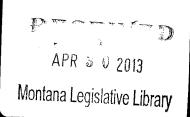
TCJ

Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education

Volume 24 No.4 Summer 2013



ion					
2012					
г 2013	3	W	6	•))
	D			0	
	Ir	K	J.		
	P	G		登予ルー 第1位 ロ	
	Lang Revit	uage	2		
	Revit	aliza	atio	n	

On Campus

BCC develops Montana's first Native language app

By blending the future of technology with the history of tribal language, **Blackfeet Community College** (BCC, Browning, MT) has developed Montana's first Native American language application for smartphone users. The BCC Blackfeet Culture and Language Division has been working on the first phase of the "app" for nearly six months. The division teamed up with Ogoki Learning and developed the first of many apps for the Blackfeet language. The free app is available to Apple iPhone users. The Android version will be available later in 2013.

BCC president, **Dr. Billie Jo Kipp**, stated, "We are pleased with the innovation that division chair **Mike LaFromboise** has initiated in the

development of this app. BCC is poised to be first in the advanced technological development of the Blackfeet Language. This type of ingenuity represents the many talents that BCC has to offer and a melding of our history to the future of technology."

The application is a quick and easy reference guide to numbers, phrases, colors, and more. The goal of the project's first phase was to establish an avenue to teach the tribe's younger generation a few words or phrases. "We feel we can connect all generations by using communication tools that the younger generation prefers. We offer a cultural teaching opportunity utilizing cutting-edge technology," LaFromboise stated.

He went on to note that the college was working on future upgrades for Phase I based on feedback from the community. The Blackfeet Culture and Language Division has also initiated plans for Phase II of the project and hopes to include Blackfeet bands in Canada.

Lakota Documentaries receives grant

By Jurgita Antoine

The South Dakota Humanities Council has awarded a media grant to Lakota Documentaries' project on the Rosebud Reservation. Founded by the late Don Moccasin, Lakota Documentaries is an elder documentation project at Sinte Gleska University (Mission, SD). The project has compiled more than 200 hours of recorded interviews, with a significant portion in the Lakota language. The collection is valuable not only for the accounts of Lakota history and cultural stories it preserves, but also because it documents the Lakota language as it is spoken in the 21st century.

The grant will support editing a portion of the material into a book printed in both Lakota and English. A 52-minute video recording of elders speaking Lakota—with English subtitles—will accompany the book. The goal of the project is to produce media in Lakota language for educational purposes and to encourage the use of the language in the community.

llisagvik offers language nest program

By Devin H. Bates

Ilisagvik College's (Barrow, AK) Uqautchim Uglua language nest program initiated a new Iñupiaq Early Learning associate of arts degree to meet the college's goal of increasing



ENGAGING TECHNOLOGY. The new Blackfeet language app serves as a reference guide for basic words and phrases.

Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education

CHAIR AMERICAN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM Dr. Cynthia Lindquist (Spirit Lake Dakota) President, Cankdeska Cikana Community College

PUBLISHER Rachael Marchbanks • publisher@tribalcollegejournal.org

MANAGING EDITOR Dr. Bradley Shreve • editor@tribalcollegejournal.org

> ADVERTISING Kim Cox • kim@tribalcollegejournal.org

SUBSCRIPTIONS/BILLS Marvene Tom (Diné) • info@tribalcollegejournal.org

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION Nakota Designs • walt@nakotadesigns.com

ADVISORY BOARD Carrie L. Billy (Diné) President and CEO, American Indian Higher Education Consortium

> Dr. Sherry Allison (Diné) President, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute

Ray Burns (Ojibwe) President, Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College Tribal College Journal Advisory Board Chair

> Dr. Elmer Guy (Diné) President, Navajo Technical College

Dr. Cynthia Lindquist (Spirit Lake Dakota) President, Cankdeska Cikana Community College

Dr. Richard Littlebear (Northern Cheyenne) President, Chief Dull Knife College

Marlin Spoonhunter (Northern Arapaho) President, Wind River Tribal College

Dr. James L. Vander Hooven President, Tohono O'odham Community College

Dr. Laurel Vermillion (Standing Rock Sioux) President, Sitting Bull College

Mission: On behalf of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium's member tribal colleges and universities, we provide information for everyone interested in American Indian higher education. Our culture-based publication addresses subjects important to the future of American Indian and Alaska Native communities, utilizing both journalistic and scholady

Tribal College Journal (ISSN 1052-5505) is a quarterly publication of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, a non-profit organization of 38 American Indian-controlled colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. It is published with assistance coneges and universities in the onited states and Canada. It is published with assistance from the colleges. Subscriptions are \$29 per year. Add \$20 per year outside the United States (\$15 for Canada). Send all correspondence (manuscripts, subscription checks, and advertising requests) to P.O. Box 720, Mancos, CO 81328. Send packages to and advertising requests) to 1.0. DOX 720, Prantos, CO 01020. Sente patkages to 130 E. Montezuma, Mancos. Phone: (970) 533-9170 or fax: (970) 533-9145. Copyright © 2013 by Tribal College Journal. Call for permission to reprint articles.

Partial or full online access to Tribal College Journal is available on TCJ's home page and is also provided by Ethnic NewsWatch, LexisNexis, ERIC Database, and EBSCO HOST.

TCJ is printed on recycled paper with 10% post-consumer fiber content and with bio-based inks.





Home page: www.tribalcollegejournal.org 2007, 2008, 2010 EXCEL and 2007, 2009 NAJA Award Winner



Dear Readers

reserving and revitalizing tribal languages, as highlighted in this issue, is an important part of how the tribal colleges safeguard the health and vitality of American Indian cultures. Native languages have been threatened ever since Europeans arrived in the Americas, but Native people have devised many strategies to protect and restore them. One such effort, as pictured on the cover of this issue, is the Cherokee syllabary. Invented by Sequoyah (Cherokee) in the early 1820s, his syllabary was a dramatic and far-reaching effort to revitalize a Native language.

An agent of change, Sequoyah was an acclaimed inventor, artist, and philosopher. Although he never learned to read or write English, Sequoyah intuited how written communication could benefit his people. Over a few years of careful observation of the spoken Cherokee language and experimentation with symbols, he developed a phonetic alphabet using letters that he created and others that he borrowed from the Roman alphabet. Since this invention was such a revolutionary concept, it was met with some skepticism and suspicion by his peers. To allay their fears, he taught his six-year-old daughter how to read and write in Cherokee using the syllabary, and together they demonstrated this new technique to their tribe. People soon saw the benefits of the system and learned it with ease. They shared it with others, and without classrooms or added expense, the Cherokees became literate within just a few months.

This newfound tool greatly increased communication between geographically isolated groups of Cherokees in Arkansas and Oklahoma. Subsequently, a Cherokee printing press was developed based on the syllabary and the very first American Indian newspaper, the Cherokee Phoenix, was established. Thousands of books, pamphlets, and passages were written or translated into Cherokee and printed by this press. Additionally, the Cherokees established a school system which used the new alphabet in its curriculum.

Sequoyah's invention revolutionized and reinvigorated Cherokee communication and education. Like Sequoyah, tribal colleges and universities are innovators, educating students while preserving culture and language. In this issue we report on some of these exemplary programs. We wish we had the space to include all of them. However, if you are interested in reading more about Native language restoration and revitalization, please check out our resource guide for this issue. The resource guide is available to everyone and can be found at www.tribalcollegejournal.org.

Sincerely,

Rachael Marchbanks Publisher, Tribal College Journal

Editor's Essay

It Takes a Movement

By Bradley Shreve

arolyn Burgess Savage grew up in a one-room shack among the sugar cane fields of southern Louisiana. Her family of eight didn't have any of the conveniences or consumer trappings that characterized postwar 1950s America. Even worse, they experienced firsthand the grinding oppression of the South's Jim Crow laws and the social, political, and economic marginalization that came with them. But Carolyn was proud. She was an enrolled member of the Chitimacha Nation, a small yet sovereign, federally-recognized tribe situated near the Gulf Coast in the town of Charenton.

Carolyn worked hard in school, secured a couple of scholarships, and set off for Lawrence, Kansas, where she took classes at the Haskell Institute. She began to recognize that the survival of her Native language was in serious jeopardy. Linguists identified Chitimacha as a dying language and, like Zuni, Washo, or Haida, as an isolate—unique and independent of any larger language family. With only a handful of speakers remaining, Carolyn made it her life mission to do everything in her power to save her language. She gave all her children Chitimacha names, including her first-born, Kica, who remembers lucidly her mother's words: "We've got to hold on to what we have and get back what we can."

Carolyn eventually moved back to Charenton and began teaching Chitimacha at the local cultural center. She taught adults, teens, and toddlers—she even sang lullabies in Chitimacha to infants. She employed every method imaginable: cleverly devising games for children, translating popular Christmas carols, and eventually working with Rosetta Stone to digitally preserve the language. Soon, Chitimacha made a comeback. "You'd hear kids speaking it," Kica recalls, "Kids would go to the store and ask for things in Chitimacha." Chitimacha songs could be heard echoing in the hallways of the schools and excited elders reported dreaming in their ancestral language. Chitimacha was being revitalized and the tribal community was rejuvenated.

Eventually Carolyn's health declined. She lost a leg and was bed-ridden. On August 16, 2012, Carolyn Burgess Savage, one of the last fluent Chitimacha speakers died. Her passing raises questions and concerns about the fate of her language and the cultural survival of the Chitimacha people. As Ryan Wilson (Oglala Lakota), president of the National Alliance to Save Native Languages, warns in his eulogy of Senator Daniel Inouye—the death of a language signals the death of a nation.

TCUs are doing more than anyone else to successfully preserve, protect, and revitalize Native languages.

Perhaps this is why historically so much energy has gone into deliberately and systematically destroying Indigenous languages. Richard Henry Pratt, the infamous founder of the Carlisle boarding school, believed that the full assimilation of Native peoples required the eradication of their languages. He set about forcibly cutting children's hair, discarding traditional dress, and outlawing cultural ceremonies. Most insidious, however, was his strict enforcement of an English-only policy, punishing children who were caught reverting back to their Native tongues. Pratt's formula would be widely adopted during the 20th century and the toll that it took is incalculable.

Today, tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) are working harder than ever to cauterize the wounds that Pratt and the assimilationists inflicted. And they are succeeding. As the articles herein illustrate, they are building dynamic language programs from the shores of the Arctic Ocean to the deserts of the Southwest and all points in between. Indeed, TCUs are doing more than anyone else to successfully preserve, protect, and revitalize Native languages.

The methods and strategies they employ are many. In her feature article, former TCJ editor Laura Paskus illuminates how Aaniiih Nakoda College and Oglala Lakota College have developed primary school immersion programs, while Ilisagvik College has launched a "language nest" preschool. In all three cases the logic is the same: children are the key to language survival and revitalization. As Paskus notes, the statistics underscore the necessity of focusing on kids, with 135 of the 155 remaining Native languages being spoken by elders only.

Other TCUs have directed their energies toward preparing a cadre of fluent language teachers who will, in turn, teach students of all ages. Persia Erdrich shows how Fond du Lac



THE WARRIOR. Until her death, Carolyn Burgess Savage fought to revitalize the Chitimacha language. She focused much of her work on teaching children at the Yaamahana preschool. Photo by Miguez Studio.

Tribal and Community College's *Ojibwemotaadidaa Omaa Gidakiiminaang* immersion program seeks to employ a one-to-one first speaker to student ratio to maximize the immersion experience for student teachers. For three weeks they "check English at the door," Erdrich tells us. Students take up residence with fluent speakers, allowing them to learn how Ojibwe is spoken in everyday life—something a book or a traditional language class cannot convey.

Blackfoot elder Louis Soop also stresses the limits of books and Western modes of teaching language. In Mary Weasel Fat's profile, the Red Crow Community College instructor maintains that when teaching language, traditional knowledge is more important than a dictionary. Indeed, Soop credits the Blackfoot sacred Horn Society as being instrumental in his understanding of the language.

Elders like Louis Soop, teachers like Erdrich, and children like those in Aaniiih Nakoda College's White Clay Immersion School are all integral parts in the success of language revitalization. As herculean as Carolyn Burgess Savage's efforts were to preserve and revitalize Chitimacha, one person cannot save a language. It takes a movement—and tribal colleges and universities are leading the way. The importance of this endeavor cannot be overstated and it is one of the foremost reasons why TCUs are so vital to both Native communities and to the cultural fabric of the United States and Canada.

Bradley Shreve is managing editor of Tribal College Journal. He thanks Kica Savage and Barbara Williams for their insight and assistance. Bradley can be reached at editor@tribalcollege-journal.org or (505) 242-2773.

More Than Words, A Way of Life

Language Restoration Programs Reach Beyond Tribal Colleges and Universities

By Laura Paskus

On February 14, students at the White Clay Immersion School visited the staff and faculty at Aaniiih Nakoda College (ANC, Harlem, MT). They passed out Valentine's Day cards, then headed down to the college's career fair. "They get involved in everything," remarked President Carole Falcon-Chandler (member of the Aaniiih and of Nakoda descent), who is proud of the students and the school.

Founded in 2003, the school's mission is to "maintain the cultural integrity of the White Clay (Aaniiih) and Nakoda (Assiniboine) tribes." The school currently offers K-8 students the chance to learn their native language, A'ani. Since it's an immersion school, students don't simply sit through language classes for 50 minutes each day. Rather, students learn about science, math, and history while hearing, speaking, and experiencing the A'ani language. Classes in A'ani aren't just another attempt to fill out the day; they're an integral part of the whole learning experience.

When the school was founded, only 5 to 10 fluent A'ani speakers remained—in the entire world. Now educating its second generation of cohorts, the school has already doubled the number of A'ani speakers.

ANC's White Clay Immersion School is widely praised as the tribal college movement's first immersion language school. And while most tribal colleges have Native language programs and courses, increasingly they are creating language programs that reach into daycares, preschools, elementary schools, and beyond. This is vitally important work. According to a 2004 report from the American Indian College Fund, a total of 155 Indigenous languages are spoken today in North America. Of those, 135 are spoken only by elders.

Today, tribal colleges and universities are at the forefront of language preservation among college-age students and youth. "Those of us who are activists in trying to save the language have a hard time getting this across, even to our own people: That a language that has been viable for hundreds of years, maybe even thousands of years, is going away," says Chief Dull Knife College President Richard Littlebear (Northern Cheyenne). "All the unique references, all the unique humor, all the worldviews that go along with that—that might act as a conscience for a country like the United States—are slowly dying out." Littlebear is a graceful force for change on the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation and across Indian Country.

Clockwise from the top. White Clay immersion school students and teachers raised money to purchase Pendleton coats. Liz McClain helps first and second graders at Aaniiih Nakoda College's White Clay Immersion School conduct a geology experiment. Teaching students both the spiritual and material culture of the buffalo at Oglala Lakota College. Photo by Marilyn Pourier



THE NEXT GENERATION. Many of the teaching activities at OLC's Lakota Woglaka Wounspe (Lakota Language Immersion School) take place in a circle. Photo by Marilyn Pourier

Language restoration has long been a priority for Oglala Lakota College President Thomas Shortbull. The tribal college, which serves the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, offers a 12-hour immersion course for those seeking to learn the Lakota language. Oglala Lakota College (OLC, Kyle, SD) also administers Lakota Woglaka Wounspe, a language immersion school in Porcupine, SD, for K-4 students. According to Tom Raymond (Sicangu Lakota), OLC's dean of education and principal of Lakota Woglaka Wounspe, between 25 and 30 students are currently enrolled at the school. Thanks to vehicles provided by OLC, they arrive from as far away as Pine Ridge and Kyle, each about 45 miles from Porcupine. Raymond says the school could serve even more children if it had more transportation options; he also hopes that the school can be expanded to someday extend through the fifth, eighth, or even twelfth grades.

At Lakota Woglaka Wounspe, 99.9% of the instruction takes place in Lakota, says Raymond. There are four teachers, a school coordinator, two cooks—and a council of elders that offers its advice. "To truly understand this project, you have to rethink school and rethink how we learn language: [The students] are learning the language because they're learning how to use the language," he says. "Our students are learning math and language and science and social studies and all that—they are learning it through the use of the Lakota language."

To survive, says Raymond—who says he is not fluent in Lakota—a language must be used. It must be spoken, lived. "We tend to think of language as something to be used to communicate with people. The problem with that is the Lakota language is a way of life. It's part of a whole culture. You don't just learn a language, you learn a way of living," he

says. "It reflects back on the old ways of life, when there was a lot of sharing, and traditional ways of living. I'm not talking about dancing back the buffalo, and everyone's wearing feathers and skins and lives in tipis. I'm talking about preserving a traditional way of life that is one with the world around." He adds that once a language has disappeared, it's not only the words that are gone—but also the culture, and a people. With Lakota Woglaka Wounspe, OLC is trying to ensure that never happens to the Lakota language or the Lakota people.

Meanwhile, far to the west and north, language programs are blooming across the North Slope—thanks to Ilisagvik College in Barrow, Alaska. The tribal college takes a multifaceted approach to teaching the Iñupiaq language, says Devin Bates, interim director of Uqautchim Uglua, the college's language program. Currently, only about 13% of Iñupiaq are fluent in their indigenous language.

Ilisagvik College offers classes in storytelling,

conversation, grammar, and traditional dance. "In the traditional dance class every semester, students learn how to sing, how to drum, how to do the motion of the dances—and you can learn a lot of the language by repetition, by singing the songs, learning how to pronounce the words," says Mary Sage (Iñupiaq), Uqautchim Uglua's program coordinator. "We also have a carving class offered by a retired language teacher." He travels out to traditional villages across the North Slope, learning and teaching traditional carvings. There are also skin sewing classes, in which students learn to sew parkas, hats, boots, and mukluks. All of those classes solidify student connections to their native language.

Ilisagvik College also has its own immersion nest, which opened in November 2012, and serves preschool-aged students. Lessons and activities are conducted entirely in Iñupiaq, and students spend time with elders and attend field trips. In mid-February, for instance, students attended Kivgiq, or Messenger Feast, a massive cultural celebration held every few years in Barrow. The relative success of a program is hard to judge, especially when there are so few students. But, says Bates, those preschool students have started to speak Iñupiaq with their families and peers. "They're not fully fluent," he says, "but we're really seeing them move leaps and bounds forward."

The tribal college works closely with other local institutions. The public school district, for instance, is developing a program—The Iñupiaq Learning Framework—to create curriculum standards for K-12 classrooms. It also devised a visual Iñupiaq vocabulary program, an online database, and has worked with the staff of the Rosetta Stone Endangered Language Program to develop a CD-ROM for Iñupiaq.

In partnership with the Barrow Office of the Mayor and the North Slope Borough Heritage Center, the tribal college holds regular cultural events. Their first event, says Sage, was called Uqapiaqta—"Let's speak," or "Let's talk Iñupiaq." They coordinated with hunters who donated four seals. "We went to the heritage center's Traditional Room, where we could get messy, and butchered the four seals," she says. "We invited the community, and elders, and learned how to cut up the seals, to butcher, and also learned the names of the parts in the Iñupiaq language." Once a month, she says, they organize events centered on traditional skills and learning the Iñupiaq language. "You could see a lot of smiles," she says, "a lot of learning."

While much has changed in recent decades, North Slope communities still engage in many aspects of traditional cultural life. Whaling still occurs each spring and fall, says Sage. And there are traditional events, feasts, and dances, as well as gift-giving, bartering, and fun. "There are still

a lot of things that we do, like hunting, skin sewing, dancing; camping," she says. "The only thing that's different is we're not fluent." Almost everyone under the age of 45, she says, is unable to speak Iñupiaq.

But that's changing.

"There is the recognition that it's time to learn the language—and use the language before we no longer have it," says Sage. "My children say what they can. Their grandmother was their babysitter; they can understand the basics, and they love using Iñupiaq words." At home, her children use the online Iñupiaq language tools available to them. They get excited, she says, when they earn top grades on the program—and she can hear them shouting out, proud of themselves.

As for the college's program director, Devin Bates, he too is learning Iñupiaq—even though he is non-Native. "The ability to speak Iñupiaq goes beyond words," he says. "The Iñupiaq language is an expressive language; it's a very rich language, and it has single words that—in the way that they work and the things they express—rival or exceed English at a post-doctoral level." One of those words, he says, is *Ikiaqtalaaq*, which means, "to flame or tingle because of emotional status." Bates explains: "It means basically, that your whole soul is pregnant, that you're tingling inside. Just one word means all that! There are words for concepts that don't exist in English. You can't learn them and know them without living here, being here. And when that happens, it becomes transformative. It's very personal, very sacred."

Sage and Bates are both optimistic for the future of language programs at Ilisagvik College—and for the revitalization of the Iñupiaq language. "We're really shooting for language nest expansion across the North Slope. At this early



PINNIPED PROCESSING. Students in Ilisagvik College's Uqautchim Uglua language program intertwine traditional practices such as seal butchering with language learning. Photo by Devin Nageak Bates

stage and with the past history of language degradation and people being deported out to boarding schools, there are a lot of wounds that run really deep," says Bates. "But the community desperately wants this. Iñupiaq is very much alive—there just needs to be some catalyst, something that breaks the barriers that history and experience have put up."

In North America, and worldwide, Indigenous languages are disappearing at an alarming rate. But there are models of success for language revitalization. Richard Littlebear points to the current use of languages, such as Hebrew, Maori, or Hawaiian, that were once on the brink of disappearance. There is hope. And if Littlebear is a role model, the hard work of language revitalization can be accomplished with humor and joy.

Whether the language learners are tribal college students greeting one another in their native language, kindergarteners seated in a semi-circle around an elder, or people laughing and sharing a meal together, the joy of language learning segues into something serious. The language programs at tribal colleges and within Native communities across North America represent a way for young people to connect more deeply with the past—to understand and speak the words their ancestors uttered, call the features on their homelands by ancient names, and sing traditional prayers with confidence—and to stitch together the threads of a vibrant future for their tribes.

Laura Paskus is the former managing editor of Tribal College Journal. She is an independent editor, writer, and radio reporter based in New Mexico and she can be reached at laura.paskus@gmail.com.

Kainai, Piikani/North Peigan, Siksika, and Aamsskaapipikani/South Peigan (or the Blackfeet Tribe of Montana). RCCC hosts this symposium, as does Blackfeet Community College across the border in Browning, Montana. The language is spoken at the symposiums, and participants discuss ways of transmitting it to their respective tribes. Although the four Blackfootspeaking tribes have their own dialects, they understand each other.

Soop often begins his courses with an orientation so that students will know what to expect of the language. He devises lessons on reading and writing, uses films like Circle of the Sun, and invites members of the RCCC Elders Advisory Council to make cultural presentations. Students do a research project pertaining to Blackfoot culture and take both midterm and final exams. He also assigns a family tree exercise. "It's important you know who your relatives are," he maintains. He often takes students on field trips to museums such as the Provincial Museum in Edmonton, the Glenbow Museum and Archives in Calgary, the Galt Museum and Archives in Lethbridge, and the Siksika Museum in Siksika, Alberta.

In teaching the Blackfoot language at RCCC, Soop has various resources at his disposal. The Kainai Studies Department—which also employs language instructors Duane Mistaken Chief, Ryan Heavy Head, and Narcisse Blood-utilizes a website that has its own Blackfoot phraseology and story applications devised by Blood Tribe elders. The Blackfoot Digital Library also has Blackfoot stories and other resources that RCCC students can access, while the RCCC Resource Centre's First Nations Information Connection portal provides access to the Blackfoot dictionary. The portal offers free online resources which are shared with the other six tribal colleges in Alberta (RCCC is the only Canadian college to be a member of

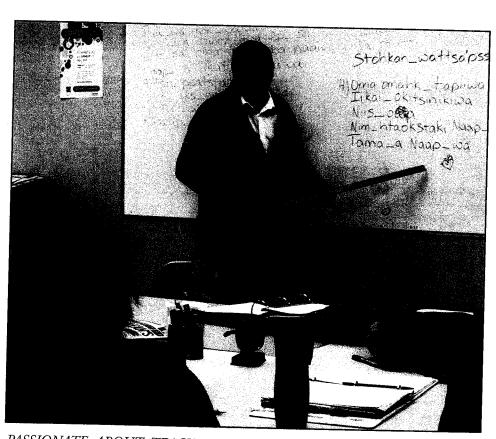
If you know the language... you know your culture because culture is embedded in language.

the American Indian Higher Education Consortium).

Although such modern technology can facilitate learning, Blackfoot incorporates traditional values, Soop states. Blackfoot ceremonies consist of language and song, about half and half. He feels that there is more interest in speaking the language when people join Blackfoot social or religious societies, believing people want to pray

and speak in their own language. If you know the language, Soop maintains, you know your culture because culture is embedded in language.

Mary Weasel Fat (Blackfoot) is the library coordinator for Red Crow Community College. She has been working in the library for about 15 years, as a clerk, assistant, and coordinator.



PASSIONATE ABOUT TEACHING. Louis Soop engages students in a Blackfoot language class. Soop always starts with the basics, noting, "You can't use big words with 20 letters." Photo by Neal Shade