

Culture is lived; language gives it life

by

Joan Brown

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

In Indigenous Education, in partnership  
With the Department of Linguistics

© Joan Brown, 2016  
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy  
or other means, without the permission of the author.

## Supervisory Committee

Culture is lived; language gives it life

by

Joan Brown

Hay tseep qa'

Shsiii'em' musteyuxw:

Supervisor: Dr. Peter Jacobs  
Department of Linguistics  
University of Victoria

Committee Members:

Dr. Donna Gerds  
Department of Linguistics  
University of Victoria

Dr. Dorothy Kennedy  
Department of Linguistics  
University of Victoria

## Abstract

The overall goal of this paper is to explore the various learning strategies of our Ancestors with one purpose in mind, to find a way to strengthen our hul'q'umi'num' revitalization efforts. Particularly, the research considers hul'q'umi'num' in the context of a much larger system, that is, its relationship to the land, the culture and its people. It is my idea that studying language within this cultural context and relating language recovery strategies to canoe ceremonial practices and experiences will reveal a preferred Coast Salish learning sequence, necessary values and the essential attitudes required for reclaiming an Indigenous language. In essence, it will teach us how to live and learn from a supernatural being like hul'q'umi'num'.

What I have come to realize is that this canoe learning model, a gift from the Elders, has been left to help us understand that learning progresses through a sacred process that is reliant on two domains. To be exact our learning model is entrenched in two separate but mutually supporting worlds; a spiritual world and a physical world. I argue that defining these unique learning techniques will reveal a natural learning sequence and a natural learning framework that ultimately, will assist language teachers in developing lessons from a Coast Salish perspective.

## Table of contents

Supervisory Committee .....	ii
Abstract .....	iii
Table of contents .....	iv
List of Tables .....	v
List of Figures .....	vi
Acknowledgments .....	vii
Dedication .....	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
1.1 Problem Statement .....	2
1.2 The Researcher .....	3
1.3 Guiding Methodologies .....	4
1.3.1 Inspiration .....	4
1.3.2 Purpose .....	6
1.3.3 Framework .....	7
1.4 Chapter Outline .....	8
Chapter Two: Learning from the Land .....	9
2.1 Land of the Snuneymuxw .....	16
Chapter Three: Hul'q'umi'num' Sqwel .....	19
3.1 Elders Include Dialect Differences .....	20
3.2 Snuneymuxwqun, the power of words .....	24
Chapter Four: Learning Cultural Practices .....	27
4.1 Learning about Spirit from our Elders: Seasons of our Life .....	29
4.2 Learning from our Ancient stories .....	33
4.3 Cultural teachings as a Coast Salish pedagogy .....	35
Chapter Five: View from the Canoe .....	37
5.1 Perspectives: all though we are many bodies, our oneness is undeniable .....	39
5.2 Oral Traditions: The Language brings culture to life. ....	41
5.3 The Collective – an important source of knowledge .....	43
5.3.1 Collective-self, remember your history .....	44
5.3.2 Honor the Language Learner .....	45
5.3.3 A Time for Introspection: Am I pulling my own weight? .....	46
5.4 Preparation: A personal responsibility .....	47
5.4.2 'uy' shqweluwun .....	48
5.5 Make a Connection: To live and be in the presence of the sacred .....	49
5.5.1 Cultural use of silence .....	52
Chapter Six: Conclusion .....	58

## List of Tables

Table 1 Words in Snuneymuxw versus other hul'q'umi'num' areas .....	22
---	----

## List of Figures

Figure 1 our historical relationship to the lands (Snuneymuxw Traditional Use Study, 1993) .....	17
Figure 2: Natural laws.....	30
Figure 3: Coast Salish Perspectives. Adopted from Common Curriculum Framework...	38
Figure 4: Coast Salish Framework.....	58

## Acknowledgments

Although words can never express the depth of my gratitude, I would like to offer my thanks:

First and foremost I would like to thank the first Ancestors who have walked with me and guided me through this process. Thank you for allowing me to reflect on and be part of your sacred knowledge. I pray that I have represented a Coast Salish way of being in a good way. Also, I would like to thank the Elders who have preserved our stories that have been passed down from one generation to the next. This project would not be possible without your wisdom.

To the Snuneymuxw Education thank you for your on-going support, especially in my most difficult times. To professors and staff of the Master's in Indigenous Language Revitalization Program thank you for your foresight and brilliance in the development of this life-changing program.

I am deeply indebted to my supervisor Dr. Peter Jacobs, thank you for supervising the committee and above all, thank you for encouraging me through this process; you have been a great medicine, helping me find balance so that I could keep my "academic" paddle in the water. Dorothy Kennedy, thank you for your on-going support and helping me take the ever first step in this journey. Also, to Dr. Donna Gerds, thank you for all the time spent editing and helping me improve my paper. You are an amazing woman, and I will be forever grateful for your friendship.

Thank you to Donna and to Aunty Ruby Peter for providing the Hul'q'umi'num' translations for stories and inspiring me to follow the teachings- our own language and culture must come first. Aunty Ruby's words really helped bring this thesis to life. Ruby's work is supported by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

A special thank you to my classmates who helped make this journey a time of great spiritual growth, you will be forever in my heart and mind.

I wish to thank my family and friends. To my parents I would like to thank you for spiritually guiding me and leaving our family with teaching to follow. You have always encouraged us all to be the best that we can be. To my late brother-in-law William, words will never express my gratitude. You have been one of my greatest teachers. Thank you. To my sisters and brother, Amy, Mandy, Penny and Clayton, thank you for carrying the teaching of our parents, when I see you I see our mom and dad, what a gift! Thank you for all that you do and thank you for remembering and sharing your stories. Most of all thank you forever encouraging me, proof reading and formatting my paper. To my brother-in-law Andy, thank you for being there for me, you always have kind words and advice when I need it the most. Also, I would like to thank Laura and Kelly Antoine; you have been a great inspiration, thank you for your great kindness and great knowledge.

viii

Finally, to my first and only love, Jerry, my husband who has always been there for me, keeping me focused and true to our way of being. Thank you for your kindness, wisdom and for spending countless hours talking through the ideas of this paper.



## **Dedication**

This paper is dedicated to our First Ancestors who have left us with a rich and beautiful cultural heritage. Their undying wisdom has been the source of my inspiration and my determination. I will be forever grateful for their gifts of knowledge and a spiritual way of life.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

*This day belongs to Hul'q'umi'num'. We will honor and recognize it as one of the sacred spiritual energies of the Coast Salish people. We humbly pray and ask Hul'q'umi'num' to have pity on. Please rejoin all the natural elements of our land. Without you, our sacred language, we are incomplete; we are strangers in our own land.*

This section is intended to extend an invitation to the readers: “you are all invited.” When you are asked in this traditional way, it is understood that this is an open invitation.

Today readers are invited to witness and to be part of a ceremonial canoe journey, a journey that will explore various aspects of Coast Salish knowledge systems. As we will discover, these complex knowledge systems can only be fully appreciated by first, understanding and recognizing the spiritual relationship between the land, language and culture. In an attempt to discover a more advanced cultural understanding of this concept, we will focus our discussion in the perspective of a specific land. To this end, I have chosen the Snuneymuxw lands, its culture and its language, Hul'q'umi'num', to be the focal point of this research.<sup>1</sup> Finally, this section will provide a backdrop for the overall discussion in the hopes of helping you and I to make a deeper connection with the ancestral ideas discussed throughout this paper, with an emphasis on the language component.

---

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this work I use the term Snuneymuxw to refer to my First Nation, spelt as they spell it. In terms of pronunciation, this is phonetically [snənéyməx<sup>w</sup>], ending in a rounded velar fricative. In current Hul'q'umi'num' orthography, though, this is rendered as snuneymuhw, as the rounded velar fricative is written by an *hw*. The variety of the language spoken by the Snuneymuxw, I will refer to as Snuneymuxwqun, with the suffix *-qun*, which means throat or mouth.

## 1.1 Problem Statement

In terms of language revitalization, this paper considers two problems. First, it is well known that Indigenous people are highly dependent on a spiritual way of life, in a present-day context; it suggests that we must find balance between a traditional way of life and a contemporary lifestyle, living in two worlds, if you will. To emphasize this duality, I will present my ideas in two voices. The first voice will be a narrative voice, reflecting a traditional way sharing information, telling and re-telling our Coast Salish myths and legends. These narratives will also include personal paddling<sup>2</sup> stories. This approach is my way of honoring the land and the Coast Salish knowledge system. The second voice is an academic voice, in part to fulfill the requirements of the University, but more importantly to draw attention, as I mentioned earlier, to our present day reality we live in two worlds. In this sense, I will refer to the use of two voices as “paddling on both sides”. It will be a reoccurring theme throughout the document, and the rationale for it will be discussed later in this paper. I will highlight these different voices and honor their respective roles by changing the font, as I change my voice. The italic font will be used for the narratives and a normal font will be used for the academic voice.

Secondly, although one of the ultimate goals of this paper is to find a balance between a traditional life style and a modern world, it has become a major concern that our modern community, as in other Indigenous communities, is continually slipping further away from the traditional ways of our Ancestors, especially as it relates to the language. One of the major problems is that there is now a tendency to teach our

---

<sup>2</sup> paddling – refers to the cultural activity of war canoe racing. It is a Coast Salish event that has been practiced for the past one hundred and fifty years. It is highly competitive; cultural event that is hosted throughout Coast Salish territory.

language devoid of the culture. I suggest that this trend has become a setback. For example, although there have been significant efforts in our community, including documenting and recording our language and offering beginning language classes,<sup>3</sup> this approach has maintained a positive momentum, but it has not been significant enough to reverse the decline of our language.

I argue that in view of the above discussion, it becomes obvious that there are some important elements missing from our language revitalization efforts. Therefore, the major thrust of this paper is twofold. First, it is an attempt to discover the significant elements, if any, that are missing from our language efforts. Also, the paper will attempt to find a much needed balanced approach to our language work, one that is best suited to work well both in an academic setting and a traditional setting. The chapters that follow are intended to help us answer these questions.

## 1.2 The Researcher

*'uy' skweyul sii'em' nu sul-hwenen, sii'em' nu siiye'yu. 'een'thu p'e'  
 Ququmalwut tun'ni' tsun 'utl' Snuneymuhw, mun'u 'utl' Qwutqumustun  
 George Wyse 'i' Marge Thomas, 'imuth 'utl' Geroge Thomas, tun'ni' 'utl'  
 Leey'qsun 'i' Anistasa Williams, tun'ni' 'utl' Quw'utsun' 'i' Jimmy-Joe  
 Wyse tun'ni' 'utl' Snuneymuhw 'i' Ellen Rice tun'ni' 'utl' Pune'luxutth'.*

First, I would like to position myself in relation to our language, Snuneymuxwqun. I have been a student of the language for the past five years. My progress has been very slow to say the least. I want to change this trend and become an active, aggressive learner of the language. I want my parents and grandparents to be proud of my accomplishments. I also

---

<sup>3</sup> To date, language lessons are predominantly offered in the public school system.

want them to find peace in the fact that their life-time sacrifices have become a great help for the people. But, of course, this means that I cannot settle for only learning our ceremonies, protocols and laws. In a traditional model, as many Elders have said, our way of life cannot exist without our language. On a more personal note, I ask, what is it that stops me from learning the language?

### **1.3 Guiding Methodologies**

*This is a story about the Coast Salish People and their efforts to Preserve a way of life. The Elders will help tell this story in such a way that we will realize their definition of language revitalization is not about saving a language, but rather, it is about restoring a way of life.*

In this section I will discuss how I approached my research, with special attention to the sources of my inspiration and the rationale for the framework. From a Coast Salish perspective, research is a lived experience. We have been told many times, in many different ways that we can only speak about what we have experienced. This paper is no exception; my research for the most part is a reflection of my experiences within the Snuneymuxw community.

#### **1.3.1 Inspiration**

I have drawn the majority of my inspiration for this work from my parents, especially from my late father George Wyse.<sup>4</sup> My father, as did the other Elders of his time, modeled a strong commitment to the people, high standards of work ethic and an unmovable love for our culture. As well, he was constantly challenging us to do more, to

---

<sup>4</sup> My late father's, parents were: his father was the late Jimmy Joe Wyse, and his late mother the late Ellen Rice

be better in every aspect of our life. But most importantly, in terms of our language, he honored, cherished and showed a strong preference for our own dialect, Snuneymuxwqun. He was so proud to be Snuneymuxw. I often think about his passion, and in my walk of life, I attempt to follow his lead. This thesis is my beginning, this is my testimony, and this is my humble effort to follow in the footsteps of my father. *Snuneymuxw tsun* “I am Snuneymuxw”, and thus the focus of my work are greatly influenced by a Coast Salish worldview.

Secondly, I have been inspired by my nephew Mike Wyse.<sup>5</sup> My nephew, just as my father did, is devoted to family, community and a Coast Salish lifestyle. A testimony to his commitment to our way of life is evident in the way he manages and leads his canoe club- Island Brave. I had an opportunity to witness his love of our culture and passion for our language when I first started this journey; my intention was to study the impact of language learning in the context of canoe culture, by offering language classes to the Island Brave Canoe. I will never forget, the first time I asked my nephew to be part of my language project he said, “Yes, of course, anything for the language.” His response set the tempo for this projects language classes that followed in summer of 2014.

Learning the language in a cultural context, was intended to create an opportunity for club members to hear and absorb the language before their daily canoe practice. My sister Mandy Jones and my nephew Thomas Jones were the teachers for this project. They offered hul’q’umi’num’ lessons with an emphasis on canoe vocabulary. The traditional setting was perfect and in the same manner as my nephew, the Island Brave crew demonstrated a tremendous commitment to the language. But as exciting these language lessons were my nephew Mike reminded me of an important teaching. One day

---

<sup>5</sup> Mike’s late Grandfather, Alfred Wyse, was my father’s older Brother.

after a lesson, my sister and I were standing on the beach with Mike and he asked: “What was it like when you paddled Aunty?”<sup>6</sup> He said, “I remember watching your canoe club come around the point, always singing, singing loud and strong.” It was obvious that this was one of his fondest canoe memories.

When I think back on that day, I still see the gleam in his eye, like so many of us wishing for the old ways. His question had such a great impact on me. In a subtle way, he reminded me of my father’s philosophy, that there is more to be told about our language; I will be forever grateful to my nephew, challenging me to do more, to dig a little deeper. Mike’s thirst for more has inspired me to change the focus of my research, as described in the next section.

### **1.3.2 Purpose**

The overall goal of this paper is to explore the various learning strategies of our Ancestors with one purpose in mind, to find an authentic way to strengthen our hul’q’umi’num’ revitalization efforts. Particularly, the research considers Hul’q’umi’num’ in the context of a much larger system, that is, its relationship to the land, the culture and its people.

It is my idea that studying language within this cultural context and relating language recovery strategies to canoe ceremonial practices will do just that. In addition, I suspect that canoe experiences will reveal a preferred Coast Salish learning sequence, necessary values and the essential attitudes required for reclaiming an Indigenous language. In essence, it will teach us how to live and learn from a supernatural being like hul’q’umi’num’.

---

<sup>6</sup> I paddled on the *Prince Charles* for over a decade, forty years ago. I was eleven years old when I started, which is common for women who come from a family of paddlers.

### 1.3.3 Framework

In this section I would like to offer some insight to the rationale for my framework. Of particular importance and inspiration for the design of the framework are the techniques and ceremonial requirements associated with the natural elements. I found that there is a great source of information documented through many of the Coast Salish myths and legends. It is important to note that these stories have always been the cornerstone of our knowledge systems. Since the beginning of time, the Ancestors have used this great oral tradition to transfer their knowledge between generations. From this viewpoint, this thesis is highly dependent on story work in that at times it will read more like a narrative.

In honor of this process, each of the narratives that I present will have a sacred seat on the canoe; the canoe, with stories at the helm, will offer insight to the sacred teachings and lessons that will give emphasis to the importance of placing language learning and language revitalization in the context of a whole-system approach. Accordingly, the primary objective of this research is to discover the elements of canoe culture that lead to a natural way of language learning.

I have been inspired by the story work of our Ancestors and also by Halkomelem scholars Jo-Ann Archibald (1997) and Ethel Gardner (2002), who have also used narratives to present their thoughts and ideas.<sup>7</sup> I will follow their example and allow storytelling to provide the framework and the methodology. I hope that this story work will offer a life-changing experience for canoe club members and for the rest of our community. Also I anticipate that these stories will ignite a new conversation, a conversation that will change the way we think and feel about our language.

---

<sup>7</sup> Also, see Shawn Wilson (2008), Trish Rosborough (2012), amongst other indigenous scholars who have used narratives as a means of presenting their ideas.



## 1.4 Chapter Outline

This paper is organized into six chapters based on an Indigenous perspective of land, language and culture. The following is a brief description of each chapter.

Chapter two introduces one of the Snuneymuxw origin stories and provides an outline of the Snuneymuxw territory to give a sense of the many gifts that the land has to offer. In addition, this chapter offers important foundational values that are critical to understanding and honoring our relationship to the land.

Chapter three describes the Snuneymuxw Elders' priorities and language revitalization strategies, including their attention to dialect differences. Also, this chapter considers the spiritual qualities of our language, recognizing that Hul'q'umi'num' comes from the land, and thus it is considered to be a living, breathing entity.

Chapter four introduces some of the key aspects of a Coast Salish way of life, especially as it relates to the spiritual nature of our people. The overall intent of this chapter is to demonstrate the importance our people place on spirituality. But it also will demonstrate that the canoe teaches and maintains the important protocol and practices related to a spiritual way of life.

Drawing on the concepts of the previous chapters, Chapter five gives an illustration of how cultural teachings and learning are deeply related. It considers the teaching and protocols of the canoe with the intent of teaching us how to live with and be one with the sacred. I argue that if we consider and honor Hul'q'umi'num' in the same manner as we do the canoe, we will uncover a natural framework for learning our language.

Chapter six offers final comments and considerations for future work.

## **Chapter Two: Learning from the Land**

*To know the language, is to know the land. From mountain to sea, from sea to mountain, Snuneymuxw land our first and greatest teacher. This is our place. This is the root of our worldview.*

The overall goal of this chapter is to illustrate the importance of learning the language in the context of its relationship to the land.<sup>8</sup> From a Coast Salish perspective, as for other Indigenous communities, the land is known and honored as the birthplace of our knowledge system, our culture and our language. Given the range and diversity of the Coast Salish landscape, we need to narrow the discussion to one community in order to acquire a deeper level of understanding. For this reason, I will limit my discussion to the specifics of a particular land, the Snuneymuxw traditional lands—the homeland of my ancestors. This approach allows me to convey a sense of the unique characteristics, the vastness and the beauty of the Snuneymuxw territory, with an emphasis on its cultural practices.

As mentioned in the previous section, I will turn to one of our traditional stories. In this case I will draw on a sacred origin story. I have learned that complexities of our land and our knowledge systems are better understood by considering some of the experiences of our people as described in our traditional stories. But, more importantly, these origin stories will represent the first building block in our proposed framework. Historically, the intention of sharing an origin story was to share knowledge and to emphasize the importance of the relationship with their lands. Therefore, in the same

---

<sup>8</sup> Land has always spoken to the Indigenous Peoples of America as a living entity. Not in the Western sense of a nutrient-rich soil, capable of bearing life in the form of trees, plants, insects, animals, etc, but as an ancient sentient, intelligent, wise being, capable of inspiring and instilling knowledge, providing visions and dreams of a higher and subtler nature (Machado, 2012, p. 142).

vein, I begin our discussions with an orientation to the land through one of our origin stories.<sup>9</sup>

The origin story that follows is told by my great-grandmother Tsass-Aya (Jenny Wyse).<sup>10</sup> Although there are many lessons and teachings in this story, for this particular conversation I would like to draw attention to *te'tuxutun* (Mount Benson) and *stl'illup* (Departure Bay), two distinct ecosystems in the Nanaimo area. As it is for all Island Coast Salish communities, the mountain realm and the sea world are two sacred systems that are not only interconnected, but both play a critical role in Coast Salish pedagogy. With honor and respect, here is the origin of the Snuneymuxw *musteyuhw*.<sup>11</sup> This is our Nation's beginning and the foundation of our ancestral learning model:<sup>12</sup>

*shtun'ni's tu snuneymuhw musteyuhw*

Origin of the Snuneymuxw People

*'u tuw' hwun'a' 'ul' 'i' nilh tu sum'shathut yu they't tu musteyuhw.*

In the beginning, the Sun, *sum'shathut*, was creating people.

*ts'uhwle' 'i' nuw' na'nuts'a' 'ul' tu ni' thuytus 'i' ts'uhwle' 'i' yey'sul'u musteyuhw tu ni' thuytus. 'i' nilh kwus nets' tu ni' shhwunum'ustuhws tu musteyuhw.*

Sometimes he made one and sometimes two and it put the people in different places.

*thuytus tuw'nilh sum'shathut tu 'a'hwul'muhw, swuy'qe' 'i' thu slheni'.*

*sus 'uw' nemust-hwus 'u tu te'tuxwtun tu yey'sul'u 'a'hwul'muhw.*

The Sun made a couple, a man and his wife, and he placed them at the foot of Mount Benson.

---

<sup>9</sup> These First Ancestor stories also evokes principals of spirit power in teaching ... they blanket highly significant areas of land, their mythical weight comparable to Jerusalem or Bethlehem (Thom, 2000, pp 93-111).

<sup>10</sup> This story was collected from Jenny Wyse by Beryl M. Cryer in around 1933, as quoted in Bouchard (1992, p. 12).

<sup>11</sup> Thank you to Ruby Peter for translating the story into Hul'q'umi'num', Donna Gerdts for transcribing it and doing the English translation, and Thomas Jones for helping to edit it into Snuneymuxwqun.

<sup>12</sup> Several different versions of this story were told to us by our Elders, with details about the various regions of our territory.

*hwun' xut'u 'i' ni' wulh tsme'mu'nu tuw'ne'ullh 'a'hwul'muhw 'u tu  
lhwelu suw'wuy'qe'allh 'i' nuw'ni' 'utl' te'tuxwtun kwus kw'umutus tey'  
lhwelu me'mun'us.*

Eventually they had three sons, and they lived there, raising their children,  
at Mount Benson.

*'i' niilh 'uw' thuytus tu sum'shathut kwthey' tl'uw' 'a'hwul'muhw, 'i' hay  
ni' nemust-hwus 'utl' stl'ilnup.*

At about the same time, the Sun made another couple, a man and his wife,  
and he placed them at Departure Bay.

*susuw' thuyuw't-hwum 'i' nilh tu xpey' ni' hakwushus kwus thuyuw't-  
hwum 'u tu li'lum'.*

They build a dwelling, and cedar was what they used to build themselves a  
little house.

*susuw' tsme'mun'u 'u tu lhwelu shunlheni' 'i' nuw'ni' 'u tey' lelum's,  
xpey' lelum's.*

They had three daughters and they lived together in the cedar house.

*'i' nilh nuw' shni' 'ul' kwus kw'umutus tey' lhwelu me'mun'us.*

They raised their three children there.

*nuts'a' skweyul 'i' wulh ts'elhum'utus tu swuy'qe' tu ni' qwaqwul'stuhw,  
'i' tsusutum' 'uw' xte'umus 'u kw' sxwayxwuy shts'uluhwus.*

One day, he heard a man speaking, and he was telling him to make a  
sxwayxwuy mask.

*'i' tey' ni' qwaqwul'stuhw ni' hw'uw'tsustum 'uw' yu stsekwul'st-hwus tu  
sxwayxwuy shts'uluhwus, sis 'uw' xt'ekw' 'u kwey'.*

And the one speaking to him told him how to use the sxwayxwuy mask.

*'i' hay kwthey' me'mun'us kwu ni' 'utl' te'tuxwtun, kwu lhwelu  
me'mun'us ni' wulh ts'isum, wulh hwu swaw'lus kwu lhwelu.*

Meanwhile the three boys at Mount Benson were growing up and they  
grew into young men.

*ni' wulh tus tu shqwaluwun 'uw' niis stsekwul' tu ni' shni's.*

They started thinking, wondering about that place.

*stl'i's 'eelhtun kws tul'nuhws 'uw' niis tlu'w' ni' kw'u qul'et musteyuhw  
ni' kw'uw' 'untsu 'ul'.*

They wanted to find out if there were other people somewhere else.

*sus nem' 'uw' 'i'mush nem' hee'wu tey' lhwelu swaw'lus.*  
And so the three young men started traveling.

*hwun' xut'u 'i' ni' wulh tus 'utl' stl'ilnup.*  
Finally, they arrived at Departure Bay.

*wulh hwunin'sus tuw'ne'ullh lhwelu swaw'lus tu swuy'qe' ni' 'u tu xpey'  
lelum'.*

There they came upon the man who lived in the cedar house.

*'i' xut'eem' tey' swuy'qe' 'u tu sxwayxwuy shts'uluhwus.*  
He was making the sxwayxwuy mask.

*suw' thut-stuhws 'eelhtun tey' swuy'qe', "nilh kwu men tst nilh hay 'ul'  
'uw' 'ulh s'eluhw.*

The boys said, "Our father is older than you.

*nilh yuw'i'na'qws tuw' mukw' tu musteyuhw."*  
He is the head of all the people."

*wulh qwal tey' xut'ukw' 'u tu shts'uluhwus, thut-st-hwus tu swaw'lus kws  
'uwu ni'us st'e.*

But the man carving the mask disagreed.

*suw' thut-s tuw'nilh swuy'qe', "'een'thu yuw'en' tunu sil'anum 'u kwun'  
men.*

He said, "No, it is I who am the eldest. I am older than your father.

*'een'thu 'uw' shsi'ems tuw' mukw'."*  
I am the head of all."

*'i' nilh kwus wulh lumnuhwus tuw'ne'ullh swaw'lus tu ni' xut'ukw'tum'  
shts'uluhwus, suw' skw'ey kws nem's taantus, skw'ey kws huye's.*

Because the boys had seen the mask he was carving, he would not let them leave.

*suw' kwuyxthut tey' s'elhuhw swuy'qe' suw' tsta'lustum tuw'ne'ullh swaw'lus 'u tu lhwelu me'mun'us q'e'lumi'.*

The man at Departure Bay gave the young men his three daughters in marriage.

*tus 'u tu nuts'a' skweyul 'i' wulh stl'i's tuw'ne'ullh swaw'lus kws nem's nets'uw't-hwum nem' 'utl' te'tuxwtun.*

One day, these three brothers wanted to take their wives and go for a visit to Mount Benson.

*hwun' xut'u 'i' ni' tl'uw' wulh lamtul 'u tu na'nuts'a' swuy'qe' ni' tl'uw' tun'ni' 'u tu sum'shathut kwus thuytum.*

On the way, they came across another man who had also been created by the Sun.

*'i' hay tey' swuy'qe' hay ni' thethi'emthutiilh 'u tu 'a'hwul'muhw. 'i' ni' 'u kwey' 'i' ni' thuytum tu shupmuns sus 'uw' q'putus 'i' ni' thuytus ni' tl'uw' hwu musteyuhw.*

This man was living with another man and woman who he had created from a pile of shavings.

*'i' nilh tu hay 'ul' sa'suqwt 'u kwu lhwelu swaw'lus, yu kwun'atul' 'u thu sta'lusth 'i' wulh lumnuhwus tu qw'uyul'ush susuw' 'unuhw hwu xi'xlhe'mutus 'eelhtun.*

The youngest of the three brothers, as well as his wife, stopped to watch the dance these strangers were doing.

*xelun'uhwus 'eelhtun—nilh kwus tsakw nets' tey' ni' sqw'uyul'ushs.*

They were astonished, as it was a very unusual dance.

*wulh tul'nuhwus tu tsi'tsut 'u tu ni' lumnuhwus tu mun'us susuw' thut-st-hwus skw'ey kws nem's tl'e' t'akw' 'u kwu shhwuw'welis.*

Because of this, the boy's father at Mount Benson would not allow his youngest son to come back home.

*'i hay kwu yey'sul'u shushiyulhs hay ni' nem' 'uw' t'a'kw susuw' nets'uw't-hwum 'u tu shhwuw'welis.*

The two older brothers went home to visit their parents.

*hay kws ne 'nuts 'uw 't-hwum ' sus nem ' 'uw ' hwu 'alum ' 'utl' stl' ilnup  
lelum 's.*

When they were finished visiting, they went back to their home at Departure Bay.

*ni' tun 'ni' 'u tu te 'tuxwtun 'i' ni' hwi' huye' nem ' 'utl' stl' ilnup yu  
kwun 'atul' 'u tu shhwuw 'elis.*

They went from Mount Benson to Departure Bay, taking their parents with them.

*suw' hwu 'uwu te' wet ni' ni' 'utl' te 'tuxwtun.*

So there was no longer anyone at Mount Benson.

*hwun' xut'u 'i' ni' wulh nan 'uw' hwu qux tu musteyuhw ni' 'utl' stl' ilnup.*  
Eventually, there were many people at Departure Bay.

*ni' wulh thuyuw 't-hwum 'eelhtun, hay 'ul' ni' hwu qux hulelum '.*

They build a lot of houses there.

*kwus hay 'ul' hwu qux musteyuhw sus 'uw' t'un' uthut tu hay 'ul' thithu  
hulelum' stutes ni' 'u tu tsuwmun.*

When there were a lot of people and they built their longhouses beside each other close to the beach.

*nem' 'uw' 'usup' 'u tu tsuwmun, sus tl'uw' qul'et t'un' uthut tun'ni' 'u tu  
'unhwulh tl'uw' thithu hulelum '.*

When they filled up at the beach, then there was another row of longhouses built in the middle.

*ne-e-m' tl'uw' 'usup' sus 'uw' hay 'ul' hwu qux hulelum' suw' qul'et  
t'un' uthut tun'ni' 'u tu hay 'ul' lhulheel' 'i' nilh tl'uw' yu st'ee kw'uw' yu  
stutin '.*

When they had filled up with a lot of houses then they built another row lined up behind those.

*hay 'ul' hwu qux hulelum ' . hay 'ul' hwu qux musteyuhw ni' 'utl' stl' ilnup,  
snuneymuhw.*

There are a lot of houses; a lot of people, there are Departure Bay, the Snuneymuxw people.

*tun'ni' kwu 'a'hwul'muhw niilh ni' 'utl' te'tuxwtun cme'mun'u 'u kwu  
suw'wuy'qe' 'i' kwu 'a'hwul'muhw niilh ni' 'utl' stl'ilnup 'i hay lhwelu tu  
swe's slhunlheni' me'mun'us sus 'uw' na'nuts'a' hwu hwnuts'ulwum  
tuw'ne'ullh.*

That couple and their sons from Mount Benson, as well as the couple and their three daughters at Departure Bay, became one family.

*niilh kwu'elh ni' shtun'aalhtuns tu snuneymuhw hwulmuhw.  
sht'es kwus hay 'ul' hwu qux mustuyuhw.*

This is thus the origin of the Snuneymuxw First Nation, the way they become so populous.

*niilh ni' sht'es 'i' ni' hay.*

This is end of the story.

This landscape, as described in this ancient story, is the anchor and the essence of the Snuneymuxw people. A beautifully balanced world beginning with a marriage between the sea world and the majestic lands of the mountain—this has always been our classroom; both land and sea essential to the survival of our Ancestors. Without a doubt these unique beings were the esteemed teachers; they provided all the basic needs for the people, such as teachings, food, shelter, medicines and a doorway to acquire a highly spiritual way of life—this is the perspective of our learning. All in all, this is the beginning of my people, Snuneymuxw, a tribe devoted to each other and to the lands in which they lived, unique in its dialect and its beliefs. In the section that follows we will continue our discussion with a more detailed look at the Snuneymuxw territory, our place of study.



## 2.1 Land of the Snuneymuxw

The intention of this section is to provide a glimpse of the depth of the Snuneymuxw territory and to offer a testimony to the longstanding relationship between a people and their traditional lands. Snuneymuxw's traditional territory ranges from the east coast of Vancouver Island—including Gabriola Island, Mudge Island, and other adjacent islands—to the Nanaimo River watershed. Our villages from the beginning of time have been strategically located along the seashore to enjoy the gifts of the sea. Living on an Island came with many benefits and opportunities. The rich resources of the sea and land provided a prosperous life for our Ancestors. They lived well, using canoes to travel freely on the seaway, following the food source. Our intimate relationship and our connectedness to the seaway could not have been realized without the help of the sacred canoe. The importance of the canoe is understood as summarized here:

The Snuneymuxw followed a yearly round in order to exploit seasonally available resources. That round began in March with the herring runs, when the Snuneymuxw left their winter villages to rake herring and gather herring roe. In April they moved to False Narrows and other locations in the Nanaimo area and the Gulf Islands to dig clams, to fish, and to hunt seals and sea-lions. In August they traveled to the Fraser River for the salmon runs, returning in the fall to the Nanaimo River for the chum salmon. In late December the Snuneymuxw moved from the Nanaimo River back to their winter villages (Bouchard, 1993, pp. 8-10).

In light of the above quote, the following map (figure 2) gives a sense of the distance that our Ancestors traveled in a given year. Our Ancestors acquired great knowledge of the sea. They learned to read tides and weather and had great skills in manoeuvring their canoes through both calm and rough waters. This was the celebrated way of life for our people—each local providing new learning strategies. But for this discussion, hopefully, it gives us a sense that the canoe culture has always been an important part our existence. In addition, the map provides the place names that emphasize the rich experiences and



However, it is noteworthy to add, because of urban sprawl, our visits to the many areas of our territory are now very limited. As a consequence, our relationship to our traditional grounds has been somewhat altered. Thankfully, we have overcome this predicament with the aid of the racing canoe. The canoe, through traditional practices of nature-based learning offers an important re-introduction to our sacred sites.

More specifically, knowledge of the canoe is transferred daily through direct interaction with the natural world, both physical and spiritual. These ritualistic practices brought us to various parts of our territory. For example, at times we would put the canoe on a truck and transport the canoe on land to launch it on one of the lakes to practice. Or we would paddle the seaway to the extreme north or extreme south parts of our territory. The importance of this practice method, as we have discovered, means that every place within our territory offers a unique opportunity to enhance our experiences of the land and our awareness the range of spiritual gifts located throughout our territory. This is how we came to know our lands, to become one with the spirit of our lands. This distinctive practice schedule is a reflection of the wisdom of the Elders. They found a way to keep us connected to the land. Today, I am happy to say, because of my paddling experiences that I know the land, and the land knows me.

### **Chapter Three: Hul'q'umi'num' Sqwel**

The previous chapter offered some insight to the homeland of hul'q'umi'num'; this chapter will continue the conversation with an attempt to understand and appreciate the language from the Elders perspective. To this end, the first part of this discussion will consider the historical work of our Ancestors. Secondly, we will consider some of the spiritual qualities of the language. I propose that understanding these foundational ideas is a critical first step to developing a successful language strategy, one that includes authentic lessons for a class room setting. As we will discover, language lessons in the classroom is becoming increasingly important, to the revival of our language.

I liken learning the language in a school setting with the spare paddle. The spare paddle sits in the front of the canoe. When paddling in a race, there are many obstacles or challenges that may cause you to lose your paddle. For example, one of the most intense times of the race is when you approach a turn. It is at this time that the paddlers are all at risk of losing their paddles. Many paddles break or fall, in the heat of the battle or at the turn. When this happens, without exception, the paddler becomes dependent on the spare paddle to stay in the race. What I have learned by using the spare paddle is that because this paddle has not been made for me, it tends to be the wrong weight and the wrong length. It just does not "feel" the same as my own paddle. However, what is important to note is that the spare paddle is the same shape and, like your own paddle, has the same potential, giving you the ability to stay in the race and an opportunity to keep moving forward.

### 3.1 Elders Include Dialect Differences

This section relates to the past efforts in our community. It is intended to give us a sense of the Elders' priorities and most importantly to give us a reference point for our language strategies priorities and to hopefully begin to understand the importance of language from their viewpoint.

Reclaiming our language and a Coast Salish way of life has been a long-time dream of our Elders. They worked tirelessly to preserve their knowledge of the language for future generations. But despite their amazing past and current efforts, Hul'q'umi'num' like all of the First Nations languages of British Columbia are in a precarious state (Ignace, 2014, p.9). The severity of our situation, as documented by the First Peoples' Cultural Council, Language Needs Assessment, is set out below:

<b>Population</b>							
On-reserve: 640			Off-reserve: 1060		Total population: 1700		
<b>Community: language fluency</b>							
	<b>Age</b>						
	5-14	15-19	20-24	24-44	45-54	65-74	75-84
Number that speak and understand the language fluently						2	3
Number that and/or speak somewhat					5	10	
Number of people learning the language	34	30	6	14			

**Table 4: Snuneymuxw language needs assessment 2014/2015**

These statistics place the Snuneymuxw language, like so many other languages in British Columbia, as one of the endangered languages. But, for the Snuneymuxw, our work has an added duty related to preserving our unique dialect. Historically, the Elders have

certainly demonstrated that preserving our own dialect is an important priority, which I will discuss in more detail in the following section.

I start with the significant work of 1997, for it is the time that I became involved with the Elders efforts. It was during this time that the Elders ignited a community language strategy with the intention and hopes of preserving our dialect for generations to come. This high-impact strategy was initiated in 1997 through a partnership of Simon Fraser University, Vancouver Island University (formally, Malaspina College), Nanaimo Ladysmith Public School District 68, Stz'uminus First Nation and Snaw-naw-as First Nation. In particular, Donna Gerdts of Simon Fraser University worked with Elders from Snuneymuxw, Stz'uminus and Snaw-naw-us, together with language teacher Theresa Thorne, to develop a variety of materials, including a phonics book (Gerdts and Hinkson 1996), two teaching grammars (Gerdts 1996, 1997) and a dictionary (Gerdts et al. 1997).<sup>13</sup> All the materials included an audio component, and the dictionary was built into a computerized dictionary.<sup>14</sup> The collaborative effort involved developing a language authority and supporting the training of teachers through a Vancouver Island University Development Standard Teaching Certificate program.

The partnership between the three mid-Island Nations made sense in terms of the proximity of their respective territories, but was largely accidental due to the fact that they were all serviced by the same public school district. However, what stands out

---

<sup>13</sup> School District 68 (Nanaimo-Ladysmith) (1997) ed. By Donna B. Gerdts (Simon Fraser University) Leonard Edwards (Nanoose First Nation) Charles H. Ulrich (University of British Columbia, Brian D. Compton (University of British Columbia) Contributing Elders' Wilfred Aleck (Chemainus) Anne Bob (Nanoose) Jim Bob (Nanoose) Leonard Edwards (Nanoose) May Frenchie (Nanaimo, Hazel Good (Nanaimo) Margaret James (Nanaimo) Emily Manson (Nanaimo) Dora Sampson (Chemainus) Bill Seward (Nanaimo) Chester Thomas (Nanaimo) Eva Thomas (Nanaimo) Theresa Thorne (Cowichan) Anderson Tommy (Nanaimo) Ellen White (Nanaimo) George Wyse (Nanaimo) Snuneymuxw Dictionary

<sup>14</sup> These materials have been used by many generations of secondary and post-secondary students. There is a new, corrected version, transliterated into the current orthography.

between these Nations are the sub-dialect differences. The Hul'q'umi'num' dictionary they co-created preserves this important distinction. Donna Gerdts describes how, in terms of vocabulary, the three areas—Stz'uminus, Snaw-naw-as, and Snuneymuxw—largely use the same words. However there are some instances where Snuneymuxw speakers use words that are not used by other Hul'q'umi'num' speakers, and these are specifically labelled as Snuneymuxw words (Gerdts et al. 1997, p. vii). There are over thirty such words noted, and here are some of them.

English	Snuneymuxw	other Hul'q'umi'num'
People	Musteyuhw	Mustimuhw
Children	ste'ehwulh	stl'ul'iqulh
Name	Skwish	Sne
Raccoon	xul'xul'us	sxuyukw'us
Butterfly	tl'amuxun	skw'ulxexe'
Lingcod	stth'xem	'eeyt
Crab	Musuqw	'ey'x
Octopus	st'ul'hwutth'	sqi'mukw'
Ice	spiw'	sthima'
Rock	tl'uts'u	Smeent

**Table 1 Words in Snuneymuxw versus other hul'q'umi'num' areas**

Our Snuneymuxw Elders have been committed to the documentation of our language and have worked with many researchers over the years starting in the 1800s. Comparisons by these researchers of Snuneymuxwqun to other varieties of Halkomelem have confirmed our uniqueness (Suttles, 2004, p. xxiii). For example, Stan James, the Snuneymuxw speaker interviewed for the dialect survey of Halkomelem undertaken by Gerdts (1977), pointed out many such differences. Gerdts was able to identify a wave-like distribution of lexical items among Coast Salish languages. Speakers of other varieties of Halkomelem show changes that did not occur in Snuneymuxw. Instead Snuneymuxwqun shares

conservative older Coast Salish forms. A thorough exploration of the features of Snuneymuxwqun is yet to be done, and the extent and the reasons for differences between Snuneymuxw and its neighbors needs further study. Whatever the reason for the differences, they present a serious challenge to developing a successful language strategy for Hul'q'umi'num'.

I realize that reversing this trend of language loss is challenging to say the least. In our community, there are too few fluent speakers, too few language activists and there are too few language resources. My late father, George Wyse, in a recorded interview, considered issues of this nature.<sup>15</sup> He said that in this fast changing world we need to work with what we have, and above all, we cannot take any shortcuts. I have come to understand my father's advice to mean that there will always be two competing world views that constitute our reality. But we must never sacrifice our own way of being. Father's advice offers a glimpse of a Snuneymuxw perspective; in terms of our language efforts, he reminds us we must always do our best, stay positive, and most importantly, do not avoid challenges by staying in the calm water. We must forge ahead through rough and calm waters.

Reflecting back on the significant work of our Ancestors, it is clear they have endorsed two methods of reclaiming our language. First, reading and writing is an acceptable tool for language learning. Secondly, working with local school districts and universities creates an opportunity for the language to live in two worlds. Although they did not quite articulate it in these terms, our Elders realized the importance of engaging in

---

<sup>15</sup> Anthropologist Lorraine Littlefield recorded my father George Wyse on Feb 24, 1999 in Nanaimo.



research on their language and saw collaboration with academics as a means of documenting and preserving the language for future generations.

To summarize, it is obvious that work of the Snuneymuxw Elders was intended to contribute to the preservation of the language for future generations, in such a manner that it could easily transition between two worlds. Their work established a high standard and continues to be an important cornerstone for language revitalization efforts in Snuneymuxw. Because we have positioned Hul'q'umi'num' as one of our natural resources, we cannot stop here. We will continue the conversation and consider some of the sacred qualities of the language.

### **3.2 Snuneymuxwqun, the power of words**

I began this journey in an attempt to understand the origin of Hul'q'umi'num', to embrace its sacredness, and to consider our language in a context that moves it beyond a tool for communication. Most importantly, it has been an effort to live with and respect the language in the way of our Ancestors. To this end, Fishman's (1996) insight helps bring us one step closer to the Ancestors by articulating a universal understanding of our languages and its relationship to the land:

Language is in the mind, spirit, and soul of a people. It is the beauty that is expressed from within. In its purist form, it has the power to unite us with the land, water and all that inhabitants of this world and the spiritual world (p.166)

I have come to realize that Hul'q'umi'num' recovery is a process that begins with understanding its spiritual energies and its unique relationship to the land. Tia Oros Peters, a well-known Zuni scholar, describes it: "We came out of particular places and our specific thoughts and belief systems came from those places as well, we were shaped

by the land, our languages come from the land” (as quoted by Parker, 2012, p. 24). Parker adds, “...if you want to understand the land you have to speak the language. And if you speak your language to the land it will understand.” (p. 24) Similarly, from a Coast Salish perspective, our Elders, have told us that our language is a spiritual language, it is the language used when communicating with the spiritual world (this is one of our truths, that have been told to me by many Elders, that I cannot credit one, but all of the Coast Salish Elders). When you string words together in the right order, in the right place, and with the right frame of mind, like magic, the spiritual energies are revealed. In my own experience, this understanding was revealed to me through one of my dreams:

*In my dream, I saw myself coming up a ladder, out of a large pit. The pit was very deep and very wide. Although I did not hear the conversation, I realized that I had traveled down to humbly ask our dialect and ask our dialect to stay with our people a little longer. Sadly, I now realize that our language was returning to the land, because we no longer use or value Snuneymuxwqun in the same manner as our Ancestors. This is an important part of our knowledge system; all things eventually return to the land.*

*A few days after my visit with the language, the spirit of our language came to our house. I have never experienced anything like this before; it was such an intense spiritual energy. It felt like the house was expanding and contracting ready to burst at the seams. It was if the house could not contain the energy. This is the great kindness of our language, always willing to help, willing to be one with the people. I remain prayerful and ever more determined to include our own dialect in our language strategy.*

Finally, as mentioned in the opening comments, one of the main goals of this paper is to help us change the way we think and feel about our language. What I have come to realize is that first and foremost we must recognize that “[t]he connections between language and land are multifaceted and complex, and are inseparable from other elements of Indigenous cultures such as spirituality and knowledge” (Parker 2014, p. 25). Romaine

(2007, p. 1) echoes similar thoughts: “We should think about languages in the same way as we do other natural resources....

In summary, these truths certainly support the belief that language and the land are inseparable, as we strive to continue to reflect back on the Elders’ way of living with Hul’q’umi’num’, the questions remain: do we do enough to acknowledge and honor the spiritual elements of our language? Which language are we revitalizing—our own Snuneymuxw dialect, or only the more common Hul’q’umi’num’ dialect? If, in fact, our work is devoted to the more common dialect without spiritual considerations, then certainly there is a risk that we are taking a short cut, as the Elders would describe it. I would like to note that the specifics of the dialect differences go beyond the scope of this paper, but based on the Elders work would suggest that it is an important future project. In the next chapter that follows we will consider some of the cultural practices of our people and consider begin to consider the relationship between culture, land and language.

## Chapter Four: Learning Cultural Practices

*Listen  
It is our way  
The traditional teachings that we  
Pass along to you  
These teachings...  
Have always been in  
Our families, your family,  
These teachings...  
Will stay with you  
When we are Gone  
(Snuneymuxw Elders 1995)<sup>16</sup>*

The Snuneymuxw people are rich with history, rich with culture<sup>17</sup> and rich with teachings. I often think about this great legacy and wonder, what are the teachings that are applicable to our language revitalization efforts? Or more importantly, I ask, are we honoring the time tested teachings of our beloved Elders? In the words of my late brother-in-law, William Seward,<sup>18</sup> who once said to me, “I have given you many teachings, but you don’t use them, you have just left them lying there”. This is a phrase that I hear often from the old people. With great sadness they say “our teachings are just lying there, no one uses them anymore.”

I have come to realize what they mean by this phrase is that we have not applied these teaching to our language revitalization efforts. We step on them or walk over them, as if there is no use for them anymore. This chapter is an attempt to reverse this trend by starting a conversation that will consider and embrace the sacred teachings and traditions

---

<sup>16</sup> This is from research with the Snuneymuxw Elders at Nanaimo District Museum, quoted by Keighley (2000, p. 15).

<sup>17</sup> Culture- I am using culture to describe an Aboriginal worldview (paradigm) that informs our ways of thinking (epistemology) knowing (ontology) and guiding our interactions (axiology) with the world (Wilson. 2001) p.2.

<sup>18</sup> William was one of my teachers/mentors. He coached us in softball, soccer and was our canoe captain. I owe much gratitude to my late brother-in law.

of our people, with the ultimate goal of “picking” up these teachings and applying them to our language learning strategies. This is our way of honoring our Ancestors and our language. In particular, with great respect and with great humility, this chapter introduces some of the key aspects of the Coast Salish life style, with an emphasis on the spiritual nature of our people. This is, as I now understand it, the foundation of our laws, and our teachings. It is known, and well understood, that this way of being, like for other Indigenous people, evolved over thousands of years. In a modern context, this way of life is now referred to as the “culture” of our people, the “teachings” of our people or as the “Natural laws” of our people.

As we continue this journey, we will now turn our attention to carefully examine this sacred lifestyle in two parts. The first part of this section will provide a glimpse of the cultural practices of our people, drawing from both current and past Elders. Also, the first section will consider some of the cultural practices described in our ancient stories to emphasize that these cultural practices are time honored way of being. The second section will attempt to bridge the relationship between language and culture. Hopefully, if we have earned it, the true understanding of the relationship between culture and language will be revealed. I will begin with some of the sacred teachings of the Elders.

My Aunty, Kwulasulwut (Ellen Rice White), in her *Legends and Teachings of Xeel's The Creator* (2006), shares some of the *snuw'uyulh* (cultural teachings) from a Coast Salish perspective, which I summarize here:

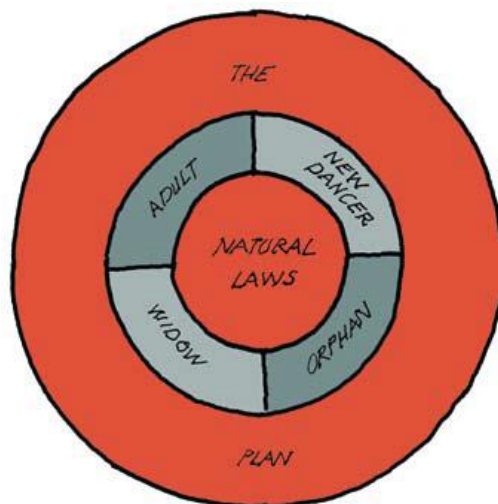
1. We understand ourselves and our world by focusing on relationships. We are all related.
2. The energy of the universe, found in the air, water and earth, encompasses all. We are all connected by this universal energy, and we can draw energy from these elements.

3. We must teach our children to be strong in their minds and to look after their bodies because they are sacred. Our children must learn to respect the sea life, animal life and Mother Earth. We must all look after one another in this world—fish, animals, and humans, everything seen and unseen. What we teach our children ensures that we will never lose the way of this world. The way you teach a child can be just as important as what you teach a child.
4. There is a time to seek the guidance of Xeel's, a time to listen to your inner-self, and a time to be connected to your surroundings. At certain times of our life it is important to be alone, to ask for help and then to listen.
5. If you believe that our own energy works with the energy of things that we can touch, both solid and liquid, you can ask these substances to transmit their energy and direct it towards helping. We can ask for help, we can ask for a situation to change, but it takes work and perseverance.
6. Spiritual knowledge takes years to master.

In the sections that follow with the above teachings in our heart and mind, I would like to look at some of the specifics of our cultural.

#### **4.1 Learning about Spirit from our Elders: Seasons of our Life**

This section will provide an opportunity to witness how the Ancestors used the teachings, and the sacred elements to grow and learn in spirit. I was very fortunate to work with the Esquimalt Nation. In my time spent there I came to realize some of the important milestones of the Coast Salish people. Chief Thomas, Heredity Chief of the Esquimalt Nation, explained in one of our many conversations: “There are four momentous times in our life. These are the most scared times in our life and are referred to as, “coming of age”, “becoming a new dancer”, “becoming an orphan” and finally, the fourth is when you “become a widow”( See figure 2). These significant times, are times of spiritual transformation, what you learn in these times, stays with you for the rest of your life.” He emphasized this cycle in his Community Comprehensive Plan as follows (2012, p.5):



**Figure 2: Natural laws<sup>19</sup>**

Although the seasons of our life are an important topic, worthy of a thorough discussion, it goes beyond the scope of this particular paper. However, we will wade through some detail, as provided by prominent Elders and documented by Diamond Jenness in 1935, to get a sense of the rituals and ceremonies involved that I suggest will become critical for the language learning framework. The following recorded interviews, the Elders explain

---

<sup>19</sup> Natural laws- Aboriginal cultures share a belief that people must live in respectful, harmonious relationships with nature, with one another and with themselves. The relationships are governed by what are understood as laws, which are gifts from the Creator. The laws are fundamentally spiritual, imbuing all aspects of life. The natural world has its own laws which must be respected if people are going to be sustained by it. Example of such laws are listed:

- People are not greater than the things in nature.
- Fundamental spiritual principles cross all domains of knowledge and are expressed as sacred laws governing our behavior and relationship to the land and its life forms.
- The basic concepts contained within each language make no separation between the secular and sacred aspects of language and culture; these remain a unified whole.
- There are implicit as well as explicit laws to regulate daily behavior. Behavioral expectations are defined in relation to such things as the natural environment, the social and moral order, the Elders and their traditional teachings, the rights to specific kinds of knowledge, the individual's participation in cultural life, and his/her personal growth and well being. (Oishi,2000, p. 5)

their experiences of “coming of age”, including the teachings associated with their experiences:

(i) Male experience

*“During the four days I was kept in the house of my aunt, who was a medicine woman, she chanted over me, morning and evening, praying that Haylse would make me strong. Since she wished me to become a medicine-man, she placed blackberry bushes under my sleeping mats, (not ferns, as some people do), made me lie on my back most of the time, and forbade me to talk. On the fifth morning she led me outdoors, told me to strip, and pointing to a blackberry bush, said “Jump over that bush and back four times.” I jumped over the bush and back four times, while she drummed and chanted a prayer; if I had fallen, she would have known that I would not live long. She then sent me to bathe in the sea, where a male relative scrubbed me with blackberry bushes after my bath.”*

(ii) Female experience

A girl’s four-day confinement differed in no essential respect from a boy’s except that her seclusion was more rigid and the prohibition against her eating and drinking enforced more strictly. If her mouth became too dry she might moisten it with water drawn up through a tube, but not to swallow any of the liquid. She passed the long hours spinning wool or making baskets, forbidden in some cases even to lie down at night, though she might rest against a post.

Even though this is a short description, I hope that it provides enough information to give a sense of the great time, discipline and the spiritual essence of our people. Of particular interest to this study is that we begin to understand, from a Coast Salish pedagogical perspective that there are three key considerations: discipline, use of medicines and the importance of Elders in the learning process.

Personally, I have experienced three of these stages, coming of age (poverty and residential school prevented ceremony or rituals) becoming an orphan, and being initiated as a new dancer. All were, as Chief Thomas described, life changing experiences. In my own experience, the diet and the stillness of mind and mouth, I practiced throughout.



However, the intense work ethic did not begin until after the first four days. The Elders constantly reminded us that the manner in which we conducted ourselves in the next four years would become habit forming. Good or bad habits would remain with us throughout the remainder of our time on Mother Earth. It is an opportunity to make positive changes, a time to shed all the negatives in our life. The story that follows provides detail of my own experience of becoming an orphan:

*As the tide rises and falls, in my life, it has stopped but three times; when I became a young adult, when I was initiated into the longhouse, and when I become an orphan. My first experience was that of becoming a young lady. There was no ceremony; but, I understood from my older sisters that this was a natural process and that it was part of growing up. At that time, I did not feel the spiritual energy that was growing and changing within. But, the next two phases, becoming a new dancer and becoming an orphan, were much different.*

*I remember when my mom passed away; it was a very difficult time in my life, for as many say, "there is nothing like the love of a mother." This is certainly true for my mother. She was a great lady, who continually showed great love for her family and her people. Her passion was for the young people. She devoted her life to supporting and fighting for positive change.*

*It was a difficult time in my life, but a time of great change. What really stands out for me, apart from the overwhelming grief, was that in the first four days, several prominent Elders moved into our house. They were there to provide support for my father, but, for the most part, they were there to provide teachings for my brother, sisters and I. They made sure that we kept very still, quiet, adhered to the very strict diet, and went to the mountain for a spiritual bath.*

*One Elder in particular, I will never forget, he continually echoed, "This is a time for introspection." At the time, I understood it to be a time to look at my strengths and my weaknesses. Was I a good person? Am I devoted to family and community? Or, was I person who partied and was only continually thinking of myself? Thankfully, with the guidance and support of the Elders, I finally turned my life around. To find strength and healing, I turned my life to our culture.*

*When I think back on this time, although it was over twenty years ago, it still fresh in my mind. But, what I have learned is that all those years of paddling helped prepare me for this moment. Every summer for ten years, we changed our diet, trained very hard and learned to be very quiet while on the canoe. It provided a much needed foundation. It provided a glimpse of the life ahead. I thank my mother, for her many gifts she has given me. In her transition into the next world, she gave me a spiritual awakening. From the*

*moment she traveled to the spirit world, I have been devoted to culture. This awakening was like a tidal wave, clearing a path for positive learning and positive growth.*

#### **4.2 Learning from our Ancient stories**

The central themes of these particular stories emphasize the importance of the teachings throughout our traditional way of life and the natural outcomes enjoyed with this particular lifestyle. I suggest that these teachings, if applied to our language learning framework, will also create the same opportunity for language learners. Namely, awakening the untapped spirit of our people will produce the same life changing outcomes.

In this section, we will continue our journey by learning from one of our ancient stories. The teaching story, “Cedar Woman,” is a compelling story that provides a detailed account of the Coast Salish practices that are important to establishing and maintaining a spiritual connection to the sacred lands. As we read this story, we will witness these life changing teachings come to life through the words recorded by the prominent late Elder, Willie Seymour (Community University Research Alliance, 2009).

#### **Cedar Women**

*No one knows how long ago, one woman’s relatives passed way, including her parents, her Elders, and her siblings. She lived alone in her tiny big house. The men and young men would go hunting. Those who gathered other foods would bring her some as well. She was always feeling bad. “How can I return this great deed, for I am very poor and alone?” For many years it was on her mind. She kept up with her ceremonial bathing. She kept up with her ceremonial bathing; she carried out her ceremonial bathing for healing for losing all her family. She bathed, wanting to find her sacred gift, going up to the mountain every morning. It was a long walk. She would get to her bathing place and she bathed. Every day, every morning, she walked up the mountain.*

*As she walked, she lamented and prayed, pleaded to her creator. “Please show me what my sacred gift will be, I don’t want to always be dependent on everyone. I want to be able to return the great deed of my people. Each day, each morning, she got up, took the tools which, she would carry when she walked, and she would carry them on her back. Sometimes she became discouraged, “Why am I working so hard with no success?” She*

*was saddened that there was no answer from the Great Spirit, the creator. For several days she would just stay home. It would come to her mind: "I can't just stay still." "I must continue with my ceremonial bath."*

*She returned to her bathing place. Early in the morning she would walk carrying her tools on her back. She would reach the bathing place, undress and pray as she went into the water. She was pleading, pleading for the gift so she could return the great deed that was given to her. How many days, how many months, of personal sacrifice and she becomes discouraged. It comes to her mind, "I must, try again." She returned to the mountain and lamented as she walked along lamenting, which became like a prayer, pleading for help.*

*Early one morning, she got up, feeling different for whatever reason. She gathered her gear and walked up the mountain. She was kind of in a hurry. She was always singing her prayer and lament, as she walked. She went up the mountain; she arrived at the bathing place, got undressed and was praying. Getting closer to the bathing place, she came face to face with a serpent like creature in the water. She became startled. She was half running as she fled. As she grabbed her cloths, she remembered. "I was praying to show me, show me my gift." "Maybe this is it." She came closer to the water and entered. It was like she challenged the creature in the water. She blacked out. How long she lay there before she woke up. She looked around for the creature she challenged and was not there. It was coming to mid day and she got ready in a hurry.*

*She began to walk down the mountain to her home. As she walked she came upon a cedar tree which seemed to echo her. It was chanting a song. "What is it? What does it mean?" She was thinking in her mind. It was like the cedar was talking to her. "You will peel my bark, singing a song." In her mind, she answered and she peeled the bark of the cedar. "You will be used, cedar. You will be used." "You will have pity on this individual who he/she uses you." This is what she was shown; she prepared the cedar and put it in her back pack. She began to walk again. I am not sure how far she walked down hill and she heard the elements talking to her. This time it was the cedar root talking to her. "You will gather the roots." She looked; while she was looking it showed her how important the roots are.*

*They are like the blood veins of people. Again she gathered the roots. Again she prepared them and put them in her pack, and continued walking. She got to the bottom of the mountain. Walking she heard the rustling of the bulrushes. "You will now gather (bulrushes) it was like it was talking to her, "you will gather like this." So she gathered the bulrushes. She brought home what she was shown; she organized them in her house. She was still not sure what they were for or why. It was evening and she got ready to sleep. She was praying for why she gathered the elements. She went to sleep and she dream. A beautiful woman came to her and told her "This is how you will prepare it, my precious one." "Do it like this and you will be okay." "Your sacrifice has been answered, it has been answered." "You will now prepare this." So she prepared it. She woke up in the morning. Her spirits were uplifted. She weaved baskets, everything that could be weaved. It wasn't long and she became known to the people.*

*People were getting to her place and purchasing what she was making. Many things were made from the cedar, clothing, and baskets. Sometimes, they traded her with canoes, sometimes dried food, tools, everything. She became well known. Her many years of sacrifice were answered. Her gift was her payment, what she had made she was able to return the great deeds giver to her for many years. This was the story shared with me by my uncle [my late elder]; s-hwixalitsup*

I have chosen Cedar Woman because her experiences is very similar to the coming of age ceremony described in the previous section. However, her experience is described in more detail. It is obvious that there is a reoccurring theme- ceremony, cleansing, praying and humbling ourselves is an important aspect of living and being with the spirit world. Thankfully, this story describes a way of being which is still practiced today by the canoe pullers throughout their paddling careers.

In closing, I would like to mention that I have chosen not to offer an interpretation of this story, but rather allow the reader to make his or her own connection to the story's message. It is worth noting that every word and every action has a special meaning and a special purpose. The interpretation of the story is a very personal experience. For myself, each time I have read this story, I have found new meaning and much needed healing. I hope that this is true for others, as well.

### **4.3 Cultural teachings as a Coast Salish pedagogy**

This chapter has introduced some of the specific cultural practices of the Coast Salish people. I have drawn on three different eras to make it obvious that there is a consistent learning model that includes praying, ceremonial preparation, practicing humility in the presence of the natural elements, and that spiritual growth is rooted and enhanced through rituals. My intention is to draw attention to the importance of these traditions and consider them in the context of potential learning strategies. Its relevance is that our

community, like other communities, is continually searching for best methods, approaches and natural learning sequences to revive our language.

This discussion supports this process by asking: What is the relationship between language and culture, and how can this understanding support our language learning? We will seek the answer to this question in a detailed discussion about the Coast Salish canoe culture. Further, I propose that after carefully examining the relationship between language and culture as lived by the Canoe Paddlers, we will learn, that language, in the most astonishing way, connects us to the sacred, but most importantly, brings us to the understanding, that “culture is lived” and language is what gives it life.

## **Chapter Five: View from the Canoe**

*When ceremonies take place, everyone who is participating needs to be ready to step beyond the everyday and to accept a raised state of consciousness (Wilson, 2008, p. 69)*

The objective of this chapter is to build on the knowledge acquired from the previous chapters to develop a Coast Salish education framework, in the context of our canoe culture. As well I will consider ways in which we can apply this framework to support the revitalization and enhancement of Indigenous languages. Specifically, each section that follows is intended to highlight some of the canoe teachings that I believe are central to successful language learning that includes:

In pursuit of an authentic framework and ultimately finding a way to “paddle on both sides”, I have framed the discussions for this chapter following the Perspective-Based Education model as described in “The Common Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Language and Culture Programs: Kindergarten to Grade 12” (Oishi, 2000). Applying their approach to my topic results in the following diagram (Oishi, 2000, p.17):



**Figure 3: Coast Salish perspectives, adopted from Common Curriculum Framework**

In a continued effort to emphasize this approach from a Coast Salish perspective, each of the following sections, as I have mentioned, will be considered in the context of canoe culture or canoe racing.<sup>20</sup> Because both the canoe and hul'q'umi'num' are from the land and of the land, I propose that the teachings associated with the canoe culture are applicable to learning Hul'q'umi'num'. Specifically as they relate to spiritual values and learning strategies. In fact, it will become obvious that the Elders have left us a time-tested way of growing and learning through spirit. These are our core principles of learning:

- Land, language and culture cannot be separated.
- The Hul'q'umi'num' language is a spiritual being and must be honored as such.

---

<sup>20</sup> Birth of the Racing Canoe- in 1884 the Canadian Government outlawed potlatches and ceremonies of great religious and political importance. It was during this ban when canoe races began to gain popularity.... (Meloche 2013):

*" Racers train hard and long for the races, which are often grueling five kilometre courses. However, as the canoe glides smoothly and swiftly through the water their efforts are rewarded. It's a great thing you can feel when everybody is one. ... The timing is down, the sliding is down and it's peaceful. All you hear is those paddles going into the water. It becomes part of you." – Stan Green, Chilliwack B.C (Meloche 2013).*

- Spirituality is the essence of our people; it is the cornerstone of our connectivity.
- The disciplines of the mind and body are critical to accessing and understanding spiritual knowledge.

### 5.1 Perspectives: all though we are many bodies, our oneness is undeniable

The purpose of this section is to take a more detailed look at some of the foundational teachings that we as paddlers learned at the outset of our training. The teachings will provide the foundation for our proposed framework. Namely, first and foremost the Elders told us that “the canoe is alive” and is one of our most respected relatives. This notion is central to paddling—every breath, every step, was designed to promote and respect the spiritual aspects and the human-like qualities of the canoe. The legend that follows relates to the origin of the Cedar tree. Hopefully, it will help us understand why the Ancestors placed a high level of importance on the Great Cedar Tree from which canoes have been carved.<sup>21</sup>

*tu stsi'elh xpey'ulhp*  
Great Cedar Tree

*' u kw'un'a wulh hith 'i' niilh ni' kwthu swuy'qe' yath 'uw' ts'ets'uw'ut tu musteyuhw, 'uy' swuy'qe', stsi'elh swuy'qe'.*

Long ago, there was a man, a good, high status man, who was always helping the people.

*mukw' tu ni' sq'uq'ith 'u tuw' stem 'ul' 'i' ni' wulh ts'ewutus.*  
Whenever they needed something, he helped them.

*ts'uhwle' 'i' ni' tu ni' sq'uq'ith 'u tu s'itth'ums, tu s'ulhtuns,*  
*'i' wulh nilh nem' ts'ewut, 'amustus 'u kwthu s'ulhtuns 'i' tu 'itth'umeens.*  
Sometimes they were short of clothing and food, and he would come help them, giving them food and garments.

---

<sup>21</sup> Thank you to Ruby Peter for translating the story into Hul'q'umi'num', Donna Gerds for transcribing it and doing the English translation, and Thomas Jones for helping to edit it into Snuneymuxwqun.



*ni' hw'uw'tsustus tu ts'lhhwulmuhws xte'um's 'u tu lelum's 'i' kws nem's tl'ulhnenum.*

He showed his tribe how to build houses and how to look for seafood.

*hay 'ul' qux ni' s'ahwust-s tu siiye'yus hw'uw'tsustus 'u tuw' mukw' stem.*

He shared his knowledge to his relatives about how to make things.

*hwun' xut'u 'i' ni' wulh s'aluhwthut tuw'nilh swuy'qe'.*

Eventually, the man grew old.

*kwus wulh lumnum 'utl' xeel's kwus wulh s'aluhwthut tey' swuy'qe' wulh hwu slhtsiw's, sus 'uw' xulhstehwus.*

When the Creator saw the man had grown old and tired, and he felt sorry for him.

*ni' wulh st'ee kw'uw' 'usup' tu syaaysth kwus yu hw'i iw'tsustus tu ts'lhhwulmuhws.*

“He has completed his work teaching his tribe.

*ha' tse' kwu'elh q'ay' 'i' kwthu ni' tse' shni's kwus punutewut 'i' nilh tse' shni's kws m'is wil' kw' xpey'ulhp.*

When he dies and where he buried, a cedar tree will grow.

*m'i tse' ts'isum, 'i' nilh ts'e ni' hwu they'tum' hulelum' sununihwulh, 'i' tuw' mukw' stem ni' ha'kw' 'u tu musteyuhw.*

It's going to grow, and it will be used for building houses, canoes, and everything that the people use.

*qux tse' ni' hwu shhwa'kws tu xpey'ulhp.*

The cedar will be used for many things.

*nilh tu syalh hay ni' tshulelum'*

Its wood will be used to make houses.

*nilh tu sluw'i hay ni' hwu 'itth'um'eens.*

Its bark will become garments.

*nilh tu kwumluhw hay ni' tsse'ultun.*

Its roots will be used for making baskets.

*nilh kwu'elh ni' sht'es kwus m'i hwu'i tetsul tu xpey'ulhp 'u tun'a tumuhw.*

In this way, the red cedar came into the world.

*'i' ni' 'u tun'a kweyul 'i' ni' tst 'uw' stsi'elhstuhw tu hayulh 'ul'  
'uy' ts'uwutuns tu musteyuhw.*

To this day, we honor the helper of the people.

*' i' nilh ni' st'ee kw'uw' swi'wul'st-hwus tu xeel's tu hays 'ul' tsi'elh tey'  
s'eluhwulh kwusulh 'i' 'u tun'a tumuhw.*

And this is how the Creator honored that old man that was here in this land

*nilh ni' sht'es 'i' ni' hay. hay ch q'u.*

That how it is and the end. Thank you.

I maintain that this amazing story affirms an important foundational truth:

We are all one and our lives are interconnected. Our relationship with our territory... we regard it as an extension of ourselves. That is why our Ancestors gave names to important sites and geographical features, just as names were and continue to be bestowed upon family members (Brown & Brown, 2009, p. 23).

Now, image if you will, the impact of developing a language strategy that considers hul'q'umi'num' in this same manner, as one of the natural elements in our community or as an extension of ourself? It is my belief that the Ancestors expected us to respect and honor the language in this way, which is not only as a living entity but also as one of our esteemed relatives. In the context of our language strategy it becomes apparent that our oneness with the natural world, including the language is dependent on this approach.

## **5.2 Oral Traditions: The Language brings culture to life.**

In this section I will consider the sacred aspect of the spoken word, with an emphasis on the spiritual essence of hul'q'umi'num' and its ability to offer the gift of connectivity. That is to say hul'q'umi'num' is the means to a meaningful relationship with the original nature of the Canoe. This has been long understood by our Ancestors. Each of the following subsections will reveal the wisdom of our Elders, and will draw attention to the

spiritual links between language and culture. I propose, without a doubt, if hul'q'umi'num' is not used in our ceremonial practices and our rituals, the spiritual essence of the sacred Canoe would fall silent and would never reach its full potential. The stories that follow will help us appreciate this belief.

I begin with a story of the great cedar tree. It is a story that reveals the techniques used to ensure that the spirit of the cedar tree will remain intact, despite extreme changes to its physical self.

*Whether one or more people select the tree, it is always treated with the utmost respect, like a human being. Elder Willie Seymour explains that medicine people bless the tree and tell it what it is going to be, while a cushion of cedar boughs is prepared for its landing (Marshall, 2010, p. 33).*

Please note, that although it is not stated, it is understood that the success of the above ceremony is highly dependent on hul'q'umi'num' to produce the desired outcome, a spirit that lives. The second story is a personal story that describes how it is used throughout the various stages of carving a canoe. Again, the intent of this story is to emphasize the importance of the language's ability to communicate to the spirit of the great cedar tree:

*One day I went to visit Uncle Tom, he was carving a Canoe ..., he was always by himself. When we went visit he would stop carving. He told us why: he had words for every stage... every stage had words that you have to say before you go on....He said a long time ago, carvers would always carve in private. They had the words that would make the Cedar respond to their every request, turning and flipping as the carver needed (Mandy Jones, p.c.).*

Finally, the third personal story describes how a skipper used the language to communicate with the canoe as told by my sister Penny:

*In the time of the race, William, my late husband, used hul'q'umi'num' continuously, instructions to turn the canoe, paddle, all in our language. But, when he was using the language, he was not talking to us, but rather, he was speaking to the Canoe. It was if hul'q'umi'num' was the only language that the*

*canoe understood. I lovingly recall hearing his voice and feeling the Canoe respond to his voice (Penny Seward, p.c.).*

These are our truths, defining the relationship between land, language and culture. It becomes obvious that the language is the bridge between the physical, or the land and her natural elements if you will, and the spirits within. What I have come to realize is that the language and culture work together, through rituals and ceremonies in such a way, that when they work together, they produce a much greater outcome than they would by working in isolation. Essentially, it is a sacred relationship that is intended to magically awaken the spiritual bond between human and canoe.

Through the words of our Elders it is ever so clear that without the language, the culture of our people does not live and worst of all, without the language we lose the ability to connect to the spiritual world; our way of life would be lost. In closing, I argue, because it is now apparent that the relationship between language and culture is so strong, undoubtedly a successful language strategy, must ensure that the language is always taught in a cultural context. All is lost if we do otherwise.

### **5.3 The Collective – an important source of knowledge**

As we continue our journey, it is important to give some thought to the community's role in a traditional learning model. In a modern context, the canoe has become an important teaching us to live and learn as a collective. Our Ancestors have long understood that the community is a unique spiritual entity. Legare (2011) speaks to this importance of community:

Community relationships provide another context to develop knowledge. Each individual person has a history with his or her Aboriginal community and that relationship with the community is as varied and distinctly unique as individuals themselves. For that reason, there are many ways to understand community and the

relationship of connection or disconnection within a community...Community also give an individual the opportunity to renew self and create continuity with the present based on the past... Connection and renewal are created in communities (Legare 2011, pp. 61-62).

In terms of my experience, this program has certainly revealed how a collective entity can become an important source of knowledge. What amazed me is that through our collective efforts, I experienced an overwhelmingly increased level of spiritual growth, which included day visions; and sacred dreams which ultimately became an important source of knowledge. These dreams and visions taught me more about myself, and taught me about the spiritual nature of our dialect. You might ask what was so different about the design of this particular program. Some of the particulars are listed:

- Each of us came with together with one purpose, to find the means to improve our respective language revitalization efforts.
- The cohort, although from different parts of Canada, honored the traditions and ceremonies of the land.
- The place of study while on campus was in fact a replica of a longhouse.

Prior to this program I did not experienced nor appreciated the importance of a collective approach to produce new source of knowledge. The personal stories that follow in the next two sections are intended to add to the conversation.

### **5.3.1 Collective-self, remember your history**

Ancestral way of life was focused on preserving the community as a unique being. However, the historical trauma experienced by the Indigenous has proven to alter not only individuals, but also our community, our collective-self. I did not understand the depths of the pain caused to our community until my husband began to re-learn *hul'q'umi'num'*. My husband, Jerry Brown, shared his story about learning the language in a group setting. I summarize his story:

*Jerry was part of a cohort, referred to as the Development Standard Teaching Certificate Program, hosted by Malaspina College. Like many of his generation, he understands the language, but did not speak the language, a latent speaker if you will. He often spoke about the high level of emotion experienced by his classmates. All, at various points released many, many tears. He was adamant that he would not let his emotions get the best of him. But they did, and one day he too shared his emotions through tears.*

Through my husband's story I now realize as the Elders have said, that collective healing is an important step to maintaining and preserving our spiritual growth, as such the language strategies must be conscious of the much needed healing component for the language learner.

### **5.3.2 Honor the Language Learner**

Many of the personal stories shared throughout this paper recognize that it is a great honor to part of a Canoe Club. This sentiment, certainly was a reflection of the communities overall attitude towards paddlers. My sister Mandy experienced the community and family pride, as she relates in the following story:

*I started pulling with the White Raven Canoe Club. Bill Seward, Senior, was the captain. In this time I was very fortunate to sit up front, which I knew, was a huge honor. We were doing quite well as a canoe club, winning a few races. This one time we went to Cultus Lake, I am happy to say that we won. We came in; back to our camp, there was my Auntie Sarah standing on the beach, and my late cousin Mel Jacobs was standing beside her. I could see her waving her arms, gesturing towards our canoe. My cousin, honoring my Auntie's request, came out to the canoe, he must have been up to his waste in the water, and he lifts me out of the canoe and packs me out of the water and brings me to Auntie Sarah. My Auntie Sarah was so happy. She gave me five dollars. So every time we were at a race, Auntie Sarah would be there and she always gave me five dollars (Mandy Jones, p.c.).*

Each time I hear my sister tell this story, I appreciate the value placed on the traditions of paddling. I got a strong sense that our Auntie Sarah was a true inspiration for Mandy, who felt appreciated and worked all that much harder. I propose that if language learners were

treated with the same reverence, it would go a long way to strengthen their language success.

### **5.3.3 A Time for Introspection: Am I pulling my own weight?**

This section asks the question, how am I supporting language revitalization in our community? It is Coast Salish teaching that each individual has a role and responsibility to the overall betterment of our community. This section tells a story of how I came to this understanding.

*One day, we gathered at the beach ready to start our training on the water. But instead of going out on the eleven-man canoe, the skipper, my late brother-in-law, William Seward, told us, "Today, we are going to train on the singles and the doubles. It is an opportunity for each paddler to develop individual skills and for the skipper to test our skill level. Everyone picked their canoe, and the skipper gave his instructions, "Go around the booms." And away we all went. As for me, Andy, my brother-in-law, offered to take me out, but the only canoe left was a fiber glass canoe. I got in the front, and he took the rear to skipper us through our training. We got half way around the booms, which took us about fifteen or twenty minutes. Things were going well, or at least I thought so. I was very proud of my efforts, yes bigheaded. I was focused, watching my paddle, reaching, confident that I was doing my part. But, suddenly the canoe stopped. I was still paddling, but the canoe stopped moving. I became very frightened, turned around and asked Andy, "What happened?" He said, "I stopped pulling!" He laughed and laughed. When we got to beach we all laughed. What a lesson for me!*

Today, I often think back on this story, yes, when I need a good laugh, but more from a way of thinking about our language efforts. I ask myself, am I really pulling my own weight? Especially in terms of the language programs or activities we develop. I ask are the programs moving us forward? Are they relevant? Is it reflective of our own knowledge system? I have learned that it is too easy to fall back on a colonial way of teaching and learning. We go through the motions, much as I did, but just not moving.

Also, we have learned that any success requires us all doing our part. Every stroke counts. There is no room for people getting on the canoe and just taking a ride.

#### **5.4 Preparation: A personal responsibility**

“You can’t just get on a canoe and paddle.”  
Preparation is a key component to becoming  
a successful paddler.

Canoe culture, as with other Coast Salish cultural practices, is a process of learning grounded in spiritual relationships. Champion canoe clubs are those clubs who without a doubt honor and practice this way of learning. All seaworthy paddlers start with an intense physical, emotional and spiritual conditioning prior to getting on the canoe. This has been my experience, and I have come to understand that each canoe will realize its spiritual potential if, and only if, the paddlers prepare themselves in this traditional manner.

From a learning perspective, Shawn Wilson echoes the power and significance of this intense preparation:

When ceremonies take place, everyone who is participating needs to be ready to step beyond the everyday to accept a raised level of consciousness. You could say that the specific rituals that make up the ceremony are designed to put the participants into a state of mind that will allow the extraordinary to take place (Wilson, 2008, p 69).

In my experience, I have learned that the ceremonies associated with paddling are just that, finding a way to be “better”, to dig down and give more. Those that follow the teaching achieve great success. In one of my many discussions with my sister Mandy, she told her story that emphasizes the importance of following the teachings:

*This is a story about my paddling days. I started as a young teenager. Late Bill Seward Sr. was starting a canoe club, and I wanted to try out. I ran home and asked my dad if I could try out. My dad right from the start began to offer me*



*teachings. He warned me that it was not an easy task. You will have to give up a lot, learn to eat properly, train hard, and learn to get up early in the morning to do roadwork. Thanks to my dad's advice, I was in good shape, because my dad said, "If you want it, you are going to have to train for it." He said, in his day, it was a great honor to be part of a canoe club. Not everyone has the privilege to paddle. He also mentioned that the canoe club he trained with moved to another island to train. They lived there, eating together, training together, one hundred percent commitment to the canoe. It's hard; you are going to have a hard life. You can't go halfway; you will have to be full-hearted (Mandy Jones, p.c.).*

My late father's words are so true, I have experienced it and witness year and year out, it takes great commitment to be a paddler. But, the Elders have also said this in terms of learning the language. It will take great sacrifice to learn the language. I have also heard this from the language teachers, especially my sister. People say that the language is important, but they are very few that are willing to sacrifice the time it takes to learn the language. Today, I think about my own language learning and will need to appreciate my father's advice: "It's hard; you are going to have a hard life. You can't go halfway; you will have to be full-hearted." (emphasis added)

#### **5.4.2 'uy' shqweluwun**

My nephew, Thomas, a long time paddler, shared his grandfather Bill Seward Sr.'s story. The story told by Bill, affectionately known as Big Bill, helps us understand the importance of having good feelings:

*My grandpa Bill Seward went to Residential School when he was young. He was subjected too much pain and suffering, and as a result he came out with a lot of anger. There was a time when he wanted to go on to the war canoe. He went to the Elders and asked if he could paddle.*

*The Elders looked at him and denied him. You have too much anger and hate. You can never bring those feelings onto the canoe. If you do, you will hurt the canoe and everyone else on the canoe.*

*So, the Elders told him to go up to the mountain to bathe for four days, to release all the anger and hatred. Grandpa did as he was told. He bathed for four days,*

*brushing himself off with cedar, constantly praying. After the four days he went back to see the Elders and they could see that he was a changed man. Not long after my grandpa got his own crew. He kept his crew happy and humble, and eventually they became champs. They trained hard, stayed together, listened to the Elders, and believed in the culture.*

*My grandpa shared many teachings with his grandchildren, telling us that it is a great honor to be part of the Canoe Club. It is highly respected. The canoe is alive, just like anything else (Thomas Seward, p.c.).*

### **5.5 Make a Connection: To live and be in the presence of the sacred**

The canoe is a Coast Salish art form that honors and reveals our relationship with the natural world. The human-like qualities of the canoe are honored in the art form. Canoe parts include a head, ribs and a heart, acting as a visual reminder that the canoe has its own breath, thoughts and feelings, and that it must be treated with the utmost respect at all times. The canoe gives us a tangible experience of living and honoring a spiritual being, training us to be humble and prayerful in our life with the canoe.

Without a doubt it, the canoe is a vessel that restores the balance between the physical and spiritual for the Coast Salish communities. As I mentioned earlier, there are many rituals and protocols associated with paddling. What stands out for me were the rituals and ceremonies associated with honoring the canoe and the water. Making our own paddles was one of them. My sister Mandy shares some of her experiences paddling with the Prince Charles Canoe Club and the White Raven Canoe Club:

*I loved being out on the canoe, in rough or calm water, it was always a great experience. I remember a teaching shared by my father's skippers, Bill Seward Sr., Bill Seward Jr., and Thomas Seward (Uncle Tom)—each of them long time paddlers, champions. They certainly knew how to honor the canoe and the water in a good way. They constantly reminded us to be very grateful to the surroundings, the trees, the water and the Canoe. When the water was choppy, they taught me how to pray to the water, praying and asking the water to settle down so that we would be safe out in the water. I was so fortunate to receive these teaching. It was my first cultural experience. I also remember, in those times*

*when my father could not travel with us to a race on the mainland, as soon as we got home, Dad was waiting. He would greet the canoe; wipe her off, thanking her for bringing his family home safe (Mandy Jones, p.c.).*

This was how our dad maintained a connection with the canoe, always demonstrating deep respect and gratitude for the canoe, acknowledging the supernatural qualities of our canoe. Although he never mentioned it, we know that when he spoke to the canoe, he always spoke Hul'q'umi'num'.

The teaching of making and keeping a connection with the Canoe carried over to the making of our paddles. As told to us, if we had the right mind and a good heart, this ritual was the means to making a spiritual connection with our paddle. My sister Mandy describes it this way:

*We made our own paddles. Uncle Tom, who was the master carver, he taught us the words to use when we were carving our paddle. He also showed us how to hold the paddle if we tipped. He said, "The paddle will save your life." Uncle Tom was so devoted to the Canoe way of life. He was constantly teaching us how to be respectful to both the canoe and our paddles (Mandy Jones, p.c.).*

My sister Penny, also paddling with the Prince Charles Canoe Club, adds:

*Uncle Tom told us that making your own paddle is the way the Ancestors have taught us to become "one" with the paddle. Remember it comes from a living tree, and it still lives. Because it was sacred work, we could only work on our paddle in the morning or early afternoon. We started our work with a prayer, and always had good thoughts while carving our paddle. If we had a bad day, we could not touch the paddle. But he was adamant, "Always finish what you have started" (Penny Seward, p.c.).*

These memories shared by my sisters, remind us of how blessed we were to live in such a sacred time, when the time-honored Canoe traditions still flourished, thanks to these four men. The knowledge that they shared taught us how to be in our daily walk of life with the natural world. The gift they left us was that paddle. Although the paddle that we made was not in our hands physically, to this day it remains with us spiritually.

All in all, this section offers much advice to the language learner. Give a whole-hearted commitment. Prepare yourself before you begin learning the language. Once you make a connection with the language, expect great outcomes. This is the power of the combined efforts of Hul'q'umi'num' and the Ancestral teachings.

Maintaining a connection to the land is one of the many gifts offered by the canoe. One of the rituals of the Canoe clubs is travel daily to Te'tuxtun (Mount Benson). It was a place for intense road work and a place for spiritual cleansing. Every season, someone in the club would ask, "Why do we have to run up the mountain?" I, too, never really understood, but with my growing and learning I have come to realize that the Snuneymuxw territory includes mountain, land, rivers and a seaway, and each of the sacred locations offers its own gifts. The story that follows, gives a sense of the uniqueness of Te'tuxtun.<sup>22</sup> This history of Te'tuxtun was told by many of our Elders. My sister Penny remembers that our Grandmother, Ellen Rice, who was one of the gifted storytellers in our community, shared this story many times:

*s-hwuhwa'us tun'ni' utl' Te'tuxwtun*  
The thunderbird from Te'tuxwtun

*nilh tu s-hwuhwa'us tun'a sxwi'em'.*  
*This story is about Thunderbird.*

*nilh ni' lelum's tu s-hwuhwa'us tu Te'tuxwtun.*  
Thunderbird's home is at Mt. Benson.

*'i' nilh sxulhus tu stseelhtun, 'es-hw, q'ulhanumutsun 'u kwus m'i t'ahw 'ewu 'u tu kw'atl'kwa.*  
And he feeds on salmon, seal, and orcas when he comes down to the sea.

*'i' 'uw' hay 'u kwsus qux stseelhtun m'i hwiwul yelhs m'is tahw 'u tu tsetsuw'.*

---

<sup>22</sup> Thank you to Ruby Peter for translating the story into Hul'q'umi'num', Donna Gerdts for transcribing it and doing the English translation, and Thomas Jones for helping to edit it into Snuneymuxwqun.

Only when plenty of salmon come to shore does the Thunderbird come down.

*'i' nilh tu hay 'ul' thi siin'lhqi') ni' ts'lhkwikwun'tul's*

And there was a big two-headed serpent that he battled with.

*nilh ni' shni' 'utl' siin'lhqi' nilh ni' lelum's tu tsuwmun, 'uli'uthuns tu sta'luw'.*

The serpent's home was at the shore at the mouth of the Nanaimo River.

*'i' mukw' kwus wulh kwintul tuw'ne'ullh, hay 'ul' thi siin'lhqi' 'i' tu s-hwuhwa'us, nilh sus 'uw' xuxun' uq't tth'ukw'tth'ukwul' tu skweyul, ni' 'u tu s'uthnuts.*

And every time they battle, that big serpent and the Thunderbird, there was lightening in the sky in the bay.

*'i' nilh tu siin'lhqi' ni' 'ew'kw't tu stseelhtun, lhey'xtus, sus 'uw'*

*t-hw'uwu te' 'ul' s'ulhtun 'utl' s-hwuhwa'us.*

It was because eating up all the fish leaving no food for the Thunderbird.

*we' tun'a kweyul 'i' tu hwulmuhw nuw' hwun' sht'eewun' nilh tu s-hwuwa'us kwus xuxun' uq't tth'ukw'tth'ukw'ul' 'i' ni' sht'eewun' mutum' kwus hays tse' 'ul' qux stseelhtun, qux tse' stseelhtun m'i hwiwul.*

Still today, the First Nations people believe that when the Thunderbird is opening his eyes causing the lightening that it is a sign that there will be plenty of salmon.

ni' hay

The end

I have chosen this particular story in hopes to give a sense that every part of the landscape is unique and has their own spiritual gifts to offer. In terms of the language learner, just like the paddlers, our learning will be dependent upon, on our ability to stay connected to land, from the mountain to the river and the sea.

### 5.5.1 Cultural use of silence

Learning to listen and developing one's senses is one of the many teachings we received while paddling. It was important to remain quiet on the canoe, even though we were out on the water for one to two hours. We could not look around, eyes forward, and above

all, no thoughts of the outside world were permitted while we were on the Canoe. We would practice this day in and day out.

The power of silence has been greatly understood by the Elders. This journey has helped me realize that this important teaching was intended to help us develop all our senses, and above all to teach us how to be humble in the presence of a sacred element. The Elders constantly reminded us to be still, just listen. These teaching to be quiet, to meditate, and to create the space for the other senses is an important aspect for living with spirit. I propose that if we transfer this teaching to learning the language, great things will happen.

### **5.5.2 Faith in the Storm**

Faith is another important teaching. A story that follows offers one of my experiences that help us understand the importance of having faith in the canoe, the water and all of the Helpers from the Natural World.

*The Lummi race is always known for its rough waters. There are two strong currents, not always running in the same direction. So without fail, regardless of the weather or time of the day, Lummi seaway is always rough during the race. Several years back, we entered the race. I was sitting number seven in the canoe. There was a young girl sitting number five. My paddle followed her stroke and her rhythm. I didn't know at the time, but she did not know how to swim, and she was not wearing a life jacket.*

*Well, as I mentioned, without fail, it is always rough in Lummi. This particular day, the water was exceptionally rough. All the canoes were struggling. We were all taking in a lot of water. The bottom of our canoe was filled with water. This young girl was now so scared she was crying, screaming for help. She was deathly afraid that we were going to tip or swamp. I tried to console her, trying to calm her down and keep her positive. Thankfully, she calmed as we made the last turn, heading for the finish line. But this was short lived.*

*One nearby canoe went to shore to bail their canoe, and of course, after they removed the water, they regained normal speed. They caught up to us very quickly, because we were still in survival mode, struggling because we had a lot*

*of water in our canoe. The extra weight made traveling very slow. As for the other canoe, taking in water did not help them. Just as they got beside us, they tipped! Oh my! My young niece went back to that place of fear. Who could blame her? Thankfully, we all made it in safe and sound. But it was a test that I will never forget.*

I tell this story to help understand how we are continually tested and what the Elders have been trying to help us understand that, regardless of the surrounding, you must stay focused and calm. There is a phrase that we hear continually:

*kw'am'kw'um'stuhw tun' shqweluwun.* Translated it means have a strong heart and a strong mind. This teaching is meant to be used under difficult conditions. If we think about this in the context of language, we are certainly in a storm. I liken this story to our current language situation. So few fluent speakers remaining and very few fluent speakers are emerging, it is like being on a canoe that is about to swamp. To keep it afloat, we have been taught that you need to keep faith. We must believe that the language will live again. It is a teaching; negative thoughts or actions will only cause harm while in the storm. The canoe offers this teaching—we must have faith. The help that we need is always nearby, ready and waiting to strengthen our language efforts.

### **5.2.3 In the presence of the sacred**

On sacred ground - a physical reminder, Coast Salish People, as other Indigenous people, traditionally have learned how to respect and honor the sacred. This particular discussion is intended to help us understand this perspective. There is a teaching which always reminds us that we must conduct ourselves in a very humble, respectful manner, especially in the presence of one of the sacred elements. For example, there is a teaching that when one gets on the canoe, enters the longhouse, or starts a sacred ceremony, one is

reminded to humble oneself, be very quiet, and be very still. What I have learned along the way is that it is not always obvious that you have entered the sacred. My story about a fishing trip helps explain this:

*One of my passions is fishing. I have been fortunate to fish many times with my husband in a place outside of Port Renfrew known as The Banks. To get to The Banks, you must travel about two hours from Port Renfrew. It is a well-known fishing site. On one of our trips we were traveling with two other boats. That day, as many times, there was so much fog that you could not see beyond five feet. We travel together for safety reasons, but that day we were separated. Nonetheless we continued. After two hours of traveling, still plenty of fog, we began to hear different noises. My husband turned off the motor. There were no other boats in the area—just us and the fog. I have always loved the fog on the water. Its presences are very powerful, perhaps because there is a physical sensation that comes with it. Well, once the motor was turned off, we heard the voices of the birds, we heard the seals jumping, and we heard a pod of whales singing. It was magical. The memory is so vivid. I remember at the time, I thought to myself, we have come to a different world. It is an experience that I will never forget.*

I think about this experience in terms of our language learning. I again believe that the Elders had a deep expectation that our attitudes and mindset would immediately change when the language was present. At various levels of learning we invite the language to be part of our life. As such, each time that a language class begins, we must recognize that we have entered the sacred grounds of our Ancestors.

What I have come to realize is that the essence of our people is highly dependent upon our ability to sustain our spirituality. This most deeply held belief is the cornerstone of our education system, for it offers a way of learning that has been built on the relationship between language and culture in the context of the natural world. As a result of this special relationship, as we will discover in the next sections, language has not only the spiritual power to communicate other energies, but also has the profound ability to persuade other sacred life forms to certain ends. Importantly, we will learn that through rituals and ceremonies, language and culture have been the ways and means to



understanding and being with the land. As such, we can only conclude that cultural ceremonies and rituals without the language will be reduced to cultural activities, devoid of spirit.

One of the many outcomes of this discussion is that it contributes to the on-going question about the best approach to teaching language and culture: “[the] ongoing debate... has focused on whether culture has to be taught together with language, [or] whether the culture can be taught in languages other than the Aboriginal one, and whether culture should be taught at all if it is not taught in the Aboriginal language. [The Canoe culture certainly helps us recognize that] ... cultural content must be taught in the Aboriginal language” (Oishi, 2000 p.16). I argue that once we truly begin to understand the complexity of this relationship then we will realize that language and culture work together in such a way that one cannot be saved independently of the other. In fact, “[p]reserving culture without language is close to impossible, and preserving language without culture is, at the least, unfortunate” (Touche, 2008, p. 4). The Elders throughout time have repeatedly echoed these same thoughts; our challenge is to embrace this teaching to the extent that it will eventually become a critical component of our language revitalization efforts. To this end, all the research efforts have been devoted to finding a language strategy that considers language as a vital part of a larger system, or developing a “whole-system” land, language and cultural approach to reclaiming our language.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge that the canoe teachings that have been shared are not complete. But hopefully they will give a sense that paddlers have many teachings to follow. I suggest that this is a way of starting a new conversation, to

57

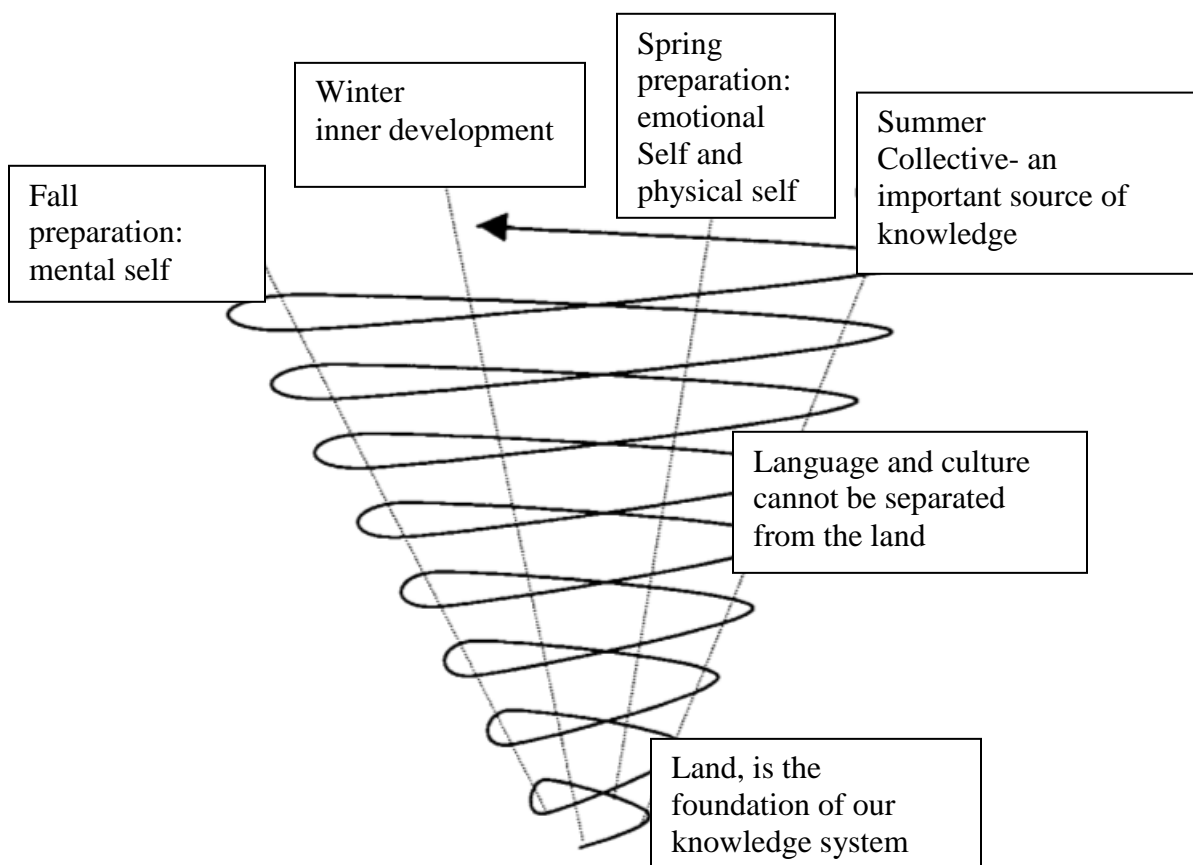
rethink the required teachings of a “language learner” by approaching them from the perspective of a canoe puller.

## Chapter Six: Conclusion

### *Paddle on both sides*

*Walking in two worlds, balance reclaimed when teachers implement the wisdom of our snuw'uyulh (knowledge) into the academic framework.*

This chapter closes the discussion to what I refer to as paddling on both sides. The Elders have long recognized that we live in two worlds. This chapter is an attempt to find ways for our Coast Salish way of life can walk freely in both worlds. This is what I refer to as paddling on both sides, a balanced approach to learning the language. The diagram below is what I believe to be the foundation of this balanced approach. It is proposed that this framework will support embracing the language as a sacred element.



**Figure 4: Coast Salish Framework**

I was fortunate to under the guidance of prominent Elders to be part of team that implemented this framework in a recent Cowichan Valley Museum Canoe Exhibit. The narrative describes the framework:

#### About Snuhwulh

We are island nations, salt water people. Our villages from the beginning of time have been strategically located along the seashore, allowing us to enjoy the gifts of the Salish Sea. Our intimate relationship with the water could not have been realized without the help of the sacred canoe. Cedar is our esteemed relative. Through ceremony and prayer, the cedar tree is transformed into sea-going vessels and into our racing canoes. The life energy of the cedar endures in the Canoe, and by respecting the canoe, we honour our natural world.

We the Coast Salish People have always gathered to celebrate our culture. In winter we gather in our longhouses and in the summer we gather at the canoe races. Training for these races is an authentic learning experience....

For further information please see: <http://snuhwulh.hwulmuhwqun.ca/about-snuhwulh/>. It is filled with language, teaching and stories that offer further insight to Coast Salish learning in relation to land, language and culture.

Finally, I would like to reflect on what I have learned throughout this process. I will phrase my reflections in a way that the old people would ask: "Well, tell me what you have learned?" I have been asked this question many times. This canoe journey has been life changing. Through this research process, I have learned that the world has not changed, but it is me who has changed. I don't see the world as the Elders see it. I believe that I have been looking at the world through a colonized lens. It makes me feel ashamed. The Elders have sacrificed so much, and my eyes and ears no longer hear what has been left for our people. I think that it is ironic that I have come to a public institution to come to this understanding. But, with the support of my new friends, and the guidance of my teachers, I have an opportunity to re-claim our Coast Salish way of knowing. It has

affected my whole being. I see more in my dreams, I listen differently, and I hope that I have become a better person.



### Bibliography

- Archibald, J. (1997). *Coyote Learns to Make a Story basket: the Place of First Nations Stories in Education* (Unpublished MA thesis). Simon Fraser University.
- Armstrong, J. (1998). Land Speaking. In S. J. Ortiz (Ed.), *Speaking for Generations: Native Writers on Writing* (pp. 175-194). Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Bouchard, R. (1992). *Notes on Nanaimo Ethnography and Ethno history*; The Departure Bay Indian Village Archaeology Project. The British Columbia Heritage Trust; Vancouver Foundation; City of Nanaimo; Nanaimo Centennial Museum.
- Esquimalt Nation. (2010). *Community Economic Opportunities Program, Status Report*.
- Fishman, J. (2001). *Can threatened languages be saved? Reversing language shift, revisited: a 21st century perspective*. Cleveland: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Gardner E.B. (2002). *We Hold our Language High: In the Everyday Lives of Sto'lo People* (Unpublished PHD dissertation). Simon Fraser University.
- Gerdts, D. B. (1977). *A Dialect Survey of Halkomelem Salish* (Unpublished MA thesis). University of British Columbia.
- Gerdts, D. (1996). *'i'lhe' xwulmuxwqun: tu nu'umat pookw. (Let's Speak Our First Nations Language: Book One)*. Chemainus, Nanaimo, and Nanoose First Nations and Nanaimo School District No. 68.
- Gerdts, D. (1997). *'i'lhe' xwulmuxwqun: tu yusá'umat pookw. (Let's Speak Our First Nations Language: Book Two)*. Chemainus, Nanaimo, and Nanoose First Nations and Nanaimo School District No. 68.
- Gerdts, D., L. Edwards, C. Ulrich, and B. Compton. (1997). *Hul'q'umi'num' Words: An English-to- Hul'q'umi'num' and Hul'q'umi'num'-to-English Dictionary*. Prepared for the Chemainus, Nanaimo, and Nanoose First Nations and Nanaimo School District No. 68, December 1997.
- Gerdts, D., and M. Q. Hinkson. (1996). *Hul'q'umi'num' Phonics*. (Self-Study Edition) A secondary school textbook prepared for the First Nations Representatives and Nanaimo School District No. 68, May 1996. (170 pp.) with three accompanying audio cassettes.
- Hermansen, V. (1993). *Plants of the SNAW-NAW-AWS and SNE-NEY-MUXW People*. Teachers Guide. School District # 68, Nanaimo.
- Ignace, M. (2014). *British Columbia Kindergarten-12 First Nations Languages Curriculum Building Guide, First Nations Education Steering Committee*.

- Jenness, D. (1935). *The Saanich Indians of Vancouver Island*. Ms. 3 VII-G-8M. Ottawa: Canadian Ethnology Service Archives, Canadian Museum of Civilization.
- Keighley, D.E. (2000). *Almost lost but not forgotten, Contemporary Social uses of Central Coast Salish Spindle Whorls* (Unpublished MA thesis). University of British Columbia.
- Leslie, A.R. (1979). *A Grammar of the Cowichan Dialect of Halkomelem Salish* (Unpublished PhD dissertation). University of Victoria.
- Marshall, T. (2011). *A Tribal Journey, Canoes, traditions, and Cultural Continuity* (Unpublished MA thesis). Royal Roads University.
- Machado, A.P. (2012). *Perspectives of the Land: The Making of Cultural Topographies*. University of Alberta, Gaudium Sciendi, No 1, Marco. Retrieved from: [http://www2.ucp.pt/resources/Documents/SCUCP/GaudiumSciendi/GaudiumSciendi\\_N1/N1\\_Artigos\\_AnaMachado.pdf](http://www2.ucp.pt/resources/Documents/SCUCP/GaudiumSciendi/GaudiumSciendi_N1/N1_Artigos_AnaMachado.pdf)
- Meloche, M. (2013). "Bringing the Canoes to Life: Bluebird Racing Canoe". The Canadian Museums Blob. Retrieved from: <https://canoemuseum.wordpress.com>
- Oishi, M. (2000). *Western Canadian Protocol Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Cultural Programs-Kindergarten to Grade 12*.
- Parker, A. (2012). *Learning the Language of the Land* (Unpublished MA thesis). University of Victoria.
- Romain (2007). *Preserving Endangered Languages*. Journal Compilation. Toronto: Blackwell Publishing.
- Littlefield, L. (1993). *Snuneymuxw Traditional Land Use Study*. Government of British Columbia, Traditional Use Study Programme.
- Suttles, W. (2004). *Musquem Reference Grammar*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Thom, B.D. (2005). *Coast Salish senses of place: dwelling, meaning, property and territory in the Coast Salish world* (Unpublished PhD dissertation). McGill University.
- Touche, K. (2007). *Struggling Languages in a Wired World: How Best to Use the Internet in Language Revitalization*. Retrieved from: [http://www.swarthmore.edu/sites/default/files/assets/documents/linguistics/2008\\_KitLaTouche.pdf](http://www.swarthmore.edu/sites/default/files/assets/documents/linguistics/2008_KitLaTouche.pdf).
- Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing.

White, E. (2006). *Legends and Teachings of Xeel's the Creator*. Vancouver, Canada: Pacific Educational Press.