

Cherokee Nation Language Preservation Long Range Plan

The overall direction for achieving language revitalization for the ten years (2002-2012) was centered on three major goals.

- Create language revitalization programs that ensure survival of the Cherokee language throughout the tribal communities.
- Educate and certify language teachers to assure a qualified and knowledgeable workforce for program implementation.
- Document the language and develop language instructional materials and curriculum.

Language Preservation Action Steps

Goal A. Create Language Revitalization Programs

Strategy A-1 - Create methods for the language to be reinforced and enthusiastically used in the home, in informal community social settings, and in CN businesses.

Action Step 1. Develop functional- based language to accomplish the language in common context. These may include such social functions as greeting and introductions, descriptions and directions, buying and selling, navigating the circumstances of eating and cooking, naming common objects and places, inquiring about the language, and discussing common subjects.
Plan & develop – 2003 Implement & assess – 2004

Action Step 2. Offer weekly weekend and/or evening classes in an immersion method teaching parents and students in a home-like setting.
Plan & develop – 2003 Implement & assess – 2004

Activities were planned (2003-2004) but did not get implemented in the (2004-2005) project year.

Action Step 3. Encourage parents to participate in the Master – Apprentice programs as described in Strategy A-4.
Plan and develop – 2003 Implement & assess - 2004

Action Step 4. Devise ways to motivate parents and families with new ideas and resources so they will continue to use the language in the home and community setting. (Example may be having periodic visits from language teachers or other families visit the home for a social visit in Cherokee or field trips with several families to events in which only the Cherokee language is spoken)
Plan & develop – 2003 Implement & assess –2004

Action Step 5. Continue to offer incentive (pay bonus) for CN employees who learn the language and progressively increase language fluency.
Plan & develop – 2003 Implement & assess - 2003

Strategy A-2 Develop and maintain demonstration immersion classrooms beginning with preschool and continuing through grade 6.

There is no doubt that creating an immersion program is the best way to jump-start the production of a new generation of fluent speakers. The primary purpose of this strategy is to help children acquire the Cherokee language in such a way that it will become an integral part of their lives and their knowledge about the world around them. The method is to develop a new grade-level classroom each year beginning in 2004 with the four-year old classroom and continuing to 2012 for the sixth grade class, and maintain each classroom in following years. The estimated output is eight grade levels by year 2011 with 20 students per grade for a total output of 160 students.

Action Step 1 - Solicit interests and hire bi-literate teachers and aides with prior classroom experience and who are willing to be trained in an immersion language-training program.

Plan & Develop – 2003 Implement & Assess - 2004

Action Step 2 - Develop in-service training program and professional support by coordinating with local colleges and universities, Oklahoma Native Language Association, and consultants described in Strategy B-2.

Plan & Develop – 2003 Implement & Assess - 2004

Action Step 3 - Develop a family component to involve parents in immersion classroom activities, develop opportunities for the parents to learn the language and create ways for the language to be used in the home setting as described in Strategy A-1.

Plan & Develop – 2003 Implement & Assess – 2004

Action Step 4 - Coordinate with Head Start and local schools to create immersion classrooms with curriculum that meets state standards further described in Strategy C-3.

Plan & Develop – 2003 Implement & Assess – 2004

Action Step 5 - Solicit participation in the immersion classrooms of community fluent speakers to visit the classroom and be involved in a variety of cultural activities so the children have an opportunity to hear the richness of the language spoken by others.

Plan & Develop – 2003 Implement & Assess – 2004

Action Step 6 - Develop and implement an on-going monitoring and evaluation protocol to assess all aspects of the immersion classrooms and to make the necessary alterations in a timely manner.

Plan & Develop – 2004 Implement & Assess - 2005

Strategy A-3. Coordinate with the local school districts to increase the quantity and quality of Cherokee language classes for students of all grade levels.

Cherokee people committed to language revitalization founded their projects on the guiding principle that bilingual speakers can easily transfer conceptual and linguistic proficiency across two languages, and that adding the native language empowers the speakers culturally, politically, and academically. The methods to be used are for the CN to offer training and technical assistance to local schools to increase their curriculum

resources, and create more effective Cherokee language classrooms. The estimated output is three schools in 2005 with 21 schools by 2011.

Action Step 1 – Collaborate with a group composed of representatives from the local area schools, the CN and others to plan ways to assess current materials for the purpose of developing new age- and competency-appropriate curriculum that meet state certification standards (Oklahoma Standards for World Languages) or new standards to be developed and adopted by the CN.
Plan & Develop – 2004 Implement & Assess -2005

Action Step 2 – Work with selected local school districts to implement an exploratory K-3 grade program that will expose students to the Cherokee language and culture and provide sequencing of instruction for grades 4-8 and 9-12.
Plan & Develop – 2004 Implement & Assess - 2005

Action Step 3 – Assess activities in Action Step 2, above, and refine instructional materials for broader implementation on a planned implementation schedule with other school districts in the CN.
Plan & Develop – 2005 Implement & Assess - 2006

Strategy A-4. Expand the Cherokee language instructional program for adults in intermediate and advanced levels (speaking, reading and writing in the Cherokee syllabary) to create more language teachers.

There is an urgent need for more advanced forms of the language to create a larger cadre of bi-literate Cherokees and language instructors. A large majority of survey respondents also expressed interest in seeking formal language education and certification, participating in master-apprentice teams, teaching classes in various communities, or simply adding to the fluency level of the tribe as a whole. The primary method is to motivate and assist novice speakers for language advancement capacity to insure a greater opportunity to revitalize the language. The estimated output is 2 intermediate classes in year 3 and 2 advanced classes beginning in year 4 for a total of 160 intermediate students and 120 advanced students by year 10.

Action Step 1 – Convene a core group of certified language teachers and linguistic consultants to define language competency skills and learner outcomes necessary for intermediate and advanced level language instruction.
Plan & Develop – 2003 Implement & Access – 2004

Action Step 2 - Develop courses of instruction beginning with functionally oriented, whole language activities and continuing to literacy and composition courses.
Plan & Develop – 2003 Implement & Access – 2004

Action Step 3 – Aggressively recruit students who are at novice or conversational level and offer courses of instruction.
Plan & Develop – 2003 Implement & Access - 2004

Action Step 4 - Develop field opportunities for the students to spend 15 - 45 hours acquiring additional language competency in the community. This could include a field placement in a home where the social use of the language is

described in A-1 or the Master-Apprentice learning situation further described in Strategy A-5.

Plan & Develop – 2003 Implement & Access - 2004

Action Step 5 – Evaluate individual student performance based on their competency skills and recommend individual learning plans so students can further language advancement.

Plan & Develop – 2004 Implement & Access - 2005

Strategy A-5. Create Master-Apprentice learning opportunities for adult learners in different Cherokee communities.

In some ways it is better for adults to learn a language outside an artificial classroom, in order to imitate the way it will be used in the setting of daily life and for real communication. The method is to pair a speaker and a learner who work together on an agreed upon time so the learner can hear and speak the functional language in everyday situations. The estimated output is eight teams beginning in year three for a total of 64 teams by year ten.

Action Step 1 - Select and assess highly fluent speakers' competency level and establish a training program for the master speaker on implementation methods.

Plan & Develop – 2005 Implement & Assess - 2006

Action Step 2 – Convene a committee of master speakers to select teams based on specific criteria e.g. fluency of the speaker, amount of time to be devoted to working together, what the apprentice wants to learn, and commitment to this type of language immersion method.

Plan & Develop – 2005 Implement & Assess – 2006

Action Step 3 - Develop structured learning activities and materials (to learn vocabulary, grammar, story-telling, conversations, etc.) suitable for adult learners as further described in other strategies.

Plan & Develop – 2005 Implement & Assess - 2006

Action Step 4 - Create ways to provide on-going support to motivate learners to reach learning goals e.g. keep journals, obtain mentoring, participate in group team meetings, receive incentives such as payments, and on-going training.

Plan & Develop – 2005 Implement & Assess - 2006

Action Step 5 - Develop an individualized team assessment protocol to determine how well the learner speaks the language, provide recommendations to the speaker, and help the team decide future plans.

Plan & Develop – 2006 Implement & Assess - 2007

Goal B. Secure a qualified and knowledgeable workforce

Strategy B-1. Define college degree requirements and certification standards for Cherokee language instructors.

There is a critical shortage of qualified Cherokee language teachers and almost no academically educated language instructors. Without implementing a process to recruit and educate more language teachers, the language will survive only a few more

generations. The proposed method is to recruit potential teachers from participants described in Goal A and from Cherokee communities, and educate them for future leadership roles in immersion classrooms and other language preservation initiatives. The estimated output is to offer one AA degree with eight students by year five with a total of 40 students by year ten; one BS degree with eight students by year six with a total of 32 students; and one MS degree with eight students by year seven with a total of 12 students by year ten.

Action Step 1 - Convene a core group of language teachers and linguistic consultants to develop the degree requirements for an Associates of Arts degree with certification for the Language Teacher Aides.

Plan & Develop – 2007 Implement & Assess – 2008

Action Step 2 - Develop the degree requirements for a Bachelor of Science in Education with certification for the Language Teachers.

Plan & Develop – 2008 Implement & Assess – 2009

Action Step 3 - Develop the degree requirements for a Master of Education degree in Applied Linguistics.

Plan & Develop – 2009 Implement & Assess – 2010

Action Step 4 - Create a tribal certification body to certify Language Teachers with AA and BSE degrees for instruction in tribal language programs.

Plan & Develop – 2006 Implement & Assess - 2007

Strategy B-2. Coordinate with higher education institutions (and/or the Cherokee Nation Tribal College) to offer the necessary course of instructions for Teacher Aides, Teachers, and Linguists.

Teachers must be skilled in teaching methodologies, strategies, and content knowledge and also be proficient in Cherokee language and culture. The method is to form partnerships with degree-granting higher education institutions to incorporate placement of student teachers with CN language programs. The estimated output measure is the same as B-1, above.

Action Step 1 - Meet with colleges/universities (Northeastern State University, Oklahoma University, University of Kansas, Cherokee Nation Tribal College,) and others to engage their interest in incorporating the various degree programs.

Plan & Develop – 2004 Implement & Assess - 2005

Action Step 2 - Collaborate with each department or college to examine the course of study to determine how courses can be offered to promote accurate language proficiency based on Cherokee cultural knowledge.

Plan & Develop – 2005 Implement & Assess - 2006

Action Step 3 - Aggressively recruit students from language preservation activities, local schools, Cherokee communities, and develop a mentor relation with CN language instructors.

Plan & Develop – 2004 Implement & Assess – 2005

Action Step 4 - Expand the teacher education program to offer courses and/or student field placement in different community settings.

Plan & Develop – 2006 Implement & Assess – 2007

GOAL C. Document the language and develop curriculum

Strategy C-1 – Research and document the older and current forms of the Cherokee written and spoken language.

The most important activity to do when a language has only a small number of speakers is to document the language and knowledge of the speakers as thoroughly as possible. Although there may be many different forms of written Cherokee and many different dialects, none have been accurately documented, or archived. The proposed method is to find and acquire copies of the language that exists in various holdings and as currently spoken in Cherokee communities, and use the newest technology to record the language for archival purpose. The estimated output measure is to record 10 elders beginning in year five for a total of 60 by year ten.

Action Step 1 - Identify sources of the written and spoken language such as publications, unpublished documentation, private and public holdings, etc.

Plan & Develop – 2006 Implement & Assess – 2007

Action Step 2 - Develop a planned process for collecting and recording present-day elders and master speakers in various venues such as songs, oral history, and other forms.

Plan & Develop – 2006 Implement & Assess – 2007

Action Step 3 - Convene a core group of master-level language experts and museum archival specialists (Cherokee Heritage Center, universities and other places) to develop a system for the documentation process.

Plan & Develop – 2006 Implement & Assess – 2007

Action Step 4 - Record and produce archival digital copies for storage.

Plan & Develop – 2006 Implement & Assess – 2007

Strategy C–2. Establish an archival system to preserve the different forms of the language for future generations

The creation of a permanent archive for the Cherokee language needs to be developed of the language in the form of songs, oral history, and stories so that all kinds of written and spoken language can be saved for future generation. The purpose is to develop the methods to not only record the language but to use the most effective digital medium for the archive. The methods include how to select the best technical process to keep audio and video copies but also to develop a management plan which requires regular updating and proper storage in separate locations.

Action Step 1 - Conduct research about efficient and cost-effective methods currently being used to archive language material.

Plan & Develop – 2007 Implement & Assess – 2008

Action Step 2 – Hire or contract with a museum archival specialist to design the master archive of Cherokee audio materials, to transfer recording of older analog recordings and copy to DAT or CD, and recommend proper storage system.
Plan & Develop – 2007 Implement & Assess – 2008

Action Step 3 - Build and maintain a permanent, comprehensive archive for the Cherokee language collection for public use and for proper storage for future use by future generations.
Plan & Develop – 2008 Implement & Assess – 2009

Strategy C-3. Assess the language instructional needs of the programs to be implemented in Goal A and develop age-appropriate and proficiency-based language curriculum.

There is need to evaluate the current language resources and create new materials and curriculum to fill in the gaps, create replacement, determine new vocabulary needs, and develop a language curriculum development process. The method is to convene a language curriculum committee for each new program to review current materials and develop a plan to address emerging language curriculum needs.

Action Step 1 - Collect and inventory copies of materials (books, publications such as the Cherokee Advocate newspaper, audiotapes, dictionaries, translate materials from the CN, local colleges, private collections, and local schools which will also support Strategy C-1 and C-2 activities.
Plan & Develop – 2003 Implement & Assess – 2004

Action Step 2 -Convene a group of curriculum experts to examine existing materials to identify materials that can be used, revised or updated.
Plan & Develop – 2003 Implement & Assess - 2004

Action Step 3 - Identify specific curriculum need based on the highest priority implementation schedule and select the most cost-effective method for implementation.
Plan & Develop – 2003 Implement & Assess – 2004

Strategy C-4 Create language teaching methods, activities, and teaching materials (such as print, audio and videotape, CD-ROM, television, distance learning, radio, etc.) for each program to be implemented.

There is an urgent need to develop language curriculum to support academic achievement of students in the immersion classrooms, intermediate and advanced language classes, the degree courses for teachers, and all other language instruction activities. The materials need to be both age- and competency-appropriate and based on specific learner outcomes. The method is with language and curriculum instructors to create materials and activities that will promote an increased competency of the spoken and written language. The estimated output measure is to develop one immersion curriculum for each year beginning in 2004 for a total of eight; develop one curriculum for the AA, BS and MS degrees for a total of three; develop one curriculum for the Intermediate and advanced language instruction program; and four curriculum for the Master-Apprentice program.

Action Step 1 - Convene a core group of master-level language experts and a linguistic consultant to create curriculum guidelines that meet or are above

identified standards and criteria (such as Head Start, Dept. of Education, colleges and/or universities, CH language standards).

Plan & Develop – 2004 Implement & Assess - 2005

Action Step 2 - Define the process, estimate costs, and secure the necessary personnel resources needed to generate language curriculum sufficient to meet the initial and long-term needs.

Plan & Develop – 2004 Implement & Assess – 2005

Action Step 3 - Conduct a systematic review of the curriculum needs for the immersion classrooms, adult language classes, and other learning environments and develop a specific time plan for implementation.

Plan & Develop – 2004 Implement & Assess - 2005

Action Step 4 - Develop and field test materials (print audio, video, etc.), which reflect a Cherokee cultural perspective and the traditional values of the people.

Plan & Develop 2005 Implement & Assess – 2006