supports language use and provides encouragement for all members involved.

From these interviews, along with Squamish Nation's own legacy of language use in the community, from the literature search, data, and through personal observation, I conclude this thesis with Ten Rules of Engagement in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Squamish Nation has used several avenues to promote language learning and language status within the community. None of these strategies have been highly



successful as very few highly proficient speakers have emerged. Squamish Nation does not have the luxury of time; the language-speaking elders will not be with us forever. We must act. I recommend *Ten Rules of Engagement* that are necessary for language revitalization in the Squamish Nation. These rules stem from the research methodologies, the measures that Squamish Nation has done thus far, the literature review, and the interviews. All of these steps are needed in order for language revitalization to be successful. The first five rules lay the foundation for engagement and the last five rules are action-oriented.

### **Ten Rules of Engagement**

#### **1) Commitment**

Without commitment, language revitalization will never happen. The Squamish Nation is fortunate in that it already has the commitment of the Elders' Language Advisory and the support of the existing second language speakers and learners. The Department of Education, under the leadership of Snitelwit, Deborah Jacobs, formed the *Nexwniw'n ta a Imats*, and at the time of writing, is planning the vision for Squamish Language Immersion School. The Squamish Language surveys that were looked at in CHAPTER TWO show that the community believes the language is important.

However, the group does not have to be large. As we saw in the Californian Breath of Life Program, they had the commitment of at least one language-speaking elder and one willing language learner. The Hawaiians began their *Renaissance* with small groups of elders, parents, and educators. The key is that the committed people are willing to act.

## **2) Counteract Language Stigma**

Squamish Nation has endured colonialism, the effects of which are still felt in the community. This impacts the value placed on the language. There still are people who do not see the value of language and may ask: What use is the language today in this modern world? Will the language get my son into college? Will the language bring me a paycheque?

The myth that second language acquisition inhibits learning English still exists. Studies show that bilingual children perform better on academic tests than their monolingual counterparts.<sup>75</sup> The quotes from CHAPTER THREE ground the value of the language and show what is lost when a language dies. Language revitalization revives the core teachings and world view of who we are, and where we are located as a people. Squamish Nation has a traditional territory, and the language belongs there. There is no other place in the world to learn it.

This stigma must be acknowledged and discussed to show that it is a part of the hegemony, a trapping of the dominant culture to devalue what is sacred and at the heart of the people.

## **3) Vision**

A vision is needed for language revitalization to occur in the Squamish Nation. The Department of Education has a vision as it relates for formal schooling and curriculum. This is the Department's mandate. The Squamish Nation, as a whole, needs a plan for the next ten, twenty, and one-hundred years.

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<sup>75</sup> See Kirkness, Reyhner

The Maori's vision stabilized and has slightly reversed language shift. It transformed the educational system all the way from Language Nests to the university level. The vision enabled changes at the governmental level in New Zealand, as well as in the public broadcasting sector. Like any vision, it cannot stop there.

The Squamish Nation needs to have a vision, separate, yet one that coincides with the Department of Education's planning, as they are the ones that have been facilitating the lion's share of language renewal. A vision for the language planning sessions need to occur within multiple sectors of the community, including elders, government, and youth. From this point, more people can be incorporated into the vision, and strategies can be formed to move the vision forward.

#### **4) The Elders Language Advisory Group is Core**

*Nexwniw'n ta a Imats*, the Elders' Language Advisory, is at the centre of language revitalization. They are the treasure that we have with us, the ones that grew up speaking the language. Their support, guidance, and teachings are what ground the movement. They also need support. As Vanessa Campbell identified earlier in CHAPTER TWO, the purpose of the group's meeting is:

*Nichimstway:*            talking to each other

*Chenchensway:*        supporting each other

*Ts'itsaptway:*            working with each other

Although this group accomplishes that, more methods and supports are needed to enable this key group of people to speak to each other in the language on a more regular basis and at different venues.

## **5) Language Revitalization Involves More than Language Learning**

Many of the methods used in language revitalization involve more generic methods of teaching such as Total Physical Response or the Berlitz “Method”. Although these methods enable language learning, the essence of the language, as was given in great detail from the interviews, must not be lost. There is more to a language than understanding a phrase such as, “Pick up the pencil and put it on the table by my coffee cup”, which is common to the Total Physical Response method.

The old people began teaching the children the *Xw'nixw'*, the upbringing, from the time the children were babies. It is critical that this aspect of language is not left out, regardless of the age of the learner.

## **6) Mobilize the Speakers**

The Squamish Nation has the elders, the highly proficient speakers and the re-emergent speakers, and a group of second language speakers who have a high amount of proficiency in the language. The elders and the second language speakers need to develop a mentorship program geared at increasing fluency levels.

This program could be modelled after the Master-Apprenticeship approach in California, with more complex objectives other than conversational fluency. The Squamish Nation is fortunate to have Peter Jacobs who, at the time of writing this thesis, is intending to write a teaching grammar for the Squamish language as a part of his PhD dissertation. His expertise, coupled with the willingness and energy of the highly proficient speakers, is one way to mobilize and strengthen the fluency and involvement of this group.

## **7) Develop Multiple Formal and Informal Strategies**

Multiple strategies need to be used in language revitalization. One of these formal strategies under development by the Department of Education is the Immersion School planning process, coupled with adult language classes. Informal strategies need further development like utilizing language with cultural groups, such as the canoe family or lacrosse players. Language can be used while gathering traditional resources or otherwise being out on the land.

Language use within the community needs to be targeted in formal settings as well as in every-day activities. It is also crucial that multiple age groups are targeted for spontaneous language use.

## **8) Build Family Networks**

Intergenerational language use is necessary in reversing language shift. Many Indigenous communities have targeted language programming towards young parents and their babies to try and re-introduce language into the home. Investing in babies learning the language is the most natural way to produce speakers, as they grow up with the language.

The Maori reflected their philosophy of family into the early child-hood nests with the *whanau*, by creating an extended family within the school system that practice the values and principles central to the language and culture.

Young parents will also need some programming and resource support geared towards their child's development as well as their own language learning.

## **9) Adult Education**

Adult education courses need to be developed as well. On top of teaching strategies for adult second language learners, there is the stigma attached of not being able to speak their language because of residential schooling. First of all, it takes time to learn the language, and classrooms for many people are intimidating. I have seen this personally while attending the adult Squamish language courses that used to be offered at the Recreation Centre. The stigma attached to the language needs to be addressed in each course.

The sounds of the language are often very different from English, and it takes a lot of practice to train the to make the right sound. In June 2006, the Department of Education staff became students in the Introductory to Squamish Language pilot course offered through NVIT. One of the tools that helped with “phonemic development” was an animated computer video that showed where the tongue was placed and how air moved through the mouth when pronouncing each letter of the Squamish alphabet. Tools such help second language acquisition, and further ways of development need to be explored.

## **10) Resource Development**

The Squamish Nation Department of Education has developed curriculum materials for over twenty years. Many of the materials are at the initiative of individual teachers. Some of the recent resources developed include a children’s book, two adult learning work books accompanied with audio CDs, a Kal’kalilh CD-ROM bingo game

that focuses on family terms. There are also two interactive websites that are geared towards children that focus on traditional territory and on the traditional naming ceremony, in the Squamish language. Further resources need to be developed that target the schools and community use.

## **Summary**

The above Ten Rules of Engagement are necessary to implement Squamish Language Revitalization. These are not the only principles of action for language revitalization; this list is not meant to be exhaustive. There are collaborative partnerships and other strategies that Indigenous communities have engaged in to support their language revitalization efforts. Each community revitalizing their language utilized the available resources and did what works for them.

These recommendations were deliberate and crucially were based on the interviews, methodology, literature review of three select Indigenous communities, Squamish history of language, and observations in my own work as a curriculum developer and language learner.

The overarching theme is that you need the speakers and the learners to be willing to commit to the language, and the language teaching strategies and curriculum must retain its world-view, ways of knowing, and the context of how it was traditionally learned. The language is at the heart of where people come from – from the traditional territory of the *Skwxwú7mesh Uxwumixw* in British Columbia – and from the elders who speak the language. The teachings of the ancestors are wrapped in the Squamish language, *Skwxwú7mesh snichim. Na mi k'anatsut ta snichim-chet.*

## EPILOGUE

In the long ago, animals used to be in human form. They wrapped themselves in a blanket to transform into the form of animals as we see them today.

Swat kwi a sna? She stands wrapped in a blanket, waiting to receive a name that has been passed down for generations. When she has received the *kweshamen*, the ancestral name, she removes the blanket, and sheds her former identity for a new one.

In our traditions we understand our connection to the land and to the animals; it is a part of who we are, and where we come from.

Swat kwi a sna? Who do you come from?

The *kweshamen* comes from the ancestors who resided in specific villages. The people who carried the names held certain rights that included land stewardship, spiritual and cultural practices, and were experts in specialized fields of knowledge. These ancestral names appear in the legends when beings that were *stl'alkem*, supernatural creatures, walked on the earth. There are names of warriors recorded in oral history dating back to times of war with traditional enemies. These names will be here one hundred, two hundred years from now.

In our language, we understand not only who we come from, but we understand where we need to go. Na mi k'anatsut ta snichim-chet , our language is coming back



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## APPENDIX A

### Interview Questions

#### Elders Interview Questions

1. Please Describe your earliest memories of hearing and speaking Squamish. Who did you first hear the language from, who spoke it to you? How has that person influenced you throughout your life? Where did you grow up?
2. How do you think that your childhood was different being raised in Squamish than being raised in English? Did you speak the language with your childhood friends? Was there a period of time that you didn't speak it? How did you begin speaking the language again? Was it hard for you?
3. What changes in the Squamish language have you observed through your lifetime? How has the community's attitude in the language changed in your lifetime?
4. What does speaking the language mean to you? How does it affect you? Why is speaking the language important? What does the term Skwxwu7mesh Uxwumixw mean to you?
5. When did you first begin teaching the language to others? What motivated you to do this? What were the challenges? What are the greatest rewards in teaching the language to others?
6. What were your elders like with the xwnixw'? How is temixw connected to the language? Have you learned anything about the land through the language? Do you ever dream in Squamish?
7. I've heard that speaking the language is necessary in keeping our culture, is that true?
8. Do you believe the Squamish language can be revitalized, that it can become a living language, used as much as English in everyday life? If so, what will it take? What do you think our priorities should be in revitalizing our language? What do we need to do in order to save it?
9. Why is it important to have the people keep speaking the Squamish language in future generations to come?
10. Is there anything that I haven't asked you that you would like to contribute to this conversation? Is there anything that you would like to add to what you have already said?