Women, kinship and language resurgence in Kahnawà:ke - Advanced pedagogies within a peer group model

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Abstract

Indigenous language movements, rooted in the recognition of language's intrinsic ties to identity and land, have gained global momentum over decades. Despite the enduring impact of colonization, Indigenous communities are forging pathways to reclaiming and fortifying their languages. This study contributes to the field by emphasizing culturally grounded pedagogies that support adult second language (L2) learners in the revitalization of Kanien'kéha [Mohawk language] in Kahnawà:ke. The research provides a peer group model of advanced language learning that strategically returns language to the home, amongst families, and within an intergenerational setting. Collaborating with Kanien'kehá:ka women, four units of study were piloted and analyzed that featured advanced-level L2 pedagogies grounded in Rotinonhsión:ni ways of knowing. This study illuminates the important role of women in language and cultural continuity as well as the collaborative interaction between advanced learners and elder first language speakers. It also illustrates how L2 learners in Kahnawà:ke are part of a grand undertaking to revitalize Kanien'kéha in their families and community while simultaneously learning it. Positioned as Indigenous-led community research, this study underscores the importance of revitalizing Onkwehón:we [languages through methods that center Onkwehón:we ways of thinking that guide the resurgence and development of culturally aligned pedagogy. This research has led to the understanding that by reconnecting language with land, culture, and identity, we are ensuring the continuity of our diverse knowledge systems and spiritual connections embedded in Indigenous languages. Thus, Indigenous language revitalization through Indigenous pedagogy becomes a pathway to nurturing, centering and celebrating Indigeneity.

Résumé

Les mouvements linguistiques autochtones, fondés sur la reconnaissance des liens intrinsèques entre la langue, l'identité et la terre, ont pris de l'ampleur à l'échelle mondiale au fil de plusieurs décennies. Malgré l'impact nocif de la colonisation, les communautés autochtones se frayent un chemin vers la récupération et la consolidation de leurs langues. Cette étude contribue à ce domaine en mettant l'accent sur des pédagogies culturellement ancrées, soutenant les apprenants adultes de langue seconde (L2) dans la revitalisation du kanien'kéha [langue mohawk] à Kahnawà:ke. La recherche fournit un modèle d'apprentissage avancé de la langue par un groupe de pairs qui ramène la langue à la maison de façon stratégique, au sein des familles et dans un cadre intergénérationnel. En collaboration avec les femmes Kanien'kehá:ka, quatre unités d'étude, présentant des pédagogies de niveau avancé en langue seconde fondées sur les modes de connaissance Rotinonhsión:ni, ont été pilotées et analysées. En étudiant les parcours d'apprentissage de ce groupe de femmes, l'étude met en lumière l'interaction collaborative entre ces apprenantes avancées et des Ainé.e.s, locuteurs natifs. L'étude met en exergue également la façon dont les apprenant.e.s de kanien'kéha à Kahnawà:ke font partie d'une grande entreprise de revitalisation et de récupération du kanien'kéha dans leurs familles et dans leur communauté, en parallèle avec le processus d'apprentissage lui-même. En tant que recherche communautaire menée par des chercheures autochtones, cette étude souligne l'importance de la revitalisation des langues onkwehón:we par le biais de méthodes axées sur les modes de pensée onkwehón:we qui guident la résurgence et le développement d'une pédagogie adaptée à la culture. Cette recherche a permis de comprendre qu'en rétablissant les connections de la langue avec la terre, avec la culture et avec l'identité, nous assurons la continuité de nos divers systèmes de connaissance et des liens spirituels ancrés dans les langues autochtones. Ainsi, la revitalisation des langues

autochtones par le biais de la pédagogie autochtone devient un moyen de nourrir, de centrer et de

célébrer l'Indigénéité.

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I also acknowledge our cherished elder speaker, Konwaia'torèn:'en Deer, who guided and supported us all throughout the project. Your knowledge, experience, kindness, patience and love for our language continues to be our inspiration, akwé:kon kwanorónhkhwa.

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With immense gratitude I acknowledge all the past and present teachers, learners and advocates for Kanien'kéha across our nation. It is truly a monumental collective effort. There is so much to celebrate as we are seeing the vision come to fruition and a new generation of Kanien'kéha speakers is emerging. Niawenhkó:wa tánon akwé: kwanorónhkhwa.

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Glossary of Kanien'kéha Terms

Aóhskon Kanien'kéha/Onkwehonwehnéha – Fully in Kanien'kéha/The original language

Kahnawa'kehró:non – The people of Kahnawà:ke

Kaianerehkó:wa – The Great Good/Great Law of Peace

Kanien'kéha – Language of the Kanien'kehá:ka

Kanien'kehá:ka – The People of the Flint, often referred to as Mohawks

Ka'nikonhrí:io – A Good Mind

Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkhwen – The words before all else, the words of thanksgiving

Onkwehón:we – The original people

Rotinonhsión:ni – People of the Longhouse (Haudenosaunee in Onondaga)

Ska'nikòn:ra – Being of one mind

Sha'tetionkwátte – We are all equals/equal in height (no individual is above another)

Skén:nen - Peace

Chapter 1: Tsi Nahò:ten Wakerihwí:sake – Brief Overview of the Study

Movements supporting the revitalization, reclamation, and preservation of Indigenous languages have been in motion for decades and continue to gain momentum globally. As Indigenous peoples, we place great value on our languages and recognize that they are closely tied to our identity, the land, knowledge systems, and worldview. It is understood that by revitalizing and reclaiming our languages we will also be revitalizing and reclaiming our knowledge systems and gaining deeper understandings of our unique cultures and worldviews. There are many accounts of Indigenous language revitalization efforts showing that communities are finding ways to regain and strengthen their languages, resisting the impacts, harms, and ongoing effects of colonization.

Across the Kanien'kehá:ka nation a generation of language workers are building on the work of those who came before us, still refining and extending pathways forward. This doctoral research is meant to complement that collective work, not to argue a point as is often seen in academia, but to add to our collective thinking as Rotinonhsión:ni[1]. With the goal of exploring extended pathways for Indigenous language learning, I present ideas to consider what comes after adult learners have reached advanced levels of Kanien'kéha proficiency and how learners can continue to build upon those tremendous successes.

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[1] *Rotinonhsión:ni* in Kanien'kéha (Haudenosaunee in Onondaga) is loosely defined as People of the Longhouse, referred to as the Iroquois by the French. The Rotinonhsión:ni are comprised of 6 allied nations, the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk and Tuscarora. The Rotinonhsión:ni nations share in foundational teachings which make up our worldview or belief systems, rooted in our creation story, cycle of ceremonies, thanksgiving greetings and our political system called the Kaianerehkó:wa or The Great Law of Peace. I use the Kanien'kéha [Mohawk] term throughout this text, unless directly quoting another language used.

This project takes place in my home community of Kahnawà:ke, Mohawk Territory. It explores Indigenous language pedagogies using a peer group model aiming to scaffold[2] learners towards a higher level of proficiency. The peer group model is grounded upon a "Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy" that was developed for the study. The framework takes the targeted advanced-high to superior[3] benchmarks (see Chapter 3 for a detailed description) and establishes how Rotinonhsión:ni values and worldview ground our pedagogical approaches for advanced language learning with a balance of communicative and structural approaches.

As an Onkwehón:we researcher from Kahnawà:ke, my research intentions continue to be grounded in the needs of my community and nation. My experiences as a learner, teacher, advocate, mother, and grandmother have greatly influenced my research goals. This doctoral study underscores the integral role of adult second language (L2) speakers and learners in revitalizing Kanien'kéha [Mohawk] in my home community of Kahnawà:ke. In support of current efforts to strengthen and revitalize our language, the research focused on identifying pedagogical approaches, resources and supports needed for Kanien'kéha learners with advanced language proficiency to progress towards a superior level of proficiency. The community-based project was undertaken with a peer group of Kanien'kehá:ka women from Kahnawà:ke who

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[2] Scaffolding is used in education as well as in the field of additional language learning and refers to the use of instructional strategies that support students to progress towards identified learning outcomes and attain increased levels of knowledge and skills (Cook, 2016; Keck & Kim, 2014; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). For examples of scaffolding techniques see The Glossary of Educational Reform at https://www.edglossary.org/scaffolding/.

[3] The benchmarks for spoken language proficiency throughout the dissertation are based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 2024). Table 2 in Chapter 2 of this dissertation provides an overview of ACTFL's 2024 advanced and superior level proficiency benchmarks, also see https://www.actfl.org/ for a full description of all proficiency levels.

piloted and analyzed four units of study featuring advanced level L2 pedagogies grounded in

Rotinonhsión:ni ways of knowing (see Chapter 4 for a detailed description of the piloting stage).

For my research, I planned a study that would directly benefit the participants and the

community, as well as contribute to knowledge shared between Indigenous Peoples in our efforts

to revitalize our languages. I purposefully chose to conduct my research with advanced adult

Kanien'kéha language learners, as this group has been identified as lacking the support and

resources needed to continue their language learning (Stacey, 2016; Stacey & Whitebean, 2018).

In Kahnawà:ke, the community has been working since 1985 to build a generation of new

speakers as expediently as possible with the skills to support a wide range of language

revitalization efforts and to bring Kanien'kéha back into the home[4]. Over time, many initiatives

emerged (Jacobs, 1998; Stacey, 2016; Stacey & Whitebean, 2018). The two-year Kanien'kéha

Ratiwennahní:rats Adult Immersion Program, established in 2002, has been the most impactful

program for creating new Kanien'kéha speakers in Kahnawà:ke (DeCaire, 2023; Stacey &

Whitebean, 2018). The program's success is evident, bringing many graduates to intermediate

and advanced levels of proficiency (DeCaire, 2023; Stacey, 2016; Stacey & Whitebean, 2018).

In a recent Kanien'kéha vitality study, DeCaire (2023) estimates that there are

approximately 40 advanced level second language speakers in Kahnawà:ke as a result of adult

immersion programming. These new speakers are supporting community-based language

programs and developing new Kanien'kéha resources in the community. For language

revitalization in Kahnawà:ke, it is important to continue exploring pathways for learners to reach

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[4] Efforts focused on the adult learners began in 1985, with a ten-month Kanien'kéha immersion cohort comprised of in-service teachers (Jacobs, 1998). Later, adult immersion re-emerged in 2002 with the establishment of the full-time Ratiwennahní:rats Adult Immersion Program (Stacey, 2016).

the highest levels of proficiency possible (Stacey, 2016; Stacey & Whitebean, 2018). This is

essential so that an unabridged language will be carried forward for our next generations. In

addition to raising their children in the language, second language speakers who achieve high

levels of language proficiency are becoming the language experts in the community who can

carry out tasks such as translation work, creating dictionaries, developing pedagogical grammars,

and contributing to the vitality of our ceremonial practices.

Although there have been great strides through adult immersion programming, Green

(2020) shares that it is very common that "many second language learners of Kanien'kéha who

are achieving the advanced level of proficiency still lack grammatical, semantic, pragmatic and

cultural accuracy" (p.133). This indicates a need for learners to continue refining their

Kanien'kéha skills to address these linguistic gaps. One of the primary challenges is that new

second language speakers are being called upon to teach and support various language programs

before they have time to reach their full potential as language learners (Stacey, 2016). It then

becomes challenging for them to find time and consistent opportunities to progress beyond

advanced levels of proficiency. This research aimed to define pedagogical approaches and

learning pathways to support these learners to extend their proficiency towards a superior level.

The study targeted participants from my local Kanien'kéha study group, comprised of

community knowledge holders, skilled in Kanien'kéha language teaching and learning. Our peer

study group came together several years ago to support one another in our continued language

learning, creating a forum where we would visit, study and speak Kanien'kéha together.

Members of our peer group, who are all women, have been successful at achieving advanced-

level proficiency and we continue to support one another to progress as Kanien'kéha speakers. It

should be noted that, because of the group's high level of proficiency, the piloting phase and

research interactions were conducted in Kanien'kéha. I am also indebted to our elder speaker who supported the participants throughout the study. My research placed the participants as actively guiding the research by collaboratively engaging in advanced Indigenous language pedagogies to analyze each method. The pilot looked to determine the effectiveness and potential for each pedagogical approach to support advanced Kanien'kéha speakers to progress towards a superior level of proficiency. This unique research group was also guided to critically engage with language pedagogies to redefine, redirect, or redress practices based in Rotinonhsión:ni ways. As an act of Indigenous resurgence, this critical engagement was also a key component of the research methodology applied in this study.

Guiding Research Questions & Purpose of the Study

Within the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation, scholarship has been steadily emerging centring around grassroots language initiatives and advanced language learning for adult learners specifically (Brant, 2024; DeCaire, 2023; Elijah, 2020; Green, 2020; Hemlock, 2020; Hill, 2015; Stacey, 2016). This scholarship establishes a common need to progress our efforts in revitalizing Kanien'kéha by creating pathways and supports for adult learners to achieve proficiency through the advanced levels and towards a superior level of proficiency. Focused on advanced-level language pedagogies, this dissertation research contributes to this collective movement for language revitalization in Kahnawà:ke as well as within the Kanien'kehá:ka nation.

To address the need for advanced-level language pedagogies and pathways for language revitalization, this study built on my master's research as well as the extensive community-based efforts and successes championed in Kahnawà:ke. The research focused on identifying successful pedagogies and appropriate resources for advanced Kanien'kéha language learners

seeking to increase their proficiency by exploring the following: **What Rotinonhsión:ni language pedagogies can best support Kahnawà:ke's advanced second language speakers to progress towards a superior level of proficiency in Kanien'kéha?**

The study also aimed to answer the following sub-questions:

- **What are the various components of advanced Rotinonhsión:ni language pedagogy?**
- **How do we describe advanced and superior proficiency in Kanien'kéha?**
- **What text types, tools and resources are needed for advanced Kanien'kéha language learning?**

To investigate language learning pedagogies for advanced learners, I collaborated with a peer group of six women who are advanced speakers of Kanien'kéha in Kahnawà:ke. Together we engaged in targeted language learning activities to increase our spoken language proficiency and collectively analyze Indigenous language pedagogies. Insights from the project will help to inform the development of learning opportunities for advanced Kanien'kéha learners and community language planning in Kahnawà:ke as well as in sister Kanien'kehá:ka communities. Applied more broadly, the research also aims to contribute to knowledge in the steadily expanding field of Indigenous language revitalization (ILR) nationally and internationally. This doctoral research also illustrates an Indigenous research methodology, more specifically a Rotinonhsión:ni methodology where each stage of research is grounded in Rotinonhsión:ni worldview, teachings, and thought.

Organization of Chapters

When I began this research, my goal was to bring to light Rotinonhsión:ni pedagogies and pathways for advanced Kanien'kéha learners. I hoped to inspire and create opportunities for these experienced learners to continue their learning journey through approaches that also connect their learning back to Onkwehón:we ways of knowing. From the onset of the study, I established researching from a Rotinonhsión:ni paradigm, applying Rotinonhsión:ni values and worldview to each aspect of the research. By doing so, it challenged me to center those teachings and to understand them more deeply. I was also challenged to lead the research activities in my language and create space—an aóhskon Kanien'kéha space—that came to life each time the peer group came together. Each subsequent chapter includes an account of how Rotinonhsión:ni teachings, language, and worldview guided my thinking and reflections throughout the study.

Researching in collaboration with the women who were part of the project was extremely rewarding and within each chapter, I aimed to portray them and what we learned with the utmost respect. They inspired me to complete this dissertation. I thought of how much they gave to the project, and I wanted to represent them in a good way. I was also inspired by my family whose support for this work was immeasurable, so I wrote with the intention of representing them as well. Throughout my writing, I also thought about our language and how it is so important to us as Kanien'kehá:ka. There continue to be significant efforts put forward to ensure it will be everlasting for our future generations. Our language is a beautiful, living, breathing entity that I wanted to honor through this dissertation work by putting my good energy and best thinking forward to help ensure it lives on for our future generations.

This dissertation is written to expand overall efforts in revitalizing Kanien'kéha in Kahnawà:ke, as well as across the Kanien'kehá:ka nation, by looking explicitly at

Onkwehonwehnéha pathways and pedagogies for already advanced Kanien'kéha learners. It is also hoped that other Rotinonhsión:ni communities who are engaged in similar work across the Haudenosaunee Confederacy find some of the insights and tools useful for their own language revitalization work. Findings can also be applied more broadly by others doing the work to revitalize and reclaim Indigenous languages.

This introductory chapter provides a brief background and purpose of the study. Through each of the following chapters, I expand on the purpose, relevance, and outcomes of the study. In Chapter 2, I share some of my personal journey as a language learner and advocate for Kanien'kéha revitalization as well as my motivations and connections to the research. The participants are introduced while highlighting some of their experiences and expertise that contributed to the outcomes of the overall project. The chapter provides insights into the many roles and complexities of language revitalization in Kahnawà:ke, showing that women make unique contributions and great sacrifices to ensure our language is everlasting.

In Chapter 3, I describe some of the background research and literature that pushed my thinking forward and helped to shape this dissertation research. Beginning with a description of an Indigenous research agenda (Smith, 2012), I describe the purpose and motivations for carrying out community-based research as a Rotinonhsión:ni person. I also provide an overview of the current vitality of Kanien'kéha in Kahnawà:ke, showing years of persistent efforts, evolving with adult language learners at the forefront. The chapter provides insights into Indigenous language revitalization and how efforts evolved based on the needs of the community, showing a clear need to support already advanced adult learners to continue their language learning journey. Important to the study, the chapter juxtaposes various tools for determining proficiency indicators and benchmarks. Finally, the chapter describes how

Indigenous knowledge shapes Indigenous research and I present a new Framework for

Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy that was integral to the development of units and

pedagogical approaches for the study.

Chapter 4 describes how Indigenous communities, researchers, and scholars have

embraced research as a means to strengthen Indigenous resilience, seeking ways forward by

centering Indigenous ways and knowledge systems. The chapter describes my methodology and

how it was positioned within a Rotinonhsión:ni paradigm, grounded in Rotinonhsión:ni ways of

knowing and worldview. The chapter establishes that all aspects of the research draw upon

Onkwehón:we thought, inclusive of the research design, data collection and analysis. I enjoyed

researching for this chapter, as I read through the examples shared by other Rotinonhsión:ni

scholars doing impactful work in their communities. In this chapter I highlight the strength of the

collective and ways of researching together in respectful relationship by applying the teachings

of Sha'tetionkwátte, Ska'nikòn:ra and Ka'nikonhrí:io as well as teachings of the Women's

Nomination Belt.

The results of the study are shared within Chapter 5. It illustrates how the new

Framework for Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy guided the development of four units of

study. I then describe how each unit was balanced between communicative and structural

learning approaches as well as the format of each unit of study. The implementation of each unit

is described in detail, showing how the group of women engage a peer group learning model.

Through the use of dialogues and excerpts from the recorded sessions, the results show how

learners engage in advanced language learning supported by our elder speaker. In this chapter the

use of Kanien'kéha is prominent, as all piloting sessions and research activities were conducted

in Kanien'kéha. Although this dissertation is written in English to reach a broad audience, to

honor the language in which the research was carried out, some Kanien'kéha iterations are translated while others are accompanied with an English rendering so that all readers can still discern what is being discussed. As an Onkwehón:we scholar doing language research, creating space for the use of Indigenous languages in the academy is an important act of Indigenous resurgence.

Chapter 6 discusses the implications of the study and makes connections to other scholarly works. It expands on the pedagogical framework as well as the use of a peer group model for advanced language learning. In the discussion chapter, I also highlight the pedagogies that emerged from the framework, showing how the group enacted various approaches such as land-based pedagogies, storytelling, visiting and oral tradition to advanced-level language learning. Within the discussion chapter, I make connections within community contexts more broadly to the field of Indigenous languages revitalization.

The last chapter provides concluding thoughts on the overall project and my hopes for the future of Kanien'kéha in Kahnawà:ke. I also share my reflections on how this project has impacted me and created space for me to become a learner once again. I hope that this dissertation inspires others doing language revitalization work in their communities as well as learners who often are the driving force leading initiatives in their communities. May your languages be everlasting.

Chapter 2: Ka'nisténhsera – Rotinonhsión:ni Women Sharing a Path of Language Reclamation and Resurgence

In this chapter, I introduce myself and share how I have come to do this work as a researcher, language learner, and advocate for the resurgence of Kanien'kéha in Kahnawà:ke. I also introduce the women who graciously accepted the invitation to participate in this doctoral research, highlighting the important role women play in Indigenous language reclamation and resurgence. I also share how this peer group of learners came together to support one another in their language learning. The contributions and experiences of women is relevant to our overall efforts towards language revitalization in Kahnawà:ke. The women who participated in this study are all second language Kanien'kéha speakers, dedicated language learners, and advocates for language revitalization in Kahnawà:ke. They serve as teachers to many in the community, and more importantly, they are striving to pass the language on within their families as mothers, grandmothers, and aunties.

Researching Rotinonhsión:ni language pedagogies for advanced language learning with this peer group recognizes that, as women, they have goals, opportunities and challenges that impact them as language learners. I am not writing from, nor exploring Indigenous language revitalization through, a feminist paradigm; however, as Rotinonhsión:ni, the role of the women is prominent in the maintenance of our social, political, and ceremonial protocols. They are also leaders of our families, our first teachers who are key to supporting intergenerational transmission of Kanien'kéha in the home.

Aonsakateweiénhsthake – To Continue Being a Learner Again

Before introducing the women who participated in my doctoral study, it is appropriate to

share a little about myself and what my connections are to my community and this language

work. My name is Kahtehrón:ni, which means *making roots* or *root maker*. I am turtle clan of the

Kanien'kehá:ka nation. In our nation, we have eight communities[5], and I am from Kahnawà:ke,

Mohawk Territory. Wakenonhsehsró:non [I am a Longhouse person]. I was raised within a

traditional Longhouse family and always felt fortunate to be brought up in that way. I was taught

about the importance of continuing our ways as Onkwehón:we and how they are important in

keeping us connected to the natural world, spiritual world, and to each other as human beings. I

continue to actively participate in Longhouse ways with my family and help maintain our

political and spiritual fires. I am also a mother and grandmother and I draw motivation from my

family and future generations as I carry out work in language revitalization and Onkwehón:we

education.

My parents are Tiorón:se and Kanatakén:iate and they were also born and raised in

Kahnawà:ke. All my grandparents spoke Kanien'kéha as first-language speakers. Like most

people my age, I grew up hearing them speaking with one another as well as amongst their

siblings and friends. I learned a lot from many of them over the years, but may have taken for

granted that I would always hear Kanien'kéha being spoken in our homes and throughout the

community. Unfortunately, as those first language speakers passed on, English took over

significantly and Kanien'kéha in Kahnawà:ke fell from being the primary language of the

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[5] The Kanien'kehá:ka nation is comprised of eight communities: Kahnawà:ke, Akwesasne, Kanehsatake, Tyendinega (Kenhté:ke), Wáhta, Ganienkeh, Kanatsoheré:ke and the Kanien'kehá:ka of Ohsweken. These eight communities span across our original unceded territory and are located in parts of what is now called New York, Ontario and Quebec.

community and the home. From my parents' generation emerged silent speakers[6] and non-speakers of Kanien'kéha due to the impacts of Indian Residential Schools and Indian Day Schools that aimed to eradicate our language and knowledge systems (Whitebean, 2019). My father is a non-speaker of Kanien'kéha who knows some basic vocabulary and phrases, while my mother is a silent speaker who understands everything and speaks Kanien'kéha occasionally when she feels comfortable doing so. I only discovered this about my mother when I began to learn Kanien'kéha as an adult. Growing up, she spoke Kanien'kéha to us using short everyday phrases and commands but not at a conversational level.

I think about my maternal grandfather often. He liked to tell stories and joke around a lot. We enjoyed one another's company, and I would always join in whatever he was doing, such as picking berries, working in the gardens, or sitting under the apple tree on hot summer days. In my teen years, he would drive me to school often because I missed the bus more times than not. I only began studying my language seriously in my early twenties when my youngest child began attending our local elementary immersion school. It took many years to learn my language well enough to speak with any sort of fluency, and by that time my grandfather had already passed on to the spirit world. I would have loved to sit and speak Kanien'kéha together with him the way I did with my grandmother. I imagine the teachings and stories he would have shared and how much we would have laughed together because everything is funnier in Kanien'kéha. I am sure he would have really enjoyed it too; I wonder and imagine what it would have been like.

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[6] Silent speakers of Indigenous languages can understand the language; however, they speak it only occasionally or not at all. For a thorough understanding of the experiences of silent speakers of Kanien'kéha, see the work of Kahentéhtha Angela Elijah from Akwesasne, Mohawk Territory (2020) at http://hdl.handle.net/1828/11873.

I also think about my maternal grandmother a lot, I learned so much from her. She was always generous with her time, and she loved to tell stories about her family and how it was to grow up in Kahnawà:ke during the 1940s. She also shared many stories with me about her involvement in the Longhouse, including struggles to ensure our ceremonies would continue and the many political movements she took part in. She shared stories about the Longhouse where she was a leader, as our turtle clan mother, and travelled for international work, including trips to Geneva to represent the Confederacy on several occasions. My grandmother and I would sit and visit in the language and she would tell me stories, I love that I was able to do that with her. I can still hear her voice and the way she used to speak Kanien'kéha, her laugh was so uplifting. She was always just a phone call away if I needed help with how to say something or a translation. She was so encouraging and proud of all the young people in Kahnawà:ke learning Kanien'kéha. I miss her so much and the relationship we had. I wished she could have been part of my doctoral project, but it just was not meant to be. She would have loved to be part of this research, to visit and share her stories with the other women.

I have come to understand that the legacy of our grandparents and our ancestors continues through us, the living generations, and it is in our hands to live as Onkwehón:we and teach our next generations just as we were taught. Ionkwaterihwaién:ni [it is in our hands] that we continue to visit, share stories, histories, and teachings to pass that knowledge down across generations. Through this project, we were able to apply these ways of knowing as part of our language learning and it was inspiring that we spoke about our grandparents often, I feel that we honoured them through this work. The women in this project are part of a grand undertaking to revitalize and reclaim Kanien'kéha in our families and community while simultaneously learning it. Through our eyes, it is integral that we put a significant effort forward because our language is

a part of our identity as Onkwehón:we and it conveys our way of thinking, being and seeing the world as Rotinonhsión:ni.

I am a second language speaker seeking pathways to reach a higher level of proficiency of Kanien'kéha. Although I have put in countless hours spanning over 20 years as a language learner, and gained an advanced level of proficiency, I strive to do better so I can pass on as much as possible to my family and grandchildren. My motivations to continue learning are connected to family, ceremony, and future generations. Like so many other learners and second language speakers, language learning has also led me to carry out various roles doing language work, advocacy, and community-based research. There are many who carry on the work of those before us and I am so grateful that I have gained many life-long friendships along the way.

My personal language learning is ongoing and has connected my path with many other Kanien'kéha learners over the years. We may share similar pathways towards regaining our ancestral language, yet each individual has a unique story that is important to language revitalization efforts across the Kanien'kehá:ka nation. There is currently a growing number of Kanien'kéha learners with advanced levels of proficiency who are now second language speakers (DeCaire, 2023; Green, 2022; Stacey, 2016). This project explores pathways to support them to reach even higher levels of proficiency. By working with a group of Rotinonhsión:ni women from Kahnawà:ke, the project provided an intimate look at our experiences of learning and piloting units of study in collaboration with our elder speaker. The understandings gained by our collective experience will help further our overall efforts and address the current gap in models for advanced Kanien'kéha language learning in Kahnawà:ke and across the Kanien'kehá:ka nation.

As the primary researcher leading this community-based study, I was also a full participant in the study. I have been a graduate student researching in the field of Indigenous language revitalization and Indigenous education for many years. Although it has been extremely rewarding work, it has also meant making many sacrifices along the way. The hardest sacrifice was time away from my family, in addition to missing friends and putting my personal language learning in the margins. I was fortunate to have so many supports over the years, but it still weighed heavy on my spirit to make those sacrifices. As I began planning for my doctoral research, I knew I wanted to make space for myself to become a dedicated language learner once again. I considered doing a self-study where I would document my learning process but instead chose to include other advanced level Kanien'kéha learners who were hoping to improve their level of proficiency. As a result, I designed my dissertation study in a way that would investigate advanced language learning in collaboration with my Kanien'kéha study group. We studied together over many years, meeting weekly in our homes to speak and learn together with guidance from various elder speakers. The research was an opportunity to bring the group together again to research and document advanced second language pedagogies within a peer group model. It was also an opportunity for the group to challenge ourselves as learners and L2 speakers by carrying out the pedagogical activities and research discussions in Kanien'kéha.

All the participants in this dissertation research are Rotinonhsión:ni women who have motivations, experiences, successes, and challenges as language learners, advocates, and teachers. Consisting of six advanced level learners and one elder speaker, each of the women are unique individuals who generously gave their time as we came together to explore Rotinonhsión:ni pathways and pedagogies to help learners progress through advanced levels of proficiency. The unique group of women brought forth a wealth of experience as Kanien'kéha

language learners, advocates, teachers, and speakers. Their experience was gained through years of work in the fields of Indigenous education and language revitalization primarily within our community of Kahnawà:ke. Together with our elder speaker, the project provided space for us to better understand our abilities and challenges as second language speakers of Kanien'kéha. It was an important reflective process that helped us to chart a pathway forward and continue our language learning together.

Ionkwate'nikonhríson ne Aietewà:ronke – We Have Made Up Our Minds to Become Speakers

This community-based study invited participants from my local study group, comprised of community knowledge holders, skilled in Kanien'kéha language teaching and learning. The women in this peer group were successful at achieving advanced-low to advanced-high proficiency and continue to support one another as Kanien'kéha language learners. Drawing upon their advanced language proficiency, the participants actively guided the research by collaboratively engaging with advanced Indigenous language pedagogies to analyze the methods presented with each unit. The pilot project looked to determine the effectiveness and potential for each pedagogical approach to support advanced-level Kanien'kéha speakers to progress towards a superior level of proficiency.

This research group was also guided to critically engage with language pedagogies to redefine, redirect, or redress practices based on Rotinonhsión:ni ways. The participants intentionally centered Onkwehón:we knowledge, worldview, and ways of knowing to explore pedagogies for advanced Kanien'kéha language learning. Bringing Onkwehón:we ways of knowing from the margins and centering them for the purposes of Kanien'kéha language

revitalization and reclamation was also an act of Indigenous resurgence. This critical engagement

was an important component of an Indigenous research methodology. As the primary researcher

within the project, my role was unique. In addition to the responsibilities of being a community-

based researcher leading the project, I was also an active learner and a full participant in the

study.

Researching these pathways alongside this group of women proved to be an intimate

study into advanced language learning. These women have dedicated years to revitalizing

Kanien'kéha within our nation, our community, and our families. They have years of expertise

and first-hand knowledge as language learners, in addition to knowledge of our ways as

Rotinonhsión:ni, gained through lived experience. They are leaders in community, driving

language programs, and doing that hard work. It was a gift to carry out this study with these

exceptional women, and through the process we grew, as learners, teachers, and friends.

I always felt that this group of women created a space for continued learning that was

supportive, uplifting and encouraging. Coming together again to learn and explore pathways for

us to improve as second language speakers aligned with my goal of becoming a learner again.

Together we have years of experience learning Kanien'kéha and being actively involved in

various language programming, advocacy, and initiatives. We have similar histories as adult

language learners too. We all graduated from the Ratiwennahní:rats Adult Immersion Program[7];

some of us were in the very first cohort in 2002 while others joined the program in later years

when it expanded into a two-year program. We share some common goals such as passing on the

language to our children, contributing to Longhouse ceremony, and supporting community

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[7] See https://www.korkahnawake.org/kanienkha-ratiwennahnrats for more on the
Ratiwennahní:rats Adult Immersion Program in Kahnawà:ke.

efforts overall. We also all fall within the advanced levels of proficiency, ranging from advanced-low to advanced-high in spoken Kanien'kéha. We are all teachers of the language working in various programs and schools.

Enkhehsennakará:tate - Introducing the Participants

As a peer group of women doing language work for many years, we have strategized and dreamed about the possibilities for Kanien'kéha revitalization in Kahnawà:ke and within our nation. We talk about this often and put efforts forward to broaden overall efforts working within our respective capacities. Each of the women have put forth amazing efforts to maintain Kanien'kéha as a living language within their families and the community.

I would first like to acknowledge our elder speaker Konwaia'torèn:'en Deer who has given her time, experience and expertise to this project. Konwaia'torèn:'en is of the bear clan and is a first language speaker from Kanehsatà:ke, Mohawk Territory. She was one of my first mentors when I began my language learning journey. I would visit her in her kitchen where we would have tea and she would help me script things I wanted to say in ceremony or develop phrases I wanted to use at home. Oftentimes my daughter would attend with me as well and she would play in the living room or hang out with Konwaia'torèn:'en's son and watch tv while I studied.

Konwaia'torèn:'en has opened her home to many learners over the years. She is always very giving and dedicated to the revitalization of Kanien'kéha, sharing her knowledge with language learners of all levels. She worked for many years in various programs throughout the community from preschool immersion to adult immersion and continues to give her time on a part-time basis. Having Konwaia'torèn:'en as part of this project was seen as integral to the

project's success. She brought her years of experience working with adult learners to each of our learning sessions and showcased her approach which is grounded in patience, respect, and honesty. She recognizes how learning Kanien'kéha is incredibly challenging and that it requires significant dedication on the learners' part. She provided us with constant encouragement to continue learning, saying that we were doing very well, and that it was important to recognize our successes. She also reminded us that we still have learning ahead of us and it was important to continue so that a "complete" language would be passed on to the next generations. She shared many times that she too would like the language to thrive for future generations; therefore, she is willing to work with us for as long as she can to help with this great undertaking.

Next, I introduce the second language speakers who graciously accepted the invitation to participate in the research. In no specific order, I begin with Wathahí:ne Deer who is bear clan of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation from Kahnawà:ke, Mohawk Territory. She is the daughter of Konwaia'torèn:'en our elder speaker and has many years of experience teaching Kanien'kéha in multiple programs such as elementary immersion and community-based classes. She spear-headed adult language classes in Ganienkeh Territory where she applies various communicative strategies as well as promotes Kanien'kéha grammar as an important learning tool. Wathahí:ne is also a home care worker and applies her knowledge of Kanien'kéha as she provides care to community elders in their own language.

Wathahí:ne gained advanced-level proficiency by spending time teaching and learning with her mother as well as attending the Ratiwennahní:rats Adult Immersion Program for one year. She has been an integral part of maintaining our Kanien'kéha study group and often a gracious host for our study sessions, alternate hosting with me in each of our homes. She

continues to be a dedicated learner and her determination was apparent throughout the study as she shared her knowledge, insights, and experiences in teaching and learning Kanien'kéha.

The youngest participant in the study was Kaia'tí:io Barnes. She is bear clan of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation from Kahnawà:ke, Mohawk Territory. At the time of the study, she was an elementary immersion teacher at Karihwanó:ron Tsi Ionterihwaienstáhkhwa where she was teaching all subject areas in Kanien'kéha using a hands-on and experiential approach. Her teaching also focused on land-based learning through traditional Rotinonhsión:ni practices and teachings. Kaia'tí:io has also taught beginner level Kanien'kéha classes for adult learners and has recently earned a bachelors in First Nations and Inuit Education from McGill University.

Kaia'tí:io was exposed to language learning at a very young age when she attended elementary immersion school in Kahnawà:ke and many years later she attended the Ratiwennahní:rats adult immersion program for two years. Kaia'tí:io had the highest level of proficiency amongst the peer group of learners, having previously been interviewed at an advanced-high level. Having her join the peer group of learners was such an asset, as she brought positive energy to the group and often shared her linguistic knowledge to bolster the group's collective knowledge of Kanien'kéha. Throughout the project, Kaia'tí:io would extend her learning by visiting with her grandfather to discuss what we were learning. It was always enlightening to hear the stories he shared with her and his perspectives on some of the concepts we were covering.

Kanerahtóntha Mahkewa is wolf clan of the Oneida Nation. Originally from the Oneida of the Thames, she was raised primarily in Kahnawà:ke where she was able to attend the Kanien'kéha immersion for her elementary school education. She was a 2003-2004 graduate, in the second cohort, of the Ratiwennahní:rats adult immersion program and then a co-founder of

the Iakwahwatsiratátie language nest[8] in 2005. Kanerahtóntha is a renowned beadwork artist whose creative works have been showcased internationally and garnered many awards.

At the time of the study Kanerahtóntha was part of a research team at the Kahnawà:ke Education Center, where she was piloting the role and impacts of a Kanien'kéha Teacher Coach[9]. In this position, Kanerahtóntha supported immersion teachers to reach their professional goals in the areas of language development, pedagogy and cultural teachings. Her knowledge and positive approach fostered strong relationships with teachers and the resurgence of Rotinonhsión:ni pathways of education. Her participation in my dissertation study was greatly valued. She always kept our conversations flowing, provided thought-provoking insights, and shared that interaction and socializing with other speakers was her preferred mode of learning. As this dissertation was being written, Kanerahtóntha served as the Artist in Residence at Western University[10].

Tsohahí:io Deom is bear clan of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation from Kahnawà:ke Mohawk Territory. She is an elementary school immersion teacher at Karonhianónhnha Tsi Ionterihwaienstáhkhwa where she spearheaded their Ionkhi'nihsténha Ionkhirihonnién:ni [Our Mother is Our Teacher] land-based language program. Tsohahí:io also worked as a curriculum consultant for several years and developed a culturally rooted social studies program for Grades 1-6 for the Kahnawà:ke Education Center's two elementary schools.

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[8] See Kahnawà:ke's Skátne Enionkwaió'ten Community Language Plan at https://skatneenionkwaioten.org/language-planning/2018-2022-five-year-plan/ for a description of the Iakwahwatsiratátie language nest (Stacey & Whitebean, 2018).

[9] The research was part of NEȾOLṈEW̱, an Indigenous-led, national partnership that brought together leaders in Indigenous languages revitalization from nine community partners. To read more about this project see https://netolnew.ca/

[10] To read more about Kanerahtóntha's time as Artist in Residence at Western University see: https://westerngazette.ca/culture/visual_arts/leith-mahkewa-western-s-indigenous-artist-in-residence-is-weaving-a-path-home/article_14d80382-b70e-11ee-8354-23834689e500.html

While participating in this research project, Tsohahí:io was coming to the end of her master's studies. She received her master's degree from Concordia University in applied linguistics where she focused on harnessing linguistic knowledge of Kanien'kéha to inform teacher practice. She is an advanced-level speaker of Kanien'kéha and also attended the Ratiwennahní:rats adult immersion program in its inaugural year. Following completion of the program she continued to visit and learn from various elders from Kahnawà:ke and Akwesasne. Throughout the project Tsohahí:io would often share stories and teachings that were passed down to her from family and the many elders she learned from.

Iakotetshén:'en Jacobs is bear clan of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation from Kahnawà:ke. She is a traditional Rotinonhsión:ni woman with vast experience as an immersion teacher. Along with Tsohahí:io, she was one of the first graduates of the Ratiwennahní:rats adult immersion program in 2003 which led to her career in elementary immersion. At the time of the study, Iakotetshén:'en had recently transitioned to the role of Kanien'kéha resource teacher where she co-developed the nation's first standardized Kanien'kéha reading assessment at Karonhianónhnha Tsi Ionterihwaiénstáhkhwa. She is also an author and illustrator of a collection of beginner level readers for Kanien'kéha learners and continues to be an advocate for the resurgence of Rotinonhsión:ni ways of knowing through Onkwehón:we education.

Iakotetshén:'en brought her experience and knowledge to the project. She often shared family stories and history about Kahnawà:ke that her grandmother passed on to her. I always feel amazed hearing Iakotetsén:'en speak Kanien'kéha because she sounds so much like her grandmother. She has committed much of her life to relearning Kanien'kéha and shared that her strength is learning through reading and writing.

Last, but certainly not least, is Ieronhienhá:wi McComber. She is from the bear clan of the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation from Kahnawà:ke and has many years of experience leading language programming in the community. Ieronhienhá:wi is the co-founder, facilitator and director of the Iakwahwatsiratátie language nest in Kahnawà:ke. She is also the creator of many open-access Kanien'kéha learning resources and focuses her work on inspiring and supporting families to raise their children in the language.

Ieronhienhá:wi is a second language speaker who graduated from the same adult immersion cohort as both Wathahí:ne and Kanerahtóntha. At the time of the study, Ieronhienhá:wi was also a graduate student doing master's research at the University of Victoria investigating Kanien'kéha speaking families and the experiences of young first language speakers. She is passionate about her work and has been dedicated to language revitalization in Kahnawà:ke for many years.

Having each of these women as part of my dissertation research was an honour and a gift. Just as within their work and family lives, they gave so much to this project in hopes that their contributions would help move overall efforts forward. Akwé:kon tekwanonhwerá:tons. Kwáh tesewarihwaierihkó:wa tánon ísi' nón:we nisewattókha. Kwanorónhkhwa onkwatshi'ó:kon.

The following chapter describes guiding scholarship that helped shape the foundations of this doctoral research. It begins with a brief overview of Indigenous research, showing how scholars are taking up community-based research to support Indigenous language revitalization. An overview of Indigenous language revitalization is provided with a focus on efforts in my home community of Kahnawà:ke. The chapter also provides a description of spoken proficiency levels and, foundational to the study, a new conceptual framework for Rotinonhsión:ni advanced language pedagogies is explained.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework and Literature

The role of an Indigenous language practitioner is often a transformative one, changing as the needs of the community evolve. In the most ideal situations, the work of Indigenous language revitalization is emergent, never stagnant, as nations and communities seek out the best pathways forward to secure their languages into the future. There are many moving parts to language revitalization and at a grassroots level, language leaders are always strategizing and thinking about the needs of each demographic. In Kahnawà:ke, our elders, children, adults, and families are all part of the wholistic plan, taking on roles as teachers, advocates, administrators, learners, speakers, and mentors (Stacey & Whitebean, 2018). More broadly, there are sister communities and other nations who become pillars of support, sharing ideas, resources, and encouragement. There are also allies in this work, mostly academic scholars whose fields of expertise converge with the work of Indigenous language revitalization. Together with local language advocates they often work through their respective universities, connected to communities and supporting the work in various ways (Bird & Kell, 2017; Czaykowska-Higgins, 2009; Hinton et al., 2018; McCarty, 2018; Sarkar, 2017).

It is continually affirmed that the revitalization of Indigenous languages must be led by a community effort for it to have enduring impacts on the community and the future of the language (Fishman, 2009; Hinton, 2001; Stacey, 2016; Stacey & Whitebean, 2018; Wilson & Kamanā, 2009). This project is positioned as an Indigenous community-based study and aims to align with the needs and priorities of my community. As such, this dissertation is written to be accessible to community-based language workers and learners in addition to other scholars who might find interest in the topic I am addressing. As a Rotinonhsión:ni woman, I felt it was paramount for my dissertation study to be grounded in this way because, for Indigenous

communities, determining our own priorities is integral in order "to bring to the center those issues of our own choosing, and to discuss them amongst ourselves" (Smith, 2012, p. 40). As Onkwehón:we researchers working within a community context, it is essential to know the community well so that the research will serve and complement community goals in a reciprocal research relationship (Simpson, 2017; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008). Research implemented in this way aims to empower community, and challenge old ways of research which were primarily extractive processes to serve the interests of the researcher (Smith, 2012).

In this chapter, I describe guiding scholarship that helped shape the foundations of my doctoral research. I begin with a brief overview of Indigenous research and how scholars are working to empower their communities by applying an Indigenous research agenda (Smith, 2012) for Indigenous language revitalization. I also offer an overview of language revitalization efforts within my home community of Kahnawà:ke. Finally, I provide a description of spoken proficiency levels as well as the new framework I developed for Rotinonhsión:ni advanced language pedagogies.

Decolonial Research as a Means Towards Indigenous Empowerment

As I prepared for this research, I reflected on the key elements of Smith's "Indigenous research agenda" (Smith, 2012, p. 122) where Indigenous research also advocates for healing, decolonization, recovery, resurgence, and community mobilization (Battiste, 2008; Corntassel & Gaudry, 2014; Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2010a; Rice, 2022; Simpson, 2017; Smith, 2012). This reflection was important to me as a Rotinonhsión:ni scholar doing language research in my community, where our voice and worldview provide the foundations of the project. Our worldview and our ways of knowing are built upon long-standing connections between language

and the land, culture, and identity. Like other Indigenous scholars, I bear in mind that these ways of knowing are fundamental for the resurgence and development of Indigenous language pedagogies (Battiste, 2013; Cajete, 1994; Grande, 2015; Tippeconic, 2015). Therefore, I planned and designed my research agenda around a process of decolonization, empowerment, and resistance (Alfred, 2009; Battiste, 2002, Simpson, 2017). This was significant, as the overarching goal for language revitalization is not simply to replace the language of the colonizer, it is to ensure that the diverse knowledge systems, kinship, spiritual connections, and worldviews expressed through the language continue (Rosborough et al., 2017; Stacey, 2016).

Many Indigenous scholars are taking up Indigenous research methodologies, steering away from incorporating pre-existing frameworks derived from Euro-centric worldviews. For Indigenous researchers, centering Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing is a careful process when we are doing work alongside our communities. Each step and decision in a research design must be carefully considered, as research "cannot easily be grafted onto pre-existing discourses/frameworks, even if they are critical, even if they are anti-racist, even if they are justice frameworks" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p.3).

In her ground-breaking book *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Smith (2012) advocates for research as a transformative pathway that can only be achieved by critically understanding the underlying, often downplayed, causes of the issues being addressed. Decolonizing research implies that a transformative process would take place through Indigenous-led research (Smith, 2004). Maori scholar Graham Smith (2004) explains that it is also important to understand how transformation actually takes place and "to know more precisely the key transformative element within a given strategy" (p. 48). Smith's (2004) main argument here is that there is a need to "move beyond conscientization to change through transformative praxis" (p. 46) where

Indigenous communities are the agents of change, resisting the status quo (colonialism) and its effects, by critically engaging with an issue in order to redefine, redirect, or redress practices based on Indigenous ways.

It is also important to recognize that most "Indigenous scholars engage in contemporary research for the explicit purpose of bringing benefits to their communities and their people" (Weber-Pillwax, 2004, p. 78). With this motivation, Indigenous researchers bear a great deal of personal responsibility to carry out impactful, meaningful research with their communities. For this reason, Indigenous researchers also assert that Indigenous community-based research is a long-term commitment, not only to doing the research but also to mobilizing it (Absolon, 2011; Dana-Sacco, 2010; Smith, 2012; Weber-Pillwax, 2004; Wilson, 2008). Examples such as developing resources to strengthen community revitalization efforts (Green, 2020; McIvor & Jacobs, 2016), reviewing programs then supporting the implementation of strategies to improve them (Chew, 2016; Michel, 2012; Stacey, 2016; Hill, 2015), or piloting new revitalization efforts that lead to longterm positive impacts in community (Johnson, 2013; Rorick, 2016). This level of responsibility is part of the reciprocal relationship between the researcher(s) and the community. Simpson (2017) describes this as "a deep relationship of reciprocity and transformation" (p. 183), where researchers share of themselves, engage in a process of collaborative knowledge building, and learn about themselves as a result.

This deep reciprocity is embedded in Indigenous research methodologies where all participants collaboratively share knowledge, expertise, and skills that build new understandings collectively. Cajete (1994) describes this type of knowledge production as embedded in Indigenous epistemology, where one is expected to "think the highest thought" (p. 46). He explains that this expression means "thinking of one's self, one's community and one's

environment richly" (Cajete, 1994, p. 46). He explains further, saying that the community is in a continuous state of knowledge production and that "each community identifies itself as a sacred place, a place of living, learning, teaching, and renewal; a place where the' 'People' share the breath of their life and thought" (p. 47). In this way, through the flow of reciprocal research relationships, all participants work together, deepening community knowledge, expertise, and capacity. This dissertation research takes into account the foundations of Indigenous research methodologies (Absolon, 2011; Battiste, 2008; Cajete, 1994; Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2010; Smith, 2004; Smith, 2012; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Weber-Pillwax, 2009; Wilson, 2008) by ensuring it is conducted with and for community in order to collectively build new understandings of advanced Kanien'kéha pedagogies. With this in mind, I aimed to carry out my doctoral research from a Rotinonhsión:ni paradigm by applying Rotinonhsión:ni worldview and teachings throughout.

Language Revitalization and Resurgence in Kahnawà:ke

As an Onkwehón:we researcher from Kahnawà:ke, my research intentions continue to be grounded in the needs of my community and nation. My experiences as a learner, teacher, advocate, mother, and grandmother have greatly influenced my research goals. In support of current efforts to strengthen and revitalize our language, the research focused on identifying pedagogical approaches, resources, and supports needed to increase proficiency of advanced level second language speakers. The community-based project was carried out with a peer group of Kanien'kehá:ka women from Kahnawà:ke who piloted and analyzed four units of study that incorporated advanced-level second language pedagogies grounded in Rotinonhsión:ni ways of knowing.

For my study I intentionally chose to carry out my research with adults who are advanced Kanien'kéha learners, as this group has been identified as lacking the supports and resources to continue their language learning (Stacey, 2016; Stacey & Whitebean, 2018). In Kahnawà:ke, the community has been working to build a pool of speakers as expeditiously as possible with the skills to support a wide range of language revitalization efforts and to bring Kanien'kéha into the home (Stacey & Whitebean, 2018). The community has been somewhat successful in these efforts. A significant challenge is that new speakers are being called to the workforce before they have time to reach their full potential as language learners (Stacey, 2016). With the high demand to support overall revitalization efforts, many sacrifice their own learning to support others to learn Kanien'kéha and, therefore, are often challenged to find time and opportunities to progress beyond advanced levels of proficiency following adult immersion (Stacey, 2016; Stacey & Whitebean, 2018). For language revitalization, having opportunities to progress is critical so that an unabridged language will be passed on to our next generations. With no models on how to achieve these higher levels of proficiency in Kanien'kéha, in the past learners would tend to remain within the intermediate to advanced-low proficiency levels (Stacey, 2016). As efforts are expanding, study groups and programs geared towards championing advanced-high and emerging superior language learners in Kahnawà:ke are surfacing. The learners themselves are charting their own way forward. This research aimed to define pedagogical approaches and learning pathways to support these learners to ultimately increase their proficiency to a superior level (proficiency descriptors are defined in the following sections).

The community-based study involved participants from my local study group and positioned them as actively guiding the research by collaboratively engaging in advanced Indigenous language pedagogies and analyzing the new units of study. This unique study group

was also guided to critically engage with language pedagogies by centering Onkwehón:we

knowledge and ways of knowing in order to redefine, redirect, or redress practices based on

Rotinonhsión:ni ways. An act of Indigenous resurgence, this critical engagement was also an

important component of an Indigenous research methodology (Simpson, 2017; Smith, 2012;

Tuck & Yang, 2012).

This research project took place in my home community of Kahnawà:ke, Mohawk

Territory. We are a population of approximately 10,000 located just south of Montreal. We call

our language Kanien'kéha [language or ways of the People of the Flint] and across all eight

Kanien'kehá:ka communities Kanien'kéha is at varying states of endangerment (DeCaire, 2023).

In Kahnawà:ke, 1.7% of the population speak Kanien'kéha (DeCaire, 2023) and the number of

second language speakers is on the rise[11] primarily as a result of full-time adult immersion

programming[12]; however, our language is still greatly endangered with fewer than 200 first

language speakers remaining (DeCaire, 2023; Stacey & Whitebean, 2018).

There are several scales that can be referenced to help determine the vitality of a given

language (DeCaire, 2023; Fishman, 1991; Johnson, 2013; Lewis & Simons, 2009; Nettle &

Romaine, 2000). In Kahnawà:ke, the Skátne Enionkwaió'ten Community Language Plan (Stacey

& Whitebean, 2018) references Fishman's (1991)Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale and

places Kanien'kéha in Kahnawà:ke at stage seven. Based on Fishman's (1991) description, the

plan defines stage seven as still having some first language speakers who are elderly, over the

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[11] DeCaire's 2023 Kanien'kéha vitality study estimates that there are 500 intermediate level and 40 advanced level second language speakers in Kahnawà:ke.

[12] The Ratiwennahní:rats Adult Immersion Program produces the most second language speakers through their two-year program; however, there are some adult learners who gained high levels proficiency through independent study or through participating in the Iakwahwatsiratátie language nest for families. See more on the Iakwahwatsiratátie language nest here https://www.iakwahwatsiratatie.com.

age of 65; while the majority of L1 speakers are beyond childbearing years they are still social within the community. Considering Fishman's (1991) descriptors as well as the findings from my master's study (Stacey, 2016), the plan calls for strategic efforts where elders and advanced learners work in unison towards the goal of bringing Kanien'kéha back into our homes with a "focus on intergenerational continuity" (Stacey & Whitebean, 2018, p. 12).

Kahnawà:ke's language plan also acknowledges the momentum of ongoing efforts and the increase in advanced second language speakers in Kahnawà:ke, declaring that Kahnawà:ke is "on the threshold of stage 6" (Stacey & Whitebean, 2018, p. 12). In summary, this means that the future of Kanien'kéha will depend largely upon enabling today's second language speakers to become highly proficient speakers and pass the language on to their children in order to nurture a renewed generation of speakers. This is by no means an easy undertaking, but "focusing our efforts to bring about this desired situation is essential in ensuring a rich unabridged language will continue for generations to come" (p. 18).

After 50 years of efforts, Kanien'kéha language revitalization continues to be a priority in Kahnawà:ke, Mohawk Territory. Our *Skátne Enionkwaió'ten 5-year Plan Towards Language Revitalization* (Stacey & Whitebean, 2018) established community-wide goals and underscored an urgency for language learners to reach advanced-high and superior levels of proficiency based on American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages benchmarks[13] (ACTFL, 2024). These goals consider learners of all ages, including adult second language speakers who have been identified as driving current programming and leading community efforts overall (Stacey, 2016). The language plan aligns with Kahnawà:ke's community vision, placing language

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[13] Throughout this dissertation, levels of proficiency are in reference to the ACTFL proficiency benchmarks (ACTFL, 2024) as they have been used in Kahnawà:ke and across Rotinonhsión:ni communities for many years (DeCaire, 2023, Green, 2020, Stacey, 2016).

revitalization as vital to the future of the community (Shared Community Vision, 2009). In addition, my master's study documenting the role of second language speakers in Kahnawà:ke called for a focus on cultivating a community of highly proficient speakers in order to safeguard Kanien'kéha into the future (Stacey, 2016).

The community's desire to encourage and support learners to reach the highest possible proficiency levels is clear (Hoover, 1991; Shared Community Vision, 2009; Stacey, 2016; Stacey & Whitebean, 2018). However, possibly more importantly, learners themselves have a strong desire to learn Kanien'kéha beyond advanced levels and "their voice is integral to the direction of language revitalization in Kahnawà:ke, as they are now the leaders of the language movement" (Stacey, 2016, p. 87). For my master's study, I surveyed past graduates of the Ratiwennahní:rats Adult Immersion Program in Kahnawà:ke. The second language learners in that study unanimously expressed that it is imperative for the future of Kanien'kéha that second language speakers strive to achieve high proficiency in order to raise their children in the language and to ensure an unabridged language will continue (Stacey, 2016). For many, raising a Kanien'kéha speaking family is the ultimate goal, yet it is our biggest challenge. With the majority of second language learners achieving intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency in Kahnawà:ke primarily through full-time adult immersion (DeCaire, 2023, Stacey; 2016; Stacey & Whitebean, 2018), it remains to be seen which approaches of Indigenous pedagogy can best support advanced learners to move towards a higher level of proficiency.

Successful Indigenous language programs that engage students in language learning at high levels share many similarities (DeCaire, 2023; Deuling, 2018; Green & Maracle, 2018; Johnson, 2017; Raukawa Charitable Trust, 2016; Squamish Language Proficiency Certificate, 2018; Stacey, 2016; TV ONE, 2004; Yuchi Language Project, 2019). For instance, these

programs incorporate a variety of learning opportunities that include a combination of structural and communicative[14] approaches. These programs also include mentorship and peer learning as purposeful learning strategies, so learners may build a network of support. In addition, various methods associated with these programs employ a morphosyntactic approach which creates space for analyses of cultural understandings embedded in the language. All these programs share an additional key feature, that is, the **sustained commitment from the learners** with full-time immersion spanning two years or more.

It is certainly a momentous task for communities doing the work of revitalizing their ancestral languages (Fishman, 1991; Grounds, 2019; Hinton et al., 2018; Ignace & Ignace, 2008). This work is necessary as Indigenous languages in North America, as well as globally, are at varied degrees of endangerment. To support the revitalization, reclamation, and survival of Indigenous languages, in 2020 the United Nations declared an International Decade of Indigenous Languages (UNESCO, 2020). Examples of language planning, standardization projects, pilot programs, teacher training, documentation, resource development and more, affirm that there are a multitude of initiatives and approaches being employed in Indigenous communities across North America (Chew & McIvor, 2021; Crowshoe et al., 2021; Hinton, 2013; Hinton et al., 2018;). Collaborations between grass-roots community language advocates, scholars (Indigenous and non-Indigenous), and universities are also becoming increasingly evident as the field of Indigenous languages revitalization expands (Bird & Kell, 2017; Chew, 2016; Czaykowska-Higgins, 2009; Chew et al., 2015; Green, 2017; Hinton, 2001; Hinton, 2013; Jenni et al., 1993; McIvor et al., 2018; Mithune, 1998; Sampson, 2014; Stacey & Whitebean,

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[14] Cook (2016) offers a clear description of the components of a structural approach and a communicative approach.

2018; Tulloch et al., 2017). Linguists and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) experts are contributing, many as allies, through collaborations that are focused on centering Indigenous pedagogies and ways of knowing (Czaykowska-Higgins, 2009; Hinton, 2001; Hinton et al., 2018; Ignace & Ignace, 2008; Kell, 2014; Mithune, 1998).

For Indigenous languages, community-based programming and planning is led and driven by community advocates and "is motivated by local needs and desires, and shaped by local resources and opportunity structures" (McCarty, 2018, p. 24). This, for example, means there are no options for approaches such as study abroad programs or extensive language corpuses which second-languge programs of dominant languages often depend upon (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). In addition, access to fluent first language speakers is often quite limited; therefore, the pedagogical approaches and program development must consider most effective ways to work with our elder speakers (Stacey, 2016).

Many communities have been working to reverse language shift[15] for decades. Scholarship has indeed been impactful to communicate developments in Indigenous language education; however, "the greatest shift stemmed from inter-community networking" (Michel, 2012, p. 91). It is through these grassroots community efforts where Indigenous pedagogical approaches emerge with teachers, elders and language advocates at the forefront. Over time, the best practices become refined, showing that "the most important influence on teacher's [and community] decisions is their own experience with previous success and disappointments, as well as the needs and abilities of their students" (Lightbown & Spada, 2013, p. 1). The

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[15] Language shift: Fishman (1991) refers to the process of a community's language use gradually decreasing and being replaced by another more "dominant" language.

networking, sharing, and cross-community support has indeed been one of the greatest strengths for advancing Indigenous languages revitalization. In addition,

> [T]he camaraderie between second language speakers and learners is quite apparent, as they have developed a growing circle of support. This is very encouraging as the next steps to move the language forward will need an *aggressive approach* from these speakers (Stacey, 2016, p. 95).

Advanced Language Learning

The literature describing pedagogies for **advanced** language learning for Indigenous languages is sparse. Because Indigenous communities are now looking towards establishing supports for advanced learners, I predict a surge of research to address this over the next few years. This focused work has already begun within the Kanien'kehá:ka nation, as recent scholarship has been steadily emerging that focuses on advanced language learning for adult learners (Brant, 2024; DeCaire, 2023; Elijah, 2020; Green, 2020; Green & Maracle, 2018; Hemlock, 2020; Hill, 2015; Stacey, 2016). This growing corpus establishes a common need to progress our efforts in revitalizing Kanien'kéha by creating pathways and supports for adult learners with an advanced-level of proficiency.

At the same time, the field of SLA "does not yet have a sufficiently comprehensive theoretical basis for understanding advanced language, much less advanced language use" (Byrnes, 2014, p. 506). Pointing to the need for additional studies, Leaver and Campbell (2015) state that "few research projects have been undertaken in order to develop a 'theory of practice' for achieving higher levels of proficiency" (p. 5). However, sources that describe teaching

practices for advanced and superior levels are continuing to grow (Brown & Bown, 2015; DeCaire, 2023; Green, 2017; Green, 2020; Green & Maracle, 2018; Jackson, 2015; Kennedy & Hansen, 2015; Martin, 2015; Webb, 2019).

The US Foreign Institute provided some early examples as Jackson & Kaplan (1999) shared pedagogical approaches to bring their learners to advanced levels of proficiency within ten months of intense language training. They argued that it is indeed possible for learners to achieve very high levels of proficiency with focused pedagogical supports in place. Providing an analysis of the literature, Byrnes (2014) found that advanced learners need to be greatly knowledgeable users of the languages they are studying and must understand their complex grammatical structures. Leaver and Campbell (2015) agree, as they describe US government language programs that produce advanced-high and superior speakers, where students explore grammar in a variety of domains and text types.

Command of more complex grammatical structures is a key element of advanced high and superior proficiency (ACTFL, 2024; Brown et al, 2015; Byrnes, 2014; Cook, 2016; DeCaire, 2023; Green, 2017; International Center for Language Studies, 2016) and, for Rotinonhsión:ni languages, meta-linguistic awareness is a crucial component, leading up to, and including, at the superior level (Green, 2017)[16]. Byrnes (2012) agrees, adding that language is "a culturally embedded system for making meaning." Learning those systems requires "diverse approaches toward language learning" (p. 515). Advanced analyses of grammatical structures create

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[16] Currently, there are approximately six second language speakers in Kahnawà:ke who have achieved a superior level of spoken proficiency in Kanien'kéha based on the ACTFL 2024 benchmarks https://www.actfl.org/uploads/files/general/Resources-Publications/ACTFL_Proficiency_Guidelines_2024.pdf.

opportunities for learners to continue expanding their cultural knowledge and to understand

Indigenous worldviews more deeply (Kell, 2014, Green, 2017, Rosborough et al, 2017).

Leaver and Campbell (2015) argue that teaching at advanced and superior levels must

also "promote learner autonomy" (p. 13) as part of their learning plan. They advocate for

pedagogical approaches specific for advanced and superior learning, arguing that it must not be

"more of the same" (p. 14). Instead, they say that

>At the higher levels, the focus is on the text as well as the form, on refined
>
>knowledge versus use of context to gain knowledge, and on both extensive and
>
>intensive reading, perhaps with the same text. Emphasis is on self-direction
>
>versus teacher direction… . at these levels, coming close is not good enough."
>
>(Leaver & Campbell, 2015, p. 14)

The concept of the self-directed learner is also stressed by Kanien'kehá:ka scholar

Tehota'kerá:ton Jeremy Green (2017) as he advocates for self-directed learning for those who

are emerging as superior speakers of Rotinonhsión:ni languages. At this high level of

proficiency, these ambitious learners "learn the language of very specific and specialized

language domains, registers, structures, trades, professions, the arts and new, expanded or

revitalized domains and registers" (Green, 2017, p. 57). Others agree that self-motived learning

at the advanced and superior levels must include specialized content that is of great interest to the

learners, aligned with their individual needs and relevant to their daily lives (Brown & Bown,

2015; Byrnes, 2014; Kennedy & Hansen, 2015). This is important so learners can "engage

actively and attentively in the process of language acquisition and derive their motivation from a sense of self-efficacy as language learners" (Kennedy & Hansen, 2015, p. 49).

Achieving the highest levels of proficiency for Indigenous language learners is demanding and laborious, and indeed requires the learner to be highly motivated and committed (Brant, 2024; DeCaire, 2023; Green, 2020; O'Regan, 2018; Stacey, 2016). Brown et al. (2015) remind us that "penetrating the Advanced High sublevel, in particular, arguably presents the most difficult stage on the ACTFL scale since learners must demonstrate partial control of Superior-level tasks to attain such a rating" (p. 80). In addition, Cook (2016) raises valid points, saying that there are only a "handful of exceptional individuals who can mimic native speakers" (p. 177). For this reason, others argue that language pedagogies need to expand to include approaches that cater to the specific needs of advanced and superior learners (Brown & Bown, 2015; Byrnes, 2014; Green, 2017; Leaver & Campbell, 2015; Stacey, 2016). Cook (2016) also acknowledges that "most language teachers, and indeed most students, accept that their goal is to become as similar to native speakers as possible" (p. 177).

The literature demonstrates that "much of the research cited and still conducted today focuses on initial acquisition, methods, and pedagogy related to early stages of foreign language learning." (Martin, 2015, p. xiii). This is especially true in regards to Indigenous languages revitalization. Advanced level pedagogical approaches to support emerging superior speakers are greatly needed for these motivated Indigenous language learners (Brant, 2024; DeCaire, 2023; Stacey, 2016). Defining learning pathways for learners at this level is timely and important to ensure our languages thrive into the future. Similar to the field of foreign language learning, who call for "a serious redress of current teaching practices" (Brown & Bown, 2015, p. 205). As part of a wholistic language revitalization strategy, Indigenous language learning at advanced levels

needs to be designed with language mastery in mind. At the same time, these pedagogies must reflect Indigenous values, cultural understandings and ways of knowing.

Within the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation there is a growing number of adult learners and L2 speakers of Kanien'kéha. There is also a clear need to progress our efforts in revitalizing Kanien'kéha by creating pathways and supports for adult learners to achieve higher levels of proficiency towards language mastery (Brant, 2024; DeCaire, 2023; Elijah, 2020; Green, 2020; Hemlock, 2020; Hill, 2015; Stacey, 2016). As efforts are strategically progressing (Stacey & Whitebean, 2018), there is a move to create a collective nationalistic approach to move this agenda forward for the benefit of the Kanien'kehá:ka nation as a whole[17]. Focused on language pedagogies for already advanced adult learners, this dissertation research contributes to this collective movement for language revitalization in Kahnawà:ke, as well as within the Kanien'kehá:ka nation.

Establishing Advanced Proficiency Benchmarks – The Tools

To establish proficiency markers and provide a common discourse, there are several tools and frameworks that are helpful in determining the levels of proficiency language learners achieve (Ignace, 2016; Jackson, 2015; Johnson, 2012; Leaver & Campbell, 2015). The ACTFL benchmarks, the Canadian Language Benchmarks, (CLB) the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR), United Nations Levels of Language Competence and the NEȽOLṈEW̱ Language Learning Assessment Tool all have

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[17] In a previous talk, I briefly describe this Kanien'kehá:ka national approach see: McIvor & Stacey (2022), NEȽOLṈEW̱ "one mind, one people": Radical Reclamation of Indigenous Languages at https://www.federationhss.ca/en/netolnew-one-mind-one-people-radical-reclamation-indigenous-languages.

similar descriptions for various levels of proficiency (ACTFL, 2024; Gauthier, 2019; McIvor & Jacobs, 2016; United Nations, 2018; International Center for Language Studies, 2016; University of Cambridge, 2011). Each of the six tools reviewed aim to establish common benchmarks to suit their specific audiences and needs. Together these assessment tools underscore the importance of having a common understanding of scaffolded proficiency levels as well as the common discourse to support it. Table 1 shows some commonalities across frameworks and provides a description of each tool, briefly summarizing the goals and purpose of each as well as the target users, their major proficiency levels and sub-levels.

Table 1

Major Levels and Sub-levels of Language Proficiency Frameworks

Framework	Purpose	Major Levels	Sublevels
ACTFL (ACTFL, 2024)	Establish United States benchmarks for evaluating proficiency of adult learners of world languages in academic and workplace settings	Novice Intermediate Advanced Superior	Low Mid High
CBL (Gauthier, 2019)	Setting national standards for French and English proficiency for adult immigrants seeking employment	Basic Intermediate Advanced	Initial Developing Adequate Fluent
CEFR (University of Cambridge, 2011)	Establish common proficiency benchmarks for European language programs, curriculum development and targets for European language learners	Basic Independent Proficient	Sub level 1 Sub level 2
ILR (International Center for	Specify universal standards of language proficiency for the US Foreign Services Institute	0 Memorized 1 Elementary 2 Limited	1+ 2+ 3+

Language Studies, 2016)		3 Professional 4 Full Professional 5 Native	4+
UN (UN, 2018)	Determine a common framework for all UN language programs with proficiency levels targeted for UN employees	Foundational Intermediate Advanced Expert	none
SENĆOŦEN NEȾOLṈEW̱ (McIvor & Jacobs, 2016)	To support novice and intermediate Adult learners of Indigenous languages	Beginner Intermediate	"Can do" questions with 5 level Likert scale Not yet, rarely, sometimes, mostly, always

Note. This table juxtaposes six language proficiency frameworks, showing the purpose of each framework as well as their established major levels and sub-levels.

With approximately 6,500 languages in the world (Nettle & Romaine, 2000), there is great diversity in language structures, domains of use, and cultural contexts for world languages as well as Indigenous languages (Gass & Mackey, 2014; Hinton et al., 2018; UN General Assembly, 2007). One might imagine the great challenge of developing a language assessment tool to meet the needs of the greatest number of language learners at various levels of proficiency. For this reason, each of these frameworks do not explicitly identify specific linguistic structures at each level; instead, they describe the language functions and general forms within each level. For example, *using simple phrases for basic greetings* would be a function at the beginner/novice level, whereas *storytelling using various timeframes* would be in the higher proficiency levels (ACTFL, 2024; Council of Europe, 2001; Gauthier, 2019; McIvor & Jacobs, Indigenous Language Learning Assessment Tool, 2016; University of Cambridge,

2011). It then remains the work of the curriculum developers, teachers and learners of specific languages to identify the unique language structures needed in order to scaffold learning through each level.

For many years, the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (2024) have been commonly used across most Rotinonhsión:ni communities including in Kahnawà:ke (DeCaire, 2023; Green, 2018, Hemlock, 2020; Hill, 2014, Stacey, 2015). Although not all descriptors within each proficiency level align perfectly with Kanien'kéha (Green, 2020), using a common tool to describe benchmarks has been useful for curriculum development, program evaluations, resource development and establishing proficiency targets for teaching and learning Kanien'kéha (Green, 2018; Stacey, 2016). It has also been extremely helpful to use common terminology when discussing target benchmarks and sharing program outcomes and goals.

It must also be noted that because ACTFL was developed based on the most commonly taught world languages, not for endangered languages, language tasks or descriptors within each level often do not align with the learning goals or worldviews of Indigenous language learners. For example, looking to the major descriptors, the level called *Superior* is a term that does not complement Indigenous worldviews. Learners would be reluctant to refer to themselves as "Superior," even though they fall within that level of proficiency. Macedo (2019) reminds us that any tools, pedagogies and theories need to be critically examined especially in respect to the teaching of Indigenous languages. Although addressed to foreign language teachers, his message is important as he calls for teachers to "critically engage the history of linguistic imperialism" (p. 27). Recognizing that the ACTFL Guidelines (2024) have been commonly used in Kahnawà:ke and across Rotinonhsión:ni communities, the ACTFL proficiency levels are used when discussing language learning benchmarks and proficiency targets throughout this project. It is my

hopes that, in the future, models such as the NEṮOLṈEW̱ Language Learning Assessment Tool (McIvor & Jacobs, 2016) will be further developed to represent these high levels of proficiency while better reflecting the languages and worldviews of Indigenous language learners.

Applying the ACTFL proficiency benchmarks, many second language learners in Kahnawà:ke have achieved intermediate and advanced abilities (see Table 2) to speak and use Kanien'kéha within their workplaces, homes and throughout the community (DeCaire, 2023; Stacey, 2016; Stacey & Whitebean, 2018). The speakers who have achieved an advanced level fall within three scaffolded sublevels of language proficiency: advanced-low, advanced-mid and advanced-high. Growing in complexity, advanced sublevels are differentiated according to ability to use the identified language forms and functions of each major level (ACTFL, 2024; Language Testing International, 2020). The majority of advanced speakers in Kahnawà:ke fall within the advanced-low and advanced-mid sub-levels, while only some reach the advanced-high level (Stacey & Whitebean, 2018). Martin (2015) nicely differentiates advanced-high speakers from those at advanced sub-levels, saying that "Advanced High is not just a superstar when performing Advanced functions; rather, an Advanced High speaker should be thought of as an emerging Superior" (p. xvi). As part of a wholistic language revitalization strategy, this study focuses on pedagogical approaches to support learners at advanced-mid and advanced-high levels, aiming to scaffold learners towards a superior level of proficiency.

To further illustrate the differences between the two major levels of focus, the descriptors of the advanced and superior levels are highlighted in Table 2. The table also distinguishes the language forms and language functions at each level. The language *forms* describe what the learner needs to **understand** and **know** at each level while the language *functions* detail what a learner can **do** at each level. Together they assist in charting a learning path by defining the

broad goals of each proficiency benchmark. Of great significance for this study, the table also
includes a brief explanation of how the sub-levels are differentiated.

Table 2

Summary of ACTFL's Advanced-level and Superior-level Proficiency Benchmarks

Speakers with Advanced-level Proficiency	
Advanced-level Language Forms	Advanced-level Language Functions
- description in the major time frames of past, present, and future - sufficient control of basic structures and vocabulary to be easily understood by native speakers of the language - precise vocabulary and intonation to express meaning	- participate in conversation to communicate information on autobiographical topics, as well as topics of community, national, or international interest - Language use is abundant, the oral paragraph is the measure of Advanced-level length and discourse - Topics are handled concretely by means of detailed narration/storytelling - confident use of communicative strategies, such as paraphrasing, circumlocution, and illustration. - speakers can also deal with a social situation with an unexpected complication
Advanced-low	Has the minimum ability to maintain the discourse of the level, speakers at this level work hard to stay within the level using the targeted forms and functions

Advanced-mid	Can easily carry out all the functions and forms of the Advanced-level with some emerging ability to function at a Superior-level
Advanced-high	Can communicate with the advanced forms and functions with ease and confidence within all time frames, often handling the tasks pertaining to the Superior level but cannot sustain functional ability at that level across a variety of topics

Speakers with Superior-level Proficiency	
Superior-level Language Forms	**Superior-level Language Functions**
• Speakers at the Superior level demonstrate no pattern of error in the use of basic structures, although they may make sporadic errors, particularly in low-frequency structures and in complex high-frequency structures • In the case of any infrequent errors, they do not distract the native speaker/listener or interfere with communication	• communicate with accuracy and fluency to participate fully and effectively in conversations on a variety of topics in formal and informal settings from both concrete and abstract perspectives • can converse, tell stories and respond using multiple paragraphs • discuss interests and special fields of competence, explain complex matters in detail, and provide lengthy and coherent narrations, all with ease, fluency, and accuracy • present their opinions on a number of issues of interest to them, such as social and political issues, and provide structured arguments to support these opinions. They are able to construct and develop hypotheses to explore alternative possibilities.

Note. This table summarizes the ACTFL 2024 proficiency levels described in the ACTFL Guidelines (2024) and the ACTFL OPI - Examinee handbook developed by Language Testing International (2020).

For Rotinonhsión:ni languages, it is estimated that progressing from one advanced sub-level to the next sub-level takes one year of full-time study within an organized adult immersion program (Green, 2017, DeCaire, 2023). The ACTFL benchmarks can help in charting a map towards advanced-high and superior levels of proficiency; however, determining the specific grammatical forms at each level is imperative for highly polysynthetic Indigenous languages (DeCaire; 2023; Green, 2017; Kell, 2014; Deering & Harries-Delisle, 2007; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011). In addition, important cultural functions and understandings are vital to Indigenous language revitalization (Green, 2020; Stacey, 2016) and must be factored into the benchmark descriptors at each level.

Ionkwanonhsión:ni – We are Rotinonhsión:ni, Centering Rotinonhsión:ni Ways of Knowing as Onkwehón:we Pedagogy

In addition to defining the target proficiency benchmarks, developing and identifying Rotinonhsión:ni pedagogies must be purposeful in ensuring the teaching and learning approaches are reflective of our ways of knowing, cultural teachings and worldview (Green, 2009; Stacey, 2016). This is crucial for Indigenous languages revitalization because language and culture are intrinsically intertwined and reflect our understandings of how we relate and see the world (Rosborough et al., 2017; Stacey, 2016). This means that planning for advanced L2 speakers to

reach superior levels of spoken proficiency must consider all the elements that make up our languages as well as the values we place on them as Onkwehón:we.

Indigenous scholars have advocated for Indigenous pedagogical frameworks[18] for the purpose of intentionally re-centering Indigenous knowledge systems and ways of knowing (Cajete, 1994, Cornelius, 1999; Grande, 2015; Green, 2009; Hill & Wilkinson, 2014; Metallic, 2017; Simpson, 2014). Together they underscore the need for Indigenous teaching and learning to steer away from euro-centric pedagogies and re-center Indigenous ways of knowing, values and world views. Metallic (2017) asserts that "Indigenous peoples hold philosophical and epistemological beliefs that shape their pedagogical practices" (Metallic, 2017, p. 36) emphasizing the importance of upholding those foundational beliefs and knowledge systems through Indigenous teaching and learning. Grande (2015) explains that Red Pedagogy "trusts the beliefs and understandings of our ancestors as well as the power of our traditional knowledge" (p. 32). This is a fundamental component of Indigenous pedagogical frameworks (Cajete, 1994; Cornelius, 1999).

When conceptualizing pedagogical frameworks for Indigenous languages, we must consider that language is viewed as an integral part of our identity. The frameworks reflect our worldviews and traditional knowledge systems. They are connected to the land and keep us connected to one another, our ancestors and our future generations. Incorporating these teachings and values into Indigenous language pedagogies is crucial not only for our language to be spoken but so our understandings of the ways in which we see the world as Rotinonhsión:ni will

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[18] For examples of pedagogical frameworks with more detailed descriptions see: Indigenous Emancipatory Pedagogy (Green, 2009); Red Pedagogy (Grande, 2015); Land Pedagogy (Simpson, 2014) and Indigegogy which was coined by Cree scholar Stan Wilson (Hill & Wilkinson, 2014).

continue. Advocating for Indigenous Emancipatory Pedagogy, Green (2009) describes this further saying "the revitalization of Kanyen'kéha as a living language is key to understanding the values, history and philosophy that provide the foundation for our political, economic, social and spiritual institutions" (Green, 2009, p. 2).

Establishing a clear and intentional pedagogical framework for advanced Indigenous language teaching and learning is crucial. The planning phase becomes an important step that allows us to think deeply about our worldview and the things we value as Indigenous Peoples (Cajete, 1994; Cornelius, 1999; Grande, 2015). With the research grounded within a Rotinonhsión:ni paradigm, the pedagogical framework for this dissertation study was consequently also wholistically Rotinonhsión:ni centric.

Wilson (2001) pushes Indigenous researchers to ground our work within an Indigenous paradigm. He envisioned scholars going further than imbedding Indigenous perspectives by wholly embracing and centering the research in a "full Indigenous paradigm" (p. 176). He writes that such an Indigenous paradigm comes from the fundamental belief that "knowledge is relational… shared with all of creation" (p. 176). He explains that relational knowledge is not merely in reference to interpersonal relationships, but relationships that include kinship relationships with the natural world and the spiritual world. Importantly, Wilson also points out that "it is not necessarily the object that is important, it is my relationship with that object that becomes important" (p. 177). This relational component of doing Indigenous research is crucial to articulate throughout the research process and beyond.

Reflecting on my own work, I think about my relationship to my language. It has shaped me as a person and strengthened relationships through the language work I do – relationships to the language, to the land and across generations. For my dissertation study I continued to build

on my master's research by applying the concept of kincentric[19] language planning for

revitalization (Stacey, 2016). In this way my study took an approach rooted within a

Rotinonhsión:ni paradigm, an extension of our worldview, as we view and see all elements in

our world as kin, interconnected and interrelated. For language revitalization this means "we

would honor and strive for Kanien'kéha speaking relationships with all our relations including

that of the natural world and spiritual world" (Stacey, 2016, p. 99).

Carrying out my doctoral research challenged me to develop a wholistic framework for

teaching and learning Kanien'kéha that would clearly depict how language and culture are fully

integrated and applied within a Rotinonhsión:ni worldview. This was a crucial step needed as it

identified the essential components of advanced Kanien'kéha language learning.

To investigate advanced Indigenous language learning pedagogies, I developed a new

Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy (see Figure 1) to support the development of

units for advanced language learning. Aiming for a wholistic language approach, the four

primary components of Rotinonhsión:ni pedagogy are balanced between a structural approach

and a communicative approach (Cook, 2016; Keck & Kim, 2014). Each of the pedagogical

components were derived from and applied within Rotinonhsión:ni cultural perspectives and

ways of knowing. Figure 1 shows that the structural approach includes ongoing lexical expansion

as well as grammar refinement and analyses at advanced levels, while the communicative

approach consists of kin-focused communication and oral tradition.

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[19] The term *kincentric* was introduced by Salmón (2000) to describe Indigenous peoples'
relationships to the natural world. This term expresses how Indigenous worldview sees all the
natural elements of an ecosystem as kin, referring to this as *kincentric ecology*. In my master's
thesis work I extended Salmon's description of kincentric ecology by applying it to Indigenous
language revitalization, proposing a move towards kincentric language pedagogy (Stacey, 2016).

Figure 1

Components of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy

Rotinonhsión:ni Centric

Structural Approach		Communicative Approach	
Lexical Expansion	Grammar Refinement	Kin Focused Communication	Oral Tradition
Lexical development and analyses through Rotinonhsión:ni cultural understandings	Polysynthetic linguistic analyses and refinement through a Rotinonhsión:ni perspective	Strengthening communal and spiritual relationships through natural conversation and ceremonial language use	Passing on knowledge through stories, histories, formal oratory and traditional skills and land-based teachings

Note: This graphic depicts four pedagogical components for Rotinonhsión:ni language revitalization. Balanced between a structural approach and a communicative approach, the pedagogical components are applied within Rotinonhsión:ni cultural perspectives and ways of knowing. Directly below each component is a brief description expanding upon each element. The image is encompassed within the symbolic Rotinonhsión:ni skydome to indicate the worldview from which it is derived.

The framework establishes learning objectives for each of the four components, which are further described as follows:

Lexical Expansion – continuous lexical development including vocabulary analyses through Rotinonhsión:ni cultural understandings

Grammar Refinement – focused polysynthetic linguistic refinement and analyses through a Rotinonhsión:ni perspective

Kin-Focused Communication – aimed at strengthening communal and spiritual relationships through natural conversation and ceremonial language use

Oral Tradition – language, culture and knowledge acquisition through stories, histories, formal oratory, and traditional skills including land-based teachings.

These four pedagogical components emerged from the findings in my masters research (Stacey, 2016) and were further influenced by studies in the fields of Indigenous languages revitalization (Bird & Kell, 2017; Chew, 2016; Foxcroft, 2016; Green, 2017; Green & Maracle, 2018; Grounds, 2011; Hinton et al, 2018; Johnson, 2017; Kell, 2014; McIvor et al., 2018; Napoleon, 2014; Norris, 2004; Rorick, 2016; Rosborough & Rorick, 2017), second language acquisition (Byrnes, 2014; Cook, 2016; Gass & Mackey, 2014; Lightbown & Spada, 2013), applied linguistics (Hill, 2019; Mithune, 2001,) and Indigenous education (Battiste, 2013; Cajete, 1994; Cornelius, 1999; Grande, 2015; Salmón, 2000; Tippeconic, 2015). The purpose of the graphic was to help engage the participants to critically analyze advanced language pedagogies from a Rotinonhsión:ni perspective. At the same time, as per the sub-questions, we would be validating and further defining the components of Indigenous language pedagogy.

Encompassed within the symbolic Rotinonhsión:ni skydome[20], Figure 1 provides an overview of the four pedagogical components I propose for Rotinonhsión:ni language revitalization. This tool was critical to the project as we investigated Rotinonhsión:ni pedagogies. The skydome is important to this visual, as it clearly establishes that the language learning activities and analyses and would be from within a Rotinonhsión:ni worldview throughout the project.

As Rotinonhsión:ni, we strive to maintain our traditional ways of thinking and knowing by fostering our kindred relationships with the natural world as well as with one another (Antone, 2013; Cornelius, 1999; Porter, 2008; Elijah, 2020; Stacey, 2016). With this understanding, the pedagogical framework was important to establish our ways and knowledge systems as Rotinonhsión:ni. It ensured planning would be targeted and purposeful, resulting in units of study that provide a clear pathway for advanced learners to increase their proficiency. In addition, the foundational planning aimed to empower learners with the knowledge of where they are going and provides pathways to get there that are derived from and applied within a Rotinonhsión:ni worldview, cultural perspectives and ways of knowing. This shows that planning for Indigenous language learning is focused first and foremost on language

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[20] The Rotinonhsión:ni skydome is a traditional symbol that represents the Rotinonhsión:ni worldview. The straight line at the bottom is symbolic of the earth, and with the dome atop, it encompasses the natural world and its natural elements. It is meant to show our understandings that everything is connected within this natural world - where human beings can exist. The dome also represents our understandings that there is a separate world that we call the skyworld, on the other side of the sky. The plant/tree atop the skydome symbolizes our everlasting connection to the other world that are remembered through the teachings of our creation story. This style of symbolism is used widely by the Rotinonhsión:ni to ensure these teachings and understanding would be passed down across generations so we can continue to be guided by them in our everyday lives.

development with cultural understandings intrinsic to the learning. It is much more than planning activities in the target language (Wiggins & McTighe, 2015).

To summarize, the Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy established important cultural foundations while also essentializing a balance between a structural and communicative approach for advanced Indigenous language learning. The foundational work described in this chapter was critical to ensure I developed units that were Rotinonhsión:ni centric and focused on pedagogical approaches that would scaffold learners through advanced levels towards a superior level of proficiency in Kanien'kéha. With this preparatory work complete, I was then able to focus on identifying pedagogical approaches and resources aimed at supporting Kanien'kéha language learning for already advanced learners.

The Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy was developed to provide a map for understanding the fundamental components required for high levels of language learning grounded within Rotinonhsión:ni cultural perspectives. The next chapter expands upon the teachings and thinking that are embedded within Rotinonhsión:ni worldview and knowledge systems. It brings further understandings of what is encompassed within the symbolic skydome depicted within the Components of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy and how it contributes to a wholistic Rotinonhsión:ni research methodology.

Chapter 4: Onkwehón:we Research Grounded in Onkwehón:we Ways

In recent years, a growing number of Indigenous communities, researchers and scholars have been embracing research as a means to strengthen Indigenous resilience and seek out ways forward by celebrating Indigenous ways and knowledge systems (Ermine, 2000; Kirkness, 2002; McIvor, 2012; Michel, 2012; Napoleon, 2014; Ngugi, 1986; Rorick, 2019; Rosborough, 2012, Smith 2012; Tuck & Yang, 2012, Wilson, 2008). Many Indigenous voices are now contributing to establishing Indigenous research methodologies comprised of key components aimed at empowering, firstly, Indigenous scholars and their communities to conduct research by and for ourselves (Absolon, 2011; Battiste, 2008; Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2010a; Simpson, 2017; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008).

The work of leading scholars such as Absolon (2011), Archibald (2008), Cajete (1994), Kovach (2010a), Simpson (2017), Smith (1999, 2012) and Wilson (2001, 2008) established the foundations of Indigenous research methodologies. Through their work, they charted pathways and challenged new Indigenous scholars to center their epistemologies through research that would benefit our communities and future generations. Purposefully grounded in this way, Indigenous research is intentional, as it aims to resist and redress the impacts of colonization (Absolon, 2011; Battiste, 2008; Cajete, 1994; Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2010a; Simpson, 2017; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2001). This means Indigenous research methodologies must center the research within an Indigenous paradigm, honoring Indigenous worldviews, knowledge systems and ways of knowing.

Kovach (2010a) describes a paradigmatic approach to determine frameworks and methods chosen to conduct Indigenous research. She describes this as a conceptual framework that "makes visible the way we see the world" (p.42). With the framework established, it then

guides the research from start to finish. The "frameworks are either transparent or not, yet they are always present" (p.42). Chilisa (2012) also explains that "a paradigm implies a methodological approach with a philosophical base that informs assumptions about perceptions about reality, what counts as knowledge and ways of knowing and values" (Chilisa, 2012, p.2). This means that research from an Indigenous paradigm, or in my case a Rotinonhsión:ni paradigm, establishes that all aspects of the research give rise to an Onkwehón:we way of thinking, seeing and being in the world (Absolon 2011; Antone 2013; Kovach, 2010a; Smith, 2012; Stacey, 2016; Wilson, 2018).

Absolon (2011) places an Indigenous paradigm at the roots of Indigenous research and maintains that this supports the methodological process. Absolon affirms that "Indigenous methodologies in the academy are guided by Indigenous paradigms, worldviews and principles" (p. 53). Wilson (2008) also asserts that an Indigenous paradigm establishes the underlying beliefs that guide our actions as researchers. He further explains that an "Indigenous research paradigm is relational and maintains relational accountability" (p. 71). There are many Indigenous scholars to be celebrated as they work alongside their communities, re-centering Indigenous knowledges through empowering Indigenous research (Corntassel & Hardbarger, 2019; Hill, 2015; Metallic, 2017; Michel, 2012; Rorick, 2016; Rosborough, 2012; Sampson, 2014; Stacey, 2016; Thomas, 2013; Tulloch et al., 2017; Underwood, 2017; Whitebean, 2019; and more). Many of these scholarly works provide strong examples of Indigenous research methodologies guided by Indigenous worldviews (Absolon, 2011; Archibald, 2008; Elijah, 2020; Foxcroft, 2016; Metallic, 2017; Michel, 2012; Rorick, 2016; Rosborough, 2012; Salmón, 2000; Sampson, 2014; Stacey, 2016; Whitebean , 2019; and more).

Wilson (2001) also pushes Indigenous researchers to ground our work within an Indigenous paradigm. He envisions scholars going further than embedding Indigenous perspectives by wholly embracing and centering the research in a "full Indigenous paradigm" (p. 176). To truly achieve this wholistic methodology, it would be essential that researchers go beyond a pan-Indigenous approach and ground their research within their own epistemologies, worldviews and knowledge systems.

This was the approach for this study, as I aimed to apply a fully Rotinonhsión:ni paradigm throughout the research. As a continuation of my master's research, I investigate pathways towards Indigenous language resurgence by re-visiting the concept of kincentric language planning (Stacey, 2016). This relational approach is rooted in Onkwehón:we ways of being and thinking, centered within our worldview, as we view and see all elements in our world as kin, interconnected and interrelated. For language revitalization this means "we would honor and strive for Kanien'kéha speaking relationships with all our relations including that of the natural world and spiritual world" (Stacey, 2016, p. 99).

Rotinonhsión:ni Worldview Shaping the Research

Establishing my research within a Rotinonhsión:ni paradigm was essential, as Rotinonhsión:ni ways of knowing relative to advanced second language pedagogies were being explored. This meant all aspects of the research would invoke Onkwehón:we thought, inclusive of the research design, data collection and analysis. This remains important for me as a Rotinonhsión:ni person to bring Rotinonhsión:ni knowledge to the forefront, honoring Rotinonhsión:ni ways and teachings. Highlighting the significance of this, the late Robert Antone (2013), an Oneida scholar, writes:

Our knowledge is not in the past, it is in the here and now. We must allow our

teachings to inform our way of thinking and doing… By celebrating

Haudenosaunee knowledge we celebrate Haudenosaunee intellectualism.

(p. 11)

Cornelius (1999) shares a similar message saying that "whether the issue is environmental,

political or social, the culture provides a way to approach the issue" (p. 98). These

epistemological underpinnings are something I do not separate myself from and I embrace, honor

and celebrate Rotinonhsión:ni knowledge and thinking throughout this work.

Rotinonhsión:ni worldview is rooted within the foundational teachings of our creation

story, cycle of ceremonies, the Kaianerehkó:wa[21] and in the words of the Ohén:ton

Karihwatéhkwen[22] (Antone, 2013; Cornelius, 1999; Hill, 2017; Porter, 2008; Sunsiri, 2011;

Thomas, 2013; Stacey, 2016; Whitebean, 2019). These teachings have been lived, practiced and

passed down for generations. They embody many examples of how we relate, interpret, express

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[21] Kaianerehkó:wa [the Great Good] is also referred to as the Great Law of Peace and consists of the laws that bind and guide us as Six Rotinonhsión:ni Nations. The Kaianerehkó:wa [literally the Great Goodness] is what is commonly called the Great Law of Peace. It was established with the formation of the Rotinonhsión:ni Confederacy when the five nations joined in a peaceful alliance and agreed to uphold the guiding laws that establishes our governance system. It describes our political systems and ensures that Rotinonhsión:ni foundational teachings and spirituality are intertwined.

[22] Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen [the matter that comes before all else] is often referred to as the Thanksgiving Address and is a construct put in place to ensure we continue to reaffirm our relationship to the natural world. This set of words carries the intellectual and scientific knowledge of our ancestors and is spoken through formal oratory each time there is a gathering of our people (Stacey, 2016).

and maintain kinship relationships with all elements of the natural world and with each other as human beings.

From within a Rotinonhsión:ni paradigm rooted in Rotinonhsión:ni worldview, I carried out this study with the intent to empower Kahnawa'kehró:non [the people of Kahnawà:ke] to strengthen the vitality of Kanien'kéha for our future generations. For this project, I aimed to ensure that all aspects of the research would align and derive from Rotinonhsión:ni teachings. This was done by situating the research project within a "wholistic cultural context" (Cornelius, 1999, p. 91), not just extracting one element but ensuring it is presented as part of the whole – the Rotinonhsión:ni worldview. In this way the research was wholistically centered by our teachings and knowledge systems.

Respect for others and the natural world, equality amongst all living things, decision making through consensus building, seven generations thinking, and spirituality in maintaining kindred relations, are examples of values embedded within Rotinonhsión:ni teachings. It is from such examples that Rotinonhsión:ni methodologies are derived, linking all aspects of the research and once again underscoring the importance of positionality and relationality. To expand further, looking seven generations ahead is significant in Rotinonhsión:ni ways. Thinking about my responsibilities to care for their future wellbeing puts me in relation to those generations I will never know personally in this life. In this example, we see the great importance of articulating what relationality means through a Rotinonhsión:ni perspective, a perspective that comes from our foundational teachings.

In our way, we say that everything we do, the decisions we make today will affect our families – for many generations. It is to their benefit or to their detriment. Wilson (2001) writes that "for research it is important to think about our relationship with ideas and concepts we are

explaining" (p. 177). He then says that an Indigenous methodology is a space to fully articulate "relational accountability… fulfilling your relationships [and]… being accountable *to all my relations*" (p. 177). Passamaquoddy scholar Gail Dana-Sacco (2010) also underscores the deep importance of relationships, saying that "we as Indigenous researchers working in community are accountable to research relationships in multiple and long-term ways" (p. 75). I was intentional to ensure that my research was carried out through the application of traditional Rotinonhsión:ni teachings.

To further elaborate upon the ways in which Rotinonhsión:ni worldview and teachings center and guide community-based research, there are growing examples as the pool of Rotinonhsión:ni scholars grows. The late Robert Antone (2013) engaged research by centering Rotinonhsión:ni teachings as he explored pathways to decolonization. He did this by "offering an Indigenous knowledge-focused approach that is 'Irocentric' (totality centered on Iroquois ways and culture) in how an Onkwehón:we exercises thought and wisdom in the cultural context given the historic and contemporary reality" (p. 4). One of the key teachings he highlights is ka'nikonhrí:io[23], relating that

> The prized personal quality of Haudenosaunee personality, the "Good Mind" –
> ka?nikohli:yo – is a way of being in one's everyday actions. …the capacity of the
> Good Mind is the ability at any moment, with or without pressure, regardless of the
> nature or the intensity of the situation, one is able to respond with a peaceful

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[23] Ka'nikonhrí:io is the Kanien'kéha word for Good Mind, while its Oneida equivalent is ka?nikonhli:io. The term is synonymous amongst all Rotinonhsión:ni Nations as a core teaching that derives from the Kaianerehkó:wa [the great goodness], our Great Law of Peace. Ka'nikonnhrí:io, Skén:nen and Ka'satsténhsera are the three overarching principles of our guiding laws.

decisive act. …ka?nikohli:io is at the core of the Haudenosaunee understanding of humanity and is fundamental to the survival of the people and their culture (Antone, 2013, p. 51).

It is through such examples of ancestral teachings that Rotinonhsión:ni knowledge and thought is guiding Rotinonhsión:ni led research.

An additional exemplar is the work of Susan Hill (2017). Her in-depth study recounts the history and lands of the Haudenosaunee at Six Nations, Ontario. From the perspective of the Rotinonhsión:ni she weaves our foundational teachings throughout each chapter, saying that it is necessary to have a "historical consciousness of the collective experiences of our ancestors" (p. 1). Establishing her perspective at the onset of her research, she explains that,

> The very core of our existence is formed around the historic inheritance passed down through the generations. This inheritance was meant to guide the Haudenosaunee for all time, as established at the time of creation. The lessons contained within our historical consciousness constitute the roadmap for a sustainable, balanced life for the current generation and the "coming faces" of our future (Hill, 2017, p. 2).

It is within the constructs of these ancestral teachings that many scholars from across the six Rotinonhsión:ni nations place the foundations of their research (Antone, 2013; Brant, 2016; Cornelius, 1999; Deer, 2016; Elijah, 2020; Green, 2009; Hemlock, 2020; Hill, 2015; Hill, 2017; House, 2016; Thomas, 2013; Stacey, 2016; Whitebean, 2019).

Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen - A Way of Being and Seeing

To describe how Rotinonhsión:ni worldview and ways of knowing are a means to grounding our research, we can look to the teachings of the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen. As previously described, Rotinonhsión:ni worldview is shaped by the foundational teachings of our creation story, cycle of ceremonies, the Kaianerehkó:wa [Great Law of Peace] and in the words of the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen (Antone, 2013; Cornelius, 1999; Hill, 2017; Hemlock, 2020; Stacey, 2016; Whitebean, 2019). Teachings that have been lived, practiced and passed down for generations, they embody countless examples of how we relate, interpret, express and maintain kinship relationships with all elements of the natural world and with each other as human beings. Rotinonhsión:ni scholars have thoughtfully described their methodologies using this lens, as they carry out research aimed at servicing the aspirations and needs of their communities and nations.

Focused on identifying strategies to support second language learners to become highly proficient speakers, in earlier work (Stacey, 2016) I carried out community-based research aimed at identifying pathways to advance language revitalization efforts in my community. I described my methodology as grounded in "an Onkwehón:we way", as I drew on the words of the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen. In this way, Rotinonhsión:ni teachings made clear the relational motivations for my research. I explained, saying that these ancient words continue to guide us in contemporary times as "we continue to live and govern ourselves based on these teachings" (Stacey, 2016, p. 23). I then illustrated further, underscoring teachings encapsulated in the language:

> thinking of this earth and people in terms of seven generations ahead, we have a
> saying within the Thanksgiving Address – "Á:se tahatikonhsontóntie" it means for

the faces yet to come… our future generations. … It is where this work is rooted, as I look ahead to them, planning seven generations ahead, to The Faces Yet To Come (Stacey, 2016, p. 23).

This is an example of how Rotinonhsión:ni worldview puts us in relation to our future generations. In this case, research and strategic language planning is seen as a means towards sustaining the well-being of Rotinonhsión:ni generations yet unborn.

Similar to the previous example, many other Rotinonhsión:ni scholars ground their research through the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen (Antone, 2013; Brant, 2016; Hill, 2017; Hemlock, 2020; Sunseri, 2011; Whitebean, 2019). This could almost be expected, as "these words provide a link to all that is Haudenosaunee" (Antone, 2013; p. 33). Wahéhshon Whitebean, a Kanien'kehá:ka scholar, worked alongside four elders to investigate experiences attending Indian Day Schools in her community (Whitebean, 2019). She grounded the project within a Rotinonhsión:ni worldview, saying that "through the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen we open the door to our ancestors and to all of creation, inviting them into gatherings, ceremony and our daily lives" (p. 16). She is explicit in her motivations to carry out her research in an Onkwehón:we way, saying that

Effects of Indian Day Schooling are understood through the lens of lived reality, set in the broader context of colonization and other facets of Indigenous life. The outcome is a process of decolonizing, healing, and approaching research as story and as medicine (Whitebean, 2019, p. iii).

Whitebean's example is a reminder of the importance of Indigenous research methodologies in community contexts, as it is a means to rebuilding and strengthening our nations. We are still recovering and combatting the impacts of colonization.

Thohtharátye Brant also situated himself and his research through Rotinonhsión:ni teachings at the onset of his community-based project (Brant, 2016). He conducted an auto-ethnography to describe the steps and commitments required to maintain a Kanien'kéha speaking home. This excerpt is important as he describes this process:

I started with burning tobacco and a speech known as the Ohén:ton

Karihwatéhkhwen (translated as "the matter that comes first") to ground myself

with the foundational element to Kanyen'kéha culture, language and spirituality.

The speech enables participants to reflect on the elements that sustain our lives

while offering greetings, thanks, love and respect to each element of creation.

With these humbling teachings in mind and heart, I undertook this research

journey with most respectful intentions (Brant, 2016, p. 13).

What is important to notice, is the intent of grounding oneself in this way. Engaging in this process, Brant began by situating himself in a space of respect and humility, humbled by these teachings. His description is a powerful reminder of how Indigenous methodologies are not solely about grounding the research, but are also about simultaneously situating the researcher in relation to the research to be carried out.

The construct of the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen is common across all six Rotinonhsión:ni nations. Through oral tradition, the words of thanksgiving are expressed at the commencement

and closing of gatherings, meetings and ceremony. Oneida scholar Lina Sunseri exercises this practice in the opening lines of her book, saying that "it is Oneida tradition that before any words are said, we must greet All Our Relations and give thanks to everything that surrounds us so that we can live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things" (p. xi). This is followed by her expressing gratitude for elements of the natural world. She then concludes with "now our minds are one" (p. xi) as an acknowledgement that, as Rotinonhsión:ni, we share a common way of thinking and being in relation to the natural world – that is, a Rotinonhsión:ni worldview.

Although the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen can be expressed in written texts, as exemplified by the work of many scholars (Antone, 2013; Brant, 2016; Cornelius, 1999; Green, 2009; Hill, 2017; Porter, 2008; Stacey, 2016; Swamp, 1995; Whitebean, 2019) it is customarily expressed as formal oratory. Each time the words are conveyed it is done in a similar formal style, while each speaker weaves the speech together in their own words. Shakokwenniónkwas, a Kanien'kehá:ka elder, explains that when he was young he had admired the ones who would recite those words, saying that it was done with sincerity, from the heart (Porter, 2008). He also points out that "not one of them ever said it exactly word-for-word, the same as the other, and yet it *was* exactly the same" (Porter, 2008, p.8). This is a very important point, as each time it is heard there are as many variations as there are speakers; in fact, the same person will say it a little differently each time. For the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen, variations are part of its beauty, as the overall expression of being thankful towards all that sustains us is constant and our kindred relations to the natural word are renewed.

Much like the various renditions of the thanksgiving address, as Rotinonhsión:ni scholars we reflect upon the teachings in ways that are relevant to our lived realities and consistently draw

upon those teachings at all stages of our research process. As Rotinonhsión:ni researchers, we can ground our work through various methodologies that emerge from the guiding words and teachings of the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen. Themes such as *seven generations thinking* (Stacey, 2016), *being of one mind* (Hill, 2017; Sunsiri, 2011; Whitebean, 2019), *having a good mind* (Antone, 2013; Brant, 2016; Hill, 2015; House, 2016), and *giving greetings* (Cornelius, 1999) are all examples of interrelated teachings that assist in constructing each framework. Cornelius (1999) describes this as placing the research within a "wholistic cultural context" (p. 91), not just extracting one element but ensuring it is presented as part of the whole – the Onkwehón:we worldview.

It is also quite notable that each of the Rotinonhsión:ni scholars utilize their ancestral language to assist in articulating complex cultural teachings and understandings. I agree with Hill (2015) as she advocates for this, saying that "in order to decolonize we have to start thinking within our language" (p. 17). As I reviewed this body of work, I immediately understood the depth of the authors' thinking merely by their use of what one might consider "key Rotinonhsión:ni terminology." Such terms are often not easily transferable to English and therefore require lengthy descriptions. One may conclude that articulating these complex understandings is a lengthy process merely to appease the academy; however, as Cornelius (1999) reminds us, it is to ensure that the research is wholistically centered within an Indigenous paradigm. Taking time to articulate these teachings, we think deeply about worldview, spirituality, our positionality, relationality, and the intricacies of our knowledge systems. As part of our foundational teachings, the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen helps to ground the epistemological underpinning of this work.

Akwé:kon Tekà:neren – A Wholistic Methodology

For the Rotinonhsión:ni, our spirituality is tightly intertwined with our traditional

governing protocols. We are always taught that one cannot fully live a Rotinonhsión:ni life by

separating our spirituality from our great guiding law, the Kaianerehkó:wa. As described earlier,

through spirituality we acknowledge our kindred relationships with the natural world and give

thanks for all that sustains us. In this way, as Onkwehón:we, we can live a good life with

Skén:nen [peace] and carry ourselves with what we call Ka'nikonhrí:io [a good mind].

Ka'nikonhrí:io refers to both a way of thinking and being. It can be seen as "the centerpiece of

the Haudenosaunee personality" (Antone, 2013, p. 12) and is essentially the manifestation of

adhering to Rotinonhsión:ni ways.

Over a continuum, "the journey of experiencing Haudenosaunee knowledge is a lifetime

of engaging in language, song, ceremony, council, clan, thanksgiving, teachings, and

ka?nikohli:yo" (Antone, 2013, p. 141). Ka'nikonhrí:io is, thus, cultivated over time, and the

importance of using a Good Mind is apparent in our everyday lives, including in our decision-

making processes. The Kaianerehkó:wa [the Great Law of Peace] is the political structure of the

Rotinonhsión:ni that guides our decision-making protocols. It requires us to use Ka'nikonhrí:io

so that ultimately, we can live in a peaceful way.

The Kaianerehkó:wa encompasses guiding laws for decision making and working in

respectful relationship within our nations and families. The laws and teachings are not only

applied to the formal acts of international or national governance, but also to our way of being

and carrying ourselves everyday as Rotinonhsión:ni. Placing myself as a researcher working in

collaboration with my community means I was responsible to carry out research in a manner that

aligns with our ways of working in relationship. The concepts of Sha'tetionkwátte and

Ska'nikòn:ra within the Kaianerehkó:wa and the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen informed a wholistic methodology for this dissertation research.

Sha'tetionkwátte – Women's Nomination Belt - Working as Equals in Respectful Relation

To establish the researcher and participant relationship I applied the concept of Sha'tetionkwátte [we are all equal in height]. This means that no individual is above another in our decision-making processes, or is of greater importance within our society. The teachings of Sha'tetionkwátte are reflected in how we interact respectfully with one another and with the natural world as we go about our daily lives. Applied in Rotinonhsión:ni systems of governance, it also ensures that each person, clan and nation has an equal voice in deciphering issues. This research put these teachings into practice. I aimed to foster respectful relationships between all participants, as we engaged in a process of collaboration to critically engage with advanced language pedagogies.

Invoking the teachings of Sha'tetionkwátte helped to ensure participants had a space to engage in respectful decision making, planning and analyses throughout the research. Applying our principles of decision making was important to the research design, as the participants were comfortable and familiar with traditional Rotinonhsión:ni processes and teachings. Cornelius (1999) describes this, saying that "dimensions of Haudenosaunee society [are] intricately interconnected and intertwined in a complex whole that make infinite sense for them" (p. 108). As a community-based research project in Kahnawà:ke, it was appropriate that my research design put Rotinonhsión:ni guiding laws into practice in ways that uphold Rotinonhsión:ni values to ground this collaborative research process.

Applying the concept of Sha'tetionkwátte for this project can be likened to the teachings of the Women's Nomination Belt (see Figure 2). It symbolizes the responsibility of the clanmothers to raise up the fifty chiefs of the Rotinonhsión:ni Confederacy. The belt depicts how the clanmothers work in relationship, with their arms linked to represent the political alliance and strength of the six nations. With six identical figures depicted, it signifies that, as nations and women, they are all equally important in their commitment to keep the fire of the Rotinonhsión:ni burning. For this project, the figures represent the peer group of women working together for the future of our language.

Figure 2

Women's Nomination Belt
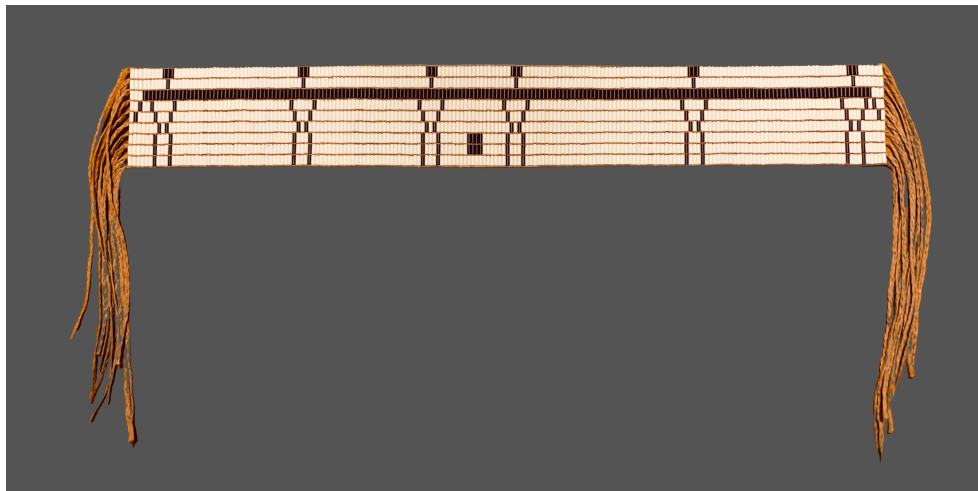
Note: Women's Nomination Belt, a replica made by Ken Miracle from the collection of Eugene Arontié:nens Jacobs. Photo credit: Author.

Ska'nikòn:ra Entewá:ton – The Strength of One Mind

Central to teachings of the Women's Nomination Belt is recognizing the strength of the collective. For the Rotinonhsión:ni, strength is generated and maintained when all nations are in agreement, with one common understanding or belief, called Ska'nikòn:ra [One Mind]. Collective thinking is practiced through decision-making with outcomes based on consensus. This research brought together individuals to plan and engage in language pedagogies where our experiences would form a collective voice through several modes of gathering knowledge and meaning making processes (see Figure 3, p. 85). As the primary researcher working in collaboration with a peer group of women, Ska'nikòn:ra meant I would be giving the participants opportunities to discuss, guide and affirm the research activities. I also provided processes for ongoing input while establishing an openness for suggestions from the participants to mobilize the research through a respectful and collaborative process.

Konkwehón:we, Nè:'e Wathró:ris Tsi Ní:ioht Tsi Enkerihwí:sake - The Study

As an Onkwehón:we researcher from Kahnawà:ke, my research intentions are directed at expanding language revitalization efforts in my community and nation. My experiences as a language learner, teacher, advocate, mother and grandmother have greatly influenced my research goals. As described in the previous chapter, the focal point of my doctoral study examines advanced-level pedagogical approaches grounded in a Rotinonhsion:ni centric framework. Working with a group of women from my community, I planned to implement a study that would directly benefit them as advanced language learners. By piloting four units of study, we aimed to define pathways toward higher levels of Kanien'kéha proficiency. The

project design is described below, illustrating how Rotinonhsión:ni teachings and worldview are applied through each research phase and activity.

Tsi Ní:tsi Wa'akwarihwí:sake – Ways of Researching Together

Grounded in Rotinonhsión:ni teachings of Sha'tetionkwátte and Ska'nikòn:ra, I outlined a cyclical process to guide the collaborative research activities. Comprised of five phases, the process aimed to engage all participants in peer learning and analyses of advanced pedagogies as follows:

1) *Affirming Learning Targets* – affirming learning objectives and assessment criteria[24] based on advanced level language forms and functions within the components of Rotinonhsión:ni pedagogy

2) *Pedagogical Planning* – validating learning strategies & resources to support advanced-high and superior language targets based on the components of Rotinonhsión:ni pedagogy

3) *Active Learning* – applying the selected learning strategies focused on language targets

4) *Reflective Analyses* – examining learning experience in relation to learning objectives

5) *Adaptation* – modifying learning strategy based on reflective analyses to better support advanced language learning based on the established learning targets

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[24] Assessment criteria for this project are focused on advanced level language forms and functions which are described in Table 2: Summary of ACTFL's Advanced-level and Superior-level Proficiency Benchmarks (p. 57).

This collaborative research process was developed based on my years of experience as a Kanien'kéha curriculum developer as well as effective approaches to curriculum development, planning and assessment (Opertti & Amadio, n.d.; Wiggins & McTyghe, 2005).

As my project investigated pedagogical approaches for advanced levels of language learning, it was important to include the pillars of curriculum development. This means that planning well for learning must begin with clear intentions and purposes, understanding the destination, and devising scaffolded steps to get there (Wiggins & McTyghe, 2005). Having the end goal in mind allows us to "identify teaching and learning priorities and guide our design of curriculum and assessments" (Wiggins & McTyghe, 2005). In other words, planning with clear intentions for learning provides the starting point to then establish criteria for evaluating to what level the established goal has been reached. When the goals for superior language forms are clear and the evaluative criteria for superior functions are established (see Table 2: Summary of ACTFL's Advanced-level and Superior-level Proficiency Benchmarks, p. 57), then the appropriate pedagogical approaches and learning activities could be designed.

The research method recognized that the participants bring unique experiences as successful Kanien'kéha language learners. Their insights and knowledge were the strength of this community-based language research, as we affirmed, validated, applied, examined, and assessed advanced Kanien'kéha pedagogies and learning targets. Each of the four pedagogical approaches selected followed the process depicted in Figure 3. At the close of the final cycle, we compared and contrasted each of the four pedagogical approaches to further reflect, examine, and define advanced Kanien'kéha pedagogies.

Figure 3

Cycle of Collaborative Research and Pedagogical Planning

Note: This diagram illustrates a cyclical process for piloting advanced language pedagogies that aims for a collaborative research design to critically engage in active language learning and analysis of each pedagogical approach. Moving in a counterclockwise direction, the process begins by affirming the learning targets, to then selecting advanced pedagogies to engage and evaluate.

Throughout this research process I was responsible for developing and preparing all the research activities and gathering any background information and resources, as well as developing tools needed to assist the group at each stage. This is further defined in the following sections.

Wa'katià:taren – I Place Myself as an Active Participant

      Similar to many Onkwehón:we scholars doing research in their home community, I am actively involved in the topic I am addressing for my dissertation. Participating in and guiding many community efforts, I have developed a strong understanding of the successes, challenges and needs for Kanien'kéha language revitalization in my community. I am grateful to have had an abundance of opportunities to contribute and collaborate alongside many outstanding individuals who drive extraordinary language initiatives.

      I have also been part of an advanced study group, consisting of seven women, for many years. This private study group has been a great source of peer support and friendship; however, we have not had clear direction or models for learning approaches at this level. To support advanced speakers such as these, my project aimed to create new approaches for Kanien'kéha language learners aiming to progress towards a superior level of proficiency. I invited my peer study group to participate in this research project, where all participants would also collaboratively share knowledge, expertise, skills and reflections to build new understandings and approaches for advanced Kanien'kéha pedagogies. To achieve collaboration at this level, I chose to be an active participant, engaging in language learning and analyses alongside the group of peer learners.

      Carrying out my study in this way could be quite challenging when navigating the complexities of academic research; however, the teachings of Sha'tetionkwátte [we are all of equal height] and Ska'nikòn:ra [One Mind] provided the mechanisms needed to guide community-based research. Positioned as a Rotinonhsión:ni researcher working in collaboration with community participants, I applied Rotinonhsión:ni ways that strive for consensus-building

processes, equal voices in decision making and that are wholistically grounded in

Rotinonhsión:ni teachings.

Wa'khehón:karon – I Extended an Invitation To Them

For my doctoral research project, the relationships I have in my community were

important to acknowledge. It is common practice that second language speakers in Kahnawà:ke

create circles of support where they can speak and learn the language together (Stacey, 2016). As

the target participants are advanced learners, members of this specialized demographic would

already be quite familiar with one another and would very likely have studied or participated in

language learning together at some point. Being an advanced Kanien'kéha speaker and language

advocate in my community, it is highly likely that I too would have connections to the target

participants through my community participation.

I am confident that each of the women who were invited to the study chose to participate

based on our consistent commitment to advancing Kanien'kéha language revitalization and

strengthening community programming in Kahnawà:ke. In addition, the goals of the project were

positioned to benefit the community and the participants so that they would have opportunities to

engage in new advanced language pedagogies for Kanien'kéha. Their participation was needed

and their support for this work was deeply appreciated, as their first-hand experience and

expertise were apparent throughout the research activities.

In recognition of their time and contributions to the research, I provided monetary

honorariums[25] to all participants for taking part in collaborative research activities and group

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[25] Funding from my Vanier scholarship enabled me to provide the honorariums to each of the participants.

learning sessions. These research activities involved collaborative analyses, reflections, sharing and planning activities. As per respectful protocol, I provided healthy snacks and/or meals at each of the collaborative research activities. This is a customary practice in my community to care for the welfare of the participants and to acknowledge them for their time given to the research activities.

I invited the six advanced speakers from Kahnawà:ke by sending an email to each of them. In the email I positioned myself as a Kanien'kehá:ka researcher doing community-based research and as a doctoral researcher at McGill University. In the invitation I provided a brief description of the research project and included the guiding questions that we would be seeking to understand. To help potential participants make an informed decision, I also attached a more detailed description of the project and offered to supply a paper copy of the project summary upon request. I welcomed any questions they may have had, which we could have discussed through either email or telephone conversation as per their preference. Importantly, I described the anticipated level of participation the project would entail, as we would engage in several cycles of pedagogical planning, piloting, reflection, and evaluation. The invitation clearly stated that they could decline for any reason without explanation or any repercussions on our personal or professional relationship or co-affiliations. I provided two weeks for participants to reply. Within five days all six women had accepted the invitation to participate.

As per respectful protocols, I planned to visit our elder, Konwaia'torèn:'en, in person to discuss my project and extend an invitation. I shared a description of the project with our elder as well as a paper copy of the project summary. I welcomed any questions and emphasized that she could decline for any reason without explanation.

Carrying out research in my community was a great responsibility, and the research was designed to ensure all participants were respected and safe. The women in this study are a specialized group of learners. They are very actively involved in community language programs in addition to having family and work obligations. I was mindful that the study could not extend beyond one year, as the participants surely would have been inconvenienced.

To minimize any risks of burn-out or stresses, the participants provided input on the scheduling and duration of the learning sessions. Table 3 depicts the schedule of research activities I developed based on their feedback. It was decided that each unit of study would be piloted over three weeks in order to implement the prescribed collaborative learning sessions and independent learning strategies. All activities were in Kanien'kéha and expected to take place for the duration of two hours; however, participants were welcomed to extend their independent study time if they chose to do so. It is important to note that, although the schedule indicated a total of 52 hours to pilot the four units of study, the participants reported that they spent additional hours implementing the independent learning strategies each week. In addition, some units were extended an additional week due to the participants having a high level of interest in selected units.

Table 3

Proposed 14-Week Schedule of Peer Group Activities

Weekly Pilot Project Activities		
Week	**Activity**	**Duration**
Week 1	Group Orientation & Affirming Learning Targets	2 hours
Week 2	**Group Planning 1: Kahnawà:ke – Stories of Community and Resilience** Independent Learning	2 hours 2 hours
Week 3	Group Visiting & Learning with Language Mentor Independent Learning	2 hours 2 hours
Week 4	Independent Learning Group Sharing Back then Evaluation with Rubric	2 hours 2 hours
Week 5	**Group Planning 2: Elder Storytelling of Community Life, Change and Resilience** Independent Learning	2 hours 2 hours
Week 6	Group Visiting & Learning with Language Mentor Independent Learning	2 hours 2 hours
Week 7	Independent Learning Group Sharing Back and Unit Evaluation with Rubric	2 hours 2 hours
Week 8	**Group Planning 3: Women's Roles and Responsibilities for Traditional Naming** Independent Learning	2 hours 2 hours
Week 9	Group Visiting & Learning with Language Mentor Independent Learning	2 hours 2 hours
Week 10	Independent Learning Group Sharing Back and Unit Evaluation with Rubric	2 hours 2 hours
Week 11	**Group Planning 4: Traditional Teachings and the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen** Independent Learning	2 hours 2 hours
Week 12	Group Visiting & Learning with Language Mentor Independent Learning	2 hours 2 hours
Week 13	Independent Learning Group Sharing Back and Unit Evaluation with Rubric	2 hours 2 hours
Week 14	Final Group Discussions and Feedback Session	2 hours
Total Hours	**Total Group Hours**	**28 hours**
	Total Independent Learning Hours	**24 hours**
	Total Combined Hours	**52 hours**

Note. This table provides an outline of the proposed 14-week piloting schedule, listing the

thematic units, activities, and time on task for each weekly session.

Once the recruitment process concluded, I launched the project by having all participants complete a researcher-developed survey (see Appendix 1) to reflect on our personal language learning experiences. This assisted me in establishing learning targets and in identifying challenging concepts and common goals for advanced language learning. The survey also helped to determine how many weeks participants could commit to the project, as well as the anticipated hours per week for the duration of the project. This information helped me to better understand the needs and challenges this group of advanced language learners are facing in order to prepare for our orientation.

Through the survey the participants officially confirmed their participation and indicated if their names may be used within the final dissertation or if they would prefer to choose, or be assigned, a pseudonym. For Indigenous community-based research, it is not uncommon for participants to be credited for their contributions to the research. For this reason, they were given the opportunity to be identified if they so chose. The consent form explained that any reference to an individual within the dissertation would be reviewed and approved by them prior to final submission. This was an additional opportunity to confirm if they preferred to be identified or remain anonymous. I elaborate on this tool further in the "gathering knowledge" section below.

Tiotierenhtáhkwa Wa'akwatia'terò:roke - Research Orientation and Launch

The first "coming together" for research began with a welcoming for all participants and an orientation to the project. I provided an overview of the project goals, sharing that the focus was on identifying successful pedagogies and appropriate resources for advanced Kanien'kéha language learners. I explained that we would do this by exploring the components of advanced

Rotinonhsión:ni language pedagogy (see Figure 1, p. 63). This included an analysis of the text

types, tools and resources needed for advanced Kanien'kéha language learning in Kahnawà:ke.

I then described the research process through which we would be strategizing,

participating in, and analyzing pedagogies for advanced Kanien'kéha learners. I established that

we would be collaborating in a research process guided by Rotinonhsión:ni knowledge and our

way of governance for decision making and working in respectful relationship. This process of

collaboration invoked guiding principles of Sha'tetionkwátte, where we would all equally

participate in decision making, deliberating and analyzing processes. The teachings of

Ska'nikòn:ra were also adhered to as we implemented respectful consensus-building practices

while navigating this project together. I explained that as the researcher, I would be responsible

to plan and provide an overview of the research activities; however, it might be modified and

transformed to best suit the needs of the participants.

Following the project overview, I shared a summary of the survey to highlight some of

the common experiences and goals the group shared for language learning. I encouraged the

participants to share their experiences with one another and discuss some of their expectations

for the project. At that time, I once again reminded the group that the teachings of

Sha'tetionkwátte and Ska'nikòn:ra would help us in our collective decision making. Following

the summary of the survey, I shared the components of Rotinonhsión:ni language pedagogy

described earlier (see Figure 1, p. 63).

The orientation concluded, following the research overview and discussions about the

elements of Rotinonhsión:ni pedagogies. I also encouraged any questions about the research

purpose or processes and prompted discussions throughout the session. This collaborative

community-based research was positioned as *research by us and for us*; therefore, a well-

organized launch was an integral part of initiating this process. Beginning the project with a strong understanding of the components of Rotinonhsión:ni pedagogies was also important to position the research and underscore the importance of collective thinking through a Rotinonhsión:ni perspective. The following sections describe the research methods and data collection processes for the study.

Kerihwarò:roks – Gathering Knowledge and Research Tools

Following the cyclical process for this collaborative research, this community-based research project had three primary research tools. Each tool was designed for organizing and gathering knowledge and feedback in ways that align with Rotinonhsión:ni ways of knowing and working in respectful relationship. I developed each of these research tools to help us critically engage in active language learning and to analyze the selected advanced language pedagogies.

The first tool for this study was the preliminary survey (see Appendix 1) used at the launch of the project. The survey served several purposes, with aspects of the survey assisting in launching the project by providing participants with an opportunity to reflect on their personal learning journey. The second tool was an individual language learning journal that served as a documentation tool, where participants tracked and reflected on their active learning experiences throughout the research project. Finally, the third tool was an evaluative rubric based on the components of Rotinonhsión:ni pedagogy and the descriptors of advanced-high and superior Kanien'kéha language proficiency. We used this third tool collaboratively through several group discussions using a conversational method (Kovach, 2010b) to analyze advanced learning activities. Together, these tools provided methods of documenting our understandings as we

generated a picture of how a peer group of Kanien'kéha learners can define, shape and engage

advanced pedagogies suited to their needs. Each of these tools is described further below.

The Preliminary Survey

The preliminary survey (see Appendix 1) established foundational insights as we began

to chart our shared learning path for the duration of the project. The design of the survey aimed

to have participants reflect on their relationship with Kanien'kéha and served as a means to

position ourselves as learners within our communities. It also helped place each of the

participants in relation, as we would further understand ourselves better as advanced language

learners and recognize the commonalities we share. To support the first research stage, I

developed this initial tool so all participants could reflect on our successes and challenges as

advanced language learners.

The survey also prompted participants to share insights on what might be hindering them

as learners. Importantly, the tool helped to establish individual goals for language learning and

ask what forms and functions of the language participants would like to improve upon. The

questions also gathered information on the hobbies, interests and activities enjoyed by each of

the participants. Gathering these insights was beneficial for establishing learning targets and

planning the units and pedagogical approaches to be piloted. An additional aim of the survey was

to determine the availability of the participants to inform scheduling for the collaborative

learning sessions. I was responsible for compiling and summarizing all the data from the initial

reflections to report back to the group. Informed by this assessment, I developed a draft schedule

of the research activities for the participants to review and validate (see Table 3, p. 90 for sample

schedule).

The Language Learning Journal

With learning targets defined and the pedagogical approaches selected, the peer group of women began piloting the units buy engaging in the advanced pedagogical approaches and language learning activities to be analyzed. During this *active learning* stage, the primary tool for documenting our individual reflections and understandings was through an individual language learning journal. The learning journal encouraged participants to continuously reflect on each pedagogical approach and document our evolving relationship with our language.

To help describe how learning journals are relevant tools for community-based research, I draw upon descriptions provided by Kemmis et al. (2014) who shares that diaries, journals and logs are widely used in participatory action research projects. They describe that learning journals are "often organized more systematically around themes or topics for clustering related observations or information" (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 178). In this way the journal serves as a way to:

> gather evidence to show us how we are doing – and if we are doing better than before – and we are interested in documenting this evidence so we can analyze and interpret it, reflect on it, share it with others involved…. The 'right' evidence is not just one kind of evidence… it is right because it provides answers for the particular kinds of questions we are asking, or because it throws light on the issue we are investigating (Kemmis et al., 2014, p. 69).

The use of a language learning journal was thus an appropriate tool for this project, as it involved ongoing reflection as well as collaborative meaning making throughout the active learning phase.

The language learning journal was an empowering tool for participants. Documenting their learning path was important, as each of their learning experiences was different and unique, showing diversity in their language learning styles. For committed adult language learners, the more they know about language and language learning, the greater chances of them achieving significantly high proficiency. They "can do this because they have learned how to learn" (Jackson & Kaplan, 1999). The language journal assisted the group to better understand how they learn, including the resources they require as advanced language learners.

I developed and provided the reflective journal for each participant, and it included prompts for learners to document, reflect and analyze the learning activities. It also included space for daily and weekly entries where learners tracked learning activities, time engaged in active language learning, resources used, and overall reflections on their learning. As an integral part of the research, the language learning journal provided learners with a tool to systematically document their learning over the duration of this research. The journal also provided learning tips, encouraging quotes and informative citations from the fields of Indigenous languages revitalization, Indigenous education, SLA and applied linguistics.

The Evaluative Rubric

The third tool is an evaluative rubric based on the components of Rotinonhsión:ni pedagogy (see Figure 1, p. 63), effective curriculum planning and design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2015), and the descriptors of advanced-high and superior Kanien'kéha language proficiency (see Table 2, p. 57). We used this third tool collaboratively through several group discussions, using a conversational method (Kovach, 2010b) to analyze advanced learning activities.

The Evaluative Rubric for Rotinonhsíon:ni Advanced Language Pedagogies is comprised of fourteen criteria (see Appendix 2) to be evaluated with a rating scale from four to one, 4) thoroughly; 3) adequately; 2) moderately; 1) minimally. Any criterion within the rubric that may not have been applicable to the pedagogical approach being evaluated could have been noted as well. This evaluative tool assisted with gathering, interpreting, and consolidating participants' feedback specific to each pedagogical approach.

Language learning through each of the four pedagogical approaches was carried out over four weeks per unit[26]. Our elder was invited to the group learning sessions to support our learning and validate any linguistic analyses. To conclude each unit, all participants came together to discuss and evaluate the learning approach using the evaluative rubric.

Group Discussions and Co-creating Knowledge

Rotinonhsión:ni ways recognize the strength of the collective and how a collective voice represents the concept of Ska'nikòn:ra [One Mind], or collective thinking in strategizing and decision making. With this in mind, I used a conversational method as a "culturally organic means to gathering knowledge" (Kovach, 2010b, p. 42). I organized and conducted semi-structured group discussions that focused on analyzing and evaluating the pedagogical approaches. The goal of this conversational method was to have the participants share through natural conversation (Kovach, 2010b) with me guiding the discussions by posing questions to prompt an exchange and analysis using the evaluative rubric.

Once each of the units and pedagogical approaches were evaluated, we compared and contrasted all four learning approaches. Through the group discussions, the participants

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[26] See Appendices 5 to 8 for an overview of each unit.

discussed their experiences in applying the learning strategy while reflecting on the criteria described in the rubric. Within the group discussions, participants also provided suggestions for improving the learning strategies. The journaling tool was also helpful for some participants when reflecting and sharing their learning experiences within the peer group.

The preliminary survey, language learning journal and evaluative rubrics combined with the group discussions helped us to better understand the pedagogical needs of advanced language learners. These modes of gathering knowledge align with Indigenous research methodologies and Rotinonhsión:ni ways of working in respectful relationship throughout the research project. Together, these methods of understanding helped to generate a picture of how a peer group of Kanien'kéha learners can define, shape and engage advanced pedagogies suited to their needs. The modes of gathering knowledge, through reflective practices, position the research as a transformative pathway (Smith, 2004) for participants to grow as learners and identify approaches for advanced Kanien'kéha learners.

While facilitating the group discussions, I noted significant points raised while also audio recording the group discussions to transcribe and analyze later. I used the Voice Recorder Pro (VRP) recording application to record the group discussions, as I was familiar with its functions and had successfully used it to record elders' stories and conversations. The VRP has a high-definition full featured audio recorder that I downloaded on both my laptop and my cellphone. I used both devices to ensure I had a backup during the group sessions. The VRP application saved audio files chronologically, indicating dates and times, and it recorded continuously the duration of each session. Files were downloaded and saved as mp4 files. The VRP app on my phone was the primary recording device and was minimally intrusive during the group conversations.

Making Meaning Methods and Analysis

Taking a wholistic approach to answer the primary research question, each stage of the collaborative research was reflected upon to identify Rotinonhsión:ni language pedagogies for advanced Kanien'kéha language learning. As per the sub-questions, I also looked to affirm the key components of advanced Indigenous language pedagogy and the descriptors of advanced proficiency, as well as the approaches and resources that can support learner autonomy for independent language learning. At each stage of the research, the participants offered valued insights into the effectiveness and appropriateness of the units, learning strategies and resources selected. I also maintained a reflective journal that was helpful to draw upon as well.

The group discussions were a valuable source of data to support the findings of the research, as was the information provided through the three research tools developed for the purposes of the project. The language learning journals were only collected at the close of the piloting period. I also included my own language learning journal as part of the final analysis, as I piloted each learning strategy alongside the participants.

To draw meaning from, reflect and summarize the group discussions, I transcribed each of the audio files using Microsoft OneNote, which has transcribing abilities and is compatible with VRP audio files. Importantly, OneNote allows for time-stamping throughout the notes, which links directly to points within the audio files. Finally, within OneNote all files can be linked through a keyword search, where "it is easy to create links between interviews when similar or contradictory evidence is heard" (Tessier, 2012, p.4). All the data was stored on my computer and saved to an external hard drive. The transcriptions were also printed and stored and used as an option for analyses.

To bring together the voices of the participants, group discussions were coded, analyzed and organized into main themes. Relative to the research questions, some themes were pre-determined and guided through the semi-structured group discussions. However, the coding and analysis process was open, to allow for any new themes to emerge. The coding process aimed to link ideas and similarities this peer group of learners shared throughout the research, while at the same time showing how each of them has their own experiences as individuals, with their own unique successes, challenges and needs. Each of them has their own story, and all the tools combined helped to convey their story as participants learning and collaborating throughout this project.

In addition to identifying and developing important themes, coding the group discussions was valuable in highlighting the actual words of the participants that bring the final dissertation to life. Chew (2016) shares that coding helps to identify and develop themes while also helping to understand the individual stories of the participants. Like many Indigenous scholars, she also places great value on the words of the participants. Using the words directly from participants is important "to reflect and explore salient points" (Metallic, 2017, p. 88), while at the same time it acknowledges the participants as being integral to any new knowledge generated from the study. To ensure all participants were fully informed and comfortable with the findings and contents of the final dissertation, a draft was shared with all the participants for their feedback, suggested edits and approval.

Similar to the outcomes of Sunsiri's research (2011) where she conducted community-based research in collaboration with Oneida women, the collective experiences of all participants generated a story of advanced language learners in Kahnawà:ke. In alignment with Indigenous research methodologies, working through this storied research analysis can be likened to

narrative inquiry (Metallic, 2017). Simultaneously, the inclusion of my own language learning journal helped to reflect on my experiences in the research as well. It was also beneficial to combine transcriptions with my notes and observations gathered throughout the research process. Through this "reflective narrative" approach (Kovach, 2010, p.44), I was positioned to develop my story within the research "as with Indigenous oral traditions and storytelling" (Metallic, 2017).

Summary

In summary, the findings emerged wholistically throughout the research process while the group discussions provided the main source of data as we sought to identify Rotinonhsión:ni language pedagogies. Through the collaborative research approach, the story of how a peer group of Kanien'kéha learners can define, shape and engage advanced pedagogies suited to their needs came to light. It was my role to adhere to the teachings of Sha'tetionkwátte by honoring the voices of all the participants with respect and care. By carefully listening, participating and reflecting on the discussions, the stories become visible, with hopes that the process will serve the wider community, as we advance our efforts in revitalizing and strengthening Kanien'kéha in Kahnawà:ke.

Through this chapter, I have shown that all the tools and processes for doing Indigenous community-based research can emerge from within our unique knowledge systems. This is important so that Indigenous scholars can thrive and transform as individuals, as we work in collaboration and support of our communities and nations. I applied a research approach that centers *Onkwehón:we ways*, staying true to who I am as a Rotinonhsión:ni person. This study

underscores the importance of revitalizing Rotinonhsión:ni languages through methods that privilege Rotinonhsión:ni thinking, worldview and knowledge systems.

       The next chapter provides the results of the study. It also features the voices of the peer group of women to describe how the new framework was applied, as well as the impacts of the four unit plans and pedagogical approaches developed, then implemented, for this study.

Chapter 5: Tsi Ní:tsi Onterihwahtén:ti - The Results

This doctoral research documented how a peer group of Rotinonhsión:ni women from Kahnawà:ke piloted and analyzed four units of study for learners with advanced proficiency in Kanien'kéha. The study investigated second language pedagogies grounded in a new Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy (Stacey, 2022) and incorporated existing high quality Kanien'kéha resources. A continuation of my master's research, the purpose of the study was to help identify pathways to scaffold learners from advanced levels towards a superior level of spoken language proficiency based on ACTFL benchmarks (ACTFL, 2024). The project also aimed to extend community-based efforts and successes championed in my home community of Kahnawà:ke.

To address a gap in advanced level to superior pedagogies for Indigenous language revitalization, the primary question I explored was: **What Rotinonhsión:ni language pedagogies can support Kahnawà:ke's advanced second language speakers to progress towards superior proficiency in Kanien'kéha?**

The following sub-questions also guided the preliminary research in preparation for the pilot:

- What are the components of advanced Indigenous language pedagogy for learners beginning to emerge as superior speakers?
- How do we define advanced and superior proficiency in Kanien'kéha?
- What advanced-level pedagogical approaches and resources can support learner autonomy for independent groups or individual Kanien'kéha language learning?

As described in the methodology chapter, four units were developed and then piloted by a peer group of advanced learners, all experienced teachers working within various Kanien'kéha programs in Kahnawà:ke. I was also a full participant along with the peer group who were previously assessed as advanced speakers of Kanien'kéha. With the group activities conducted in Kanien'kéha, it was very rewarding to see the project come to life and to be immersed in the language as a learner once again. The pilot positioned the seven of us as active learners and, as we engaged each unit, we were supported by an elder speaker throughout the project.

This chapter shares the results of applying the new Framework for Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy as well as the emergent themes relative to advanced Kanien'kéha learning that came to light throughout the piloting of the four units of study. The use of Kanien'kéha is prominent throughout this chapter, as all piloting sessions and research activities were conducted in Kanien'kéha. Because this dissertation is written in English to engage a wider readership, to honor the language in which the research was carried out, some Kanien'kéha dialogues and narrations are translated while others are accompanied with an English summary within the text. In this way, all readers can follow what is being discussed by the participants. Centering Kanien'kéha creates space for the use of Indigenous languages in the academy and is an important act of Indigenous resurgence.

Application of a Rotinonhsión:ni Centric Pedagogical Framework

With the research grounded within a Rotinonhsión:ni paradigm, consequently the pedagogical framework was wholistically Rotinonhsión:ni centric. The results show that such a framework is essential to ensuring the pedagogical components are derived from and applied within Rotinonhsión:ni worldview, cultural perspectives and ways of knowing. Having this

framework to work from, I was free to think and work from a Rotinonhsión:ni standpoint, to think deeply about what that means for designing peer group language learning and how it would be enacted. As presented in the results, the learners showed a high level of engagement as the units of study were piloted. With the units designed from within a Rotinonhsión:ni framework, learning approaches also broadened our thinking and knowledge of the language through Rotinonhsión:ni ways and perspectives. The impacts of a strong pedagogical framework are consistent with the work of Cajete (1994) and Cornelius (1999), both Indigenous scholars who advocate for Indigenous frameworks to ground Indigenous teaching and learning to ensure the continuance of Indigenous worldviews, thought and lifeways.

The results of the study confirm that conceptualization of the new Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy (see Figure 1, p. 63) was a crucial step needed to establish the essential components of advanced Kanien'kéha language learning, as it guided the development of each subsequent unit. The results also show that, as each of the units were implemented, the advanced learners were highly engaged with strategies that directly addressed their learning needs and interests through methods that centered Rotinonhsión:ni teachings and ways of knowing. This was evidenced by the learners as they consistently engaged in lengthy discussions on everyday life, cultural teachings, histories, and worldview throughout each unit of study. In addition, they also expressed a heightened awareness of Rotinonhsión:ni ways of knowing such as intentional observation, visiting and oral storytelling. This underscores the importance of beginning with a clear and intentional pedagogical framework for Indigenous language learning. The planning phase is thus an important step that allows us to think deeply about our worldview and the things we value as Rotinonhsión:ni people.

The findings also highlight how the methodology, guided by the teachings of Sha'tetionkwátte, greatly contributed to the success of the project and application of the pedagogical framework. As each unit was presented to the participants, they reviewed them in relation to the framework and validated the usefulness of the units of study for advanced language learning. This resulted in strengthened unit plans that were focused on their specific needs as advanced learners as well as their interests as traditional Kanien'kehá:ka women. Their comments during the analysis also affirm that units developed in this way do lead learners to gain deeper cultural understandings through the application of Rotinonhsión:ni ways of knowing. This corresponds with the work of Carol Cornelius (1999), a seasoned Oneida scholar, who maintains that a culturally rooted curriculum framework must be developed with and by those who hold the knowledge of the culture and traditions. At each stage of the research, having participants who carry this knowledge, as well as an elder speaker, is invaluable. Recognized as community experts, they provide firsthand experiences, knowledge and valued insights from an Onkwehón:we perspective.

The importance of having a strong foundational vision is consistent with Cajete's (1994) work, as he asserts that, for Indigenous peoples, such foundations derive from the experiences and traditional knowledge we hold within ourselves which was passed down and learned from interactions with the natural world. As a traditional Rotinonhsión:ni woman I aimed to bring that knowledge to the forefront by drawing from what I learned from my first teachers within my family, many cherished elders as well as my own life experiences as a traditional Longhouse person. I was also able to apply the knowledge I gained through years of experience studying my own language and through extensive work in the fields of ILR and Indigenous education. I felt I had the knowledge and experience to develop such a framework and throughout the process I

envisioned the possibilities of the framework being useful across Rotinonhsión:ni communities by language revitalization leaders, planners, educators and learners.

The results show how we, as Rotinonhsión:ni, draw upon our teachings for guidance as well as the knowledge we share through our lived Rotinonhsión:ni experience. Being Rotinonhsión:ni carries both spiritual and political accountabilities. Efforts towards revitalizing and reclaiming Rotinonhsión:ni languages in turn contribute to the maintenance of our political protocols and structures. As included within the framework, formal oratory thus includes both ceremonial and political domains in order to ensure the continuance of the protocols that maintain the international alliance between our Rotinonhsión:ni nations. This further emphasizes that planning for learning must be from within a wholistic framework "comprised of interrelated cultural components" (Cornelius, 1999, p. 67). It is from this framework that units and themes emerge. With this in mind, I feel that the framework can be useful in planning curriculum and programs for Rotinonhsión:ni languages in all communities, as a culturally specific framework "provides a way to think about and process the cultural information necessary to design culture-based curriculum" (Cornelius, 1999, p. 42). The results show that this was certainly the case for this project, as the Framework for Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy led to the development of the thematic units for the piloting. The next sections describe the components of the four units of study that emerged from the framework.

Balancing Structured and Communicative Approaches - Unit Development Within a Peer Group Learning Model

Within the Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy are four pillars that essentialize a balance between a structural and communicative approach for advanced

Indigenous language learning. Throughout the pilot, the women affirmed the importance and the impacts of advanced learning through this balanced approach. The results are consistent, showing that grammar analysis is effective and continuous peer group discussions are invaluable for extending advanced learners towards higher levels of proficiency. Learner insights showed the framework was successful in wholistically grounding each of the units, due to the four primary components of Rotinonhsión:ni advanced language pedagogy (see Figure 1, p. 63).

Rotinonhsión:ni Centric Analyses – A Structural Approach & Prompting Questions

The four units of study were developed to feature varied learning approaches through various text types for the peer group of women to pilot. Each of the units included structural approaches aimed at ongoing lexical expansion, grammar refinement and analyses at advanced levels. Inclusion of a structural approach was very important, as the grammar refinement and analyses through a Rotinonhsión:ni perspective addressed the highly polysynthetic nature of Kanien'kéha. In addition, the peer group of learners have extensive experience studying Kanien'kéha through a grammar analysis approach, as such pedagogical approaches have been in use within Kanien'kéha adult learning programs for decades and have shown to significantly contribute to learner success (DeCaire, 2023; Deering & Harries-Delisle, 2007; Green, 2017; Green & Maracle, 2018; Martin, 2023; Stacey, 2016).

From a structural standpoint, most learners' knowledge of how, precisely, Kanien'kéha grammar scaffolds from advanced levels of proficiency towards a superior level is limited. I aimed to mitigate this challenge within the units of study by providing guiding questions intended to prompt sustained inquiry. The questions were developed so the learners themselves would determine the focus of inquiry within each unit, based on the gaps in their linguistic

knowledge and on their interests. To achieve this, questions were open-ended, to allow for a self-guided and differentiated approach for the peer group. Wiggins & McTighe (2015) describe several functions of what they call an "essential question," saying "it *helps students effectively inquire and make sense* of important but complicated ideas, knowledge and know-how… .[and] helps the learner to arrive at important understandings as well as greater coherence in content knowledge and skill" (p. 109). Based on their feedback, including guiding questions for the learners proved to be an important inclusion for the study.

Each of the four units included one essential question to prepare students for piloting and learning, using various text types and pedagogical approaches:

1) How can analyzing **written Kanien'kéha texts** help us to become superior-level speakers? 2) How can we use **audio visual resources** of elder storytelling to become better speakers? 3) How can analyzing the linguistic and cultural knowledge embedded in **traditional Kanien'kéha names** help us to become superior level Kanien'kéha speakers? 4) How can studying our foundational teachings through **oral tradition** help us to deepen our cultural knowledge and refine our use of more complex grammatical forms of Kanien'kéha for ceremonial and interpersonal communication?

The peer group of learners shared that these questions were helpful for them by defining the focus and purpose of each unit. The questions also prepared participants to explore what learning at advanced towards superior levels of proficiency entailed, for individual and peer group learning.

As described in the previous chapter, each of the units included several pedagogical approaches to be piloted. The structural components encouraged ongoing textual, lexical and

discourse analyses, using a second set of guiding questions. As learners were analyzing texts and

stories, they were asked to consider questions such as:

- What did you notice?

- What contexts call for the use of these particles?

- What was easy to understand?

- What parts of the elder's speech or word use make it difficult to understand?

- How can you use these verb forms or particles in your own speech?

- What parts of the names make it difficult to understand?

- How can you use these verb forms to produce new names?

- What contexts call for the use of these incorporations?

The learners appreciated having the guiding questions included in each of the units and

repeatedly stated that they felt empowered as learners as the units provided them a roadmap to

progress as speakers. The process was summarized by Kaia'tí:io, who said that the individual

learning strategies, along with the prompting questions provided in the unit, "touched on

different modes of learning, and left room for individuals to take initiative in how they want to

analyze the text." This was valuable feedback; it showed that the participants applied the

strategies and focused their learning on what best suited them when analyzing the various text

types.

At the end of each unit each of the learners were to share the new knowledge and

understandings they had gained. To prepare learners for the peer sharing activity, a third set of

questions were developed. Once again, these questions were open-ended to encourage learners to

focus on their own needs and to further develop their language skills. They prepared learners to present what they learned through the unit of study and show what they know, understand and can do by asking:

- What did you find out?

- What new understandings have you gained and how do you understand them?

- How do you feel this knowledge will make you a better speaker?

These open-ended questions allowed for a differentiated approach that addressed the varying levels of linguistic knowledge amongst the group members. It also led to deep learning, through the use of written texts, audio visual resources, storytelling and group discussions. The peer group of learners were consciously analyzing the language and intently listening, while noticing the nuances of the language. Their analyses led to focused group discussions with our elder where grammatical concepts were shared and expanded upon. This process generated extensive discussions and peer group learning, as the learners often focused on different components of the language within a prescribed text. Overall the units guided the learners to be very conscious and active learners, where their listening skills were sharpened, particularly through the use of audio-visual resources, storytelling, group conversations and storytelling.

Importantly, all of the participants acknowledged that taking a structural approach with a focus on Kanien'kéha grammar and morphology was very effective; however, they had agreed not to be pre-occupied with using and learning formal linguistic terminology. Instead, the group chose to use Kanien'kéha terms to describe grammatical concepts according to the changes and patterns taking place within the language. This was significant, as it brings to light that terminology to describe linguistic functions or structures of the language can be developed as needed in ways that are easily comprehensible for the learners. Having common Kanien'kéha

terms also expands their understanding, more so than having to learn advanced linguistic terminology in English alongside the actual target language. Green and Maracle (2018) provide an example of this as they describe using a color-coding system to delineate Kanien'kéha prefixes in the Owén:na Kentyóhkwa Adult Immersion Program in Ohsweken, Ontario, where they use the Root Word Method[27]. Similar to the adult immersion programs in sister Kanien'kehá:ka communities, some common linguistic terms in English are used while others are formulated to help learners grasp and discuss concepts more easily. The fundamental point here is that for Indigenous language revitalization, when using a structural approach, grammar is recognized as a valued tool for polysynthetic Indigenous languages. Increasing spoken proficiency outcomes must remain the primary goal, "not for students to become applied linguistics majors" (Green & Maracle, 2018). For the revitalization of polysynthetic Rotinonhsión:ni languages, grammar continues to be an effective tool to help learners progress significantly in their language learning; however, language use across generations is the ultimate goal.

The results showed that congruency between a structural and communicative approach was important throughout each unit of study. Having the framework proved to be very impactful for grounding and wholistically connecting the structural and communicative approaches as learners piloted each of the units. The next section discusses how communicative approaches were integral to the project; how this has informed us in relation to Rotinonhsión:ni language learning; and how communicative approaches can apply to teaching and learning Indigenous languages at highly advanced levels.

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[27] To read more on the Root Word Method, see The Root-Word Method for Building Proficient Second-Language Speakers of Polysynthetic Languages: Onkwawén:na Kentyóhkwa Adult Mohawk Language Immersion Program (Green & Maracle, 2018).

Fostering Kanien'kéha Speaking Relationships – A Communicative Approach

The research shows how Kanien'kéha language units of study can be designed to take on both structural and communicative approaches. Communicative learning approaches were centered around the pillars of *Kin-focused Communication* and *Oral Tradition* defined within the Rotinonhsión:ni -centric pedagogical framework. Strengthening communal and spiritual relationships through natural conversation, visiting and ceremonial language was the objective of *Kin-Focused Communication*. Language, culture and knowledge acquisition through stories, histories, formal oratory, and traditional skills including land-based teachings fell within the component of *Oral Tradition*.

These Onkwehón:we ways of knowing, focused on language use as both the goal and the method of learning, allowed for extensive discussions within all units of study. This created an interdependence between the communicative and structural approaches across the units of study or learning activities. As the learners were engaged in conversational activities, oral storytelling and group discussions, the participants were cognizant of their ongoing lexical expansion and intentionally focused on grammar refinement within the array of communicative activities. Through these activities, advanced language learning was naturally contextualized to support extended linguistic understandings and vocabulary acquisition, in order for learners to carry out tasks that are meaningful through the use of Kanien'kéha.

It is important to reiterate here that planning for learning through methods focused on oral communication entails understanding the needs and interests of the participants. This means that establishing the advanced to superior level benchmarks and learning targets is integral to guide the development of the units of study. Unit development was based on the relevancy and abilities of the advanced group of learners in order for them to scaffold towards a superior level

of proficiency. For peer group learning, planning is crucial, to ensure learners have ample

opportunities to hear, learn and use Kanien'kéha consistently together. The communicative

pillars, Kin-focused Communication and Oral Tradition, ensure the language is contextualized in

various natural settings and cultural contexts while also being immersive through Onkwehón:we

ways of knowing.

Communicative Approaches at Advanced Levels

The communicative tasks at advanced-mid and advanced-high levels of proficiency differ

from those at lower levels (ACTFL, 2024); therefore, the learning plan needed to reflect this.

Second language learners of Kanien'kéha that fall into this advanced range of proficiency draw

readily upon their communicative skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) to function in

the language with ease. As described in the following sections, they can participate with a high

level of engagement when visiting, storytelling and communicating in the language. The design

of the units assumed that, as advanced speakers, participants would not necessarily be distracted

with trying to understand what is being said. Instead, they would notice the discourse and

linguistic choices of speakers as well as picking up contextualized vocabulary. This was apparent

throughout the research, as discussions and storytelling through peer group learning and

gathering with our elder were determined to be the most impactful and enjoyable for the

participants.

The results clearly show that for advanced Kanien'kéha learners to improve through

communicative learning strategies, the elder speaker[28] becomes integral. Kahnawà:ke is truly

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[28] A first language elder speaker was central to the study; however, this can be an adult L1
lspeaker or a highly proficient L2 speaker.

fortunate to still have first language speakers who dedicate their time and energy towards language revitalization efforts, especially working with adult language learners. Authentic input combined with intentional listening and conversation is crucial for advanced learners climbing towards a superior level of proficiency. The peer group learning sessions supported by our elder speaker created immersive learning opportunities for the participants using communicative strategies. In addition to extended conversations, listening proves to be paramount when elder speakers are sharing stories and teachings. Through these immersive interactions, the learners were noticing language in order to expand the areas where they were lacking, be it vocabulary, idioms, or more complex tenses.

To summarize the importance of establishing the Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy for the project, there are several points I would like to highlight. First is that programming and pathways for advanced to superior levels of Kanien'kéha proficiency are only now beginning to be explored. The framework provides a map for understanding the important components for high levels of language learning. Establishing clear learning targets determined by the advanced to superior language benchmarks is helpful when planning for peer group and independent language learning. Having a guiding learning path with defined learning targets is greatly beneficial for learners aiming to progress towards advanced-high and superior levels of proficiency. Planning empowers learners with the knowledge of where they are going and provides pathways to get there. In addition, when planning for teaching and learning at this level, having a culturally grounded framework as well as proficiency benchmarks ensures learning is intentional and goals are clear. Finally, it is important to highlight that an Indigenous-centric framework ensures language is learned through Indigenous was of knowing and through Indigenous worldviews and thinking. This shows that planning for Indigenous language learning

is focused first and foremost on language development with cultural understandings intrinsic to the learning. It is much more than planning activities in the target language (Wiggins & McTighe, 2015). The next sections discusses key points that arose through the four units of study employed by the peer group of learners.

Unit One: Kahiatonhserà:ke - Analyzing Written Texts to Retell and Discuss Stories of Community Resilience

The first learning approach of the pilot focused on using a text-based approach for advanced level language learning. The peer group of women were to explore how analyzing written Kanien'kéha texts can help advanced learners to progress towards becoming superior-level speakers. The unit plan (see Appendix 3) was designed to provide the participants with a wholistic learning approach, over a four-week period, that included opportunities to focus on advanced level language forms and functions. The unit plan placed emphasis on empowering the peer group to work collaboratively while also incorporating strategies aimed at fostering learner autonomy and maximizing opportunities for elder support.

This section provides an account of how the peer group came together for shared learning as well as how they applied the independent study strategies. With all sessions taking place in Kanien'kéha, selected dialogues have been included to highlight the areas of focused language learning and to illustrate how the learners' language development was supported by their elder speaker. The sections describing the results of Unit 1 conclude with a summary and reflections on the unit plan.

The Resource – Old Kahnawà:ke

The resource selected for this text-based approach was developed in Kahnawà:ke and called Old Kahnawà:ke (KORLCC, 2017). This resource is a collection of short community stories as told by 12 storytellers in Kahnawà:ke. Each story is written in Kanien'kéha, English and French, with photos of Kahnawà:ke to accompany each story. The resource was recently updated to include an updated orthography and was chosen for its quality and relevance to the learners.

The group reviewed the resource together to determine the stories we would be analyzing. After some discussion, it was decided we would be piloting the learning approaches focusing on three short stories. They chose Kaión:ni [The Wampum] as told by Joe Deer (KORLCC, 2017, p. 4), Sha'kawihstanó:ron'ne [The Depression] as told by Angela Morris (KORLCC, 2017, p. 13) and Tsi Nón:we Tewakatehiá:ron [Where I Grew Up] as told by Roger Goodleaf (KORLCC, 2017, p. 31). The group agreed these three stories would allow them to analyse and discuss a diverse range of topics as well as provide opportunities to be exposed to varied vocabulary sets.

The next sections will describe the group's experiences, interactions and feedback on the implementation of the first unit, which focused on analyzing written text to retell and discuss community stories. It will also include dialogues to help illustrate how this peer group of women learn together, strategies used when interacting with our elder and areas of focus for these advanced learners. The group brought the theme to life as they centered their attention on stories of community and resilience in Kahnawà:ke.

Unit Overview - Kahnawà:ke: Stories of Community and Resilience

The unit for the text-based approach began by establishing the following long-term learning

targets for advanced learners:

1) engage in conversation and storytelling using all major timeframes of past, present and

   future; 2) communicate information, opinions and interests on a variety of topics with

   accuracy and fluency; 3) present opinions and special interests with lengthy detail and

   coherent narrations using expanded lexical diversity.

These long-term learning targets provide a general overview of the abilities of an advanced-high

speaker (ACTFL, 2024; see also Table 1, p. 53). They also provided the peer group with clear

targets for their learning as they engaged with the texts. The theme selected for the first unit was

Kahnawà:ke - Stories of Community and Resilience. This theme would serve to ground the unit

with a broad topic to motivate and engage the interest of the learners over the four-week piloting

module.

   The Learning Objectives for this advanced group were developed to include both a

structural and communicative approach that is Rotinonhsión:ni centric as defined in the

pedagogical framework (see Figure 1, p. 63) so that learners would be able to:

- Develop their vocabulary by analyzing written texts and documenting vocabulary through

  lexical groupings/themes as well as applying Rotinonhsión:ni cultural understandings and

  meanings.

- Refine their use of past, present and future timeframes by analyzing more complex

  grammatical structures to explain, share and apply this new knowledge with peers.

- Discuss experiences, community stories and cultural knowledge with peers through natural conversation using new vocabulary and appropriate timeframes.

- Retell and share cultural stories, oral history and knowledge with grammatical accuracy and fluency.

The unit included the identified learning approaches that would engage the peer group over four weeks. The strategies were to be applied through independent study, group visiting with our elder, extension and review, and final group reflections and sharing. Each learning approach included a focus on the forms and functions of the language as well as the key activities the advanced learners would engage in.

      Independent Study - Reading for Understanding and Text Analysis. The start of the unit was designed for participants to learn through independent study. They were to read selected stories beginning with a focus on understanding. While reading, learners were to highlight and note any new vocabulary as well as any unfamiliar grammatical patterns. The unit prompted learners to analyze the text with the following open-ended questions:

- What do you notice?

- What was easy to understand?

- What parts of the word make it difficult to understand?

- How can you use the various particles in your own speech?

- What contexts call for the use of these particles?

The questions were to help guide their individual learning needs, and the open-ended questions would allow for differentiation[29] among these advanced learners.

With a strong understanding of the text, learners were to then practice reading the stories aloud to prioritize oral production. The unit called for participants to pay attention to enunciating new vocabulary and phrases with fluency. The learners were to practice retelling the stories in preparation to discuss and retell the story with our elder speaker. The unit suggested they pay attention to the tense markers and any challenges they might anticipate having when discussing the stories. To bring the independent learning week to a close, learners were asked to reflect on the storyline so they could **re-tell** and **summarize** the story naturally. Additional questions were provided to help prepare learners for the elder visit, asking what thoughts or interests the story raised for them and if they connected to certain points in the text.

Elder Visiting - Conversations and Clarifications. Following the focused independent study, the unit aimed to transition the learners to a peer group session with an invited elder speaker. For the first portion of the visit, learners were to retell and share the stories reviewed using a natural conversation approach. The group would also discuss the themes within the selected readings and how they related to the stories about their community.

The second component of the group visit focused on increasing the group's **understandings** of challenging vocabulary they encountered within the text. Learners were to elicit feedback on verb forms and vocabulary by posing questions for our elder. At this time our

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[29] Differentiation refers to a teaching approach that addresses learners' diverse needs at various levels and interests.

elder would validate understandings and clarify any questions generated from the independent study time.

Independent Study - Reviewing and Extending. Following the elder visit, the unit transitioned learners back to learning through independent study, this time with a focus on reviewing and extending their knowledge of language covered within the theme. Learners were prompted to review their notes and any additional materials by focusing on grammatical patterns or vocabulary. Learners would study the examples of how they are applied in various contexts including everyday speech, reviewing explanations and examples based on elder feedback. To extend their learning, participants would prepare to share and explain one or two things they learned throughout the unit with the peer group.

Peer Learning - Reflections and Sharing. To conclude the unit, participants would share what they learned from the unit with our peer group. Each participant would explain at least one grammatical pattern or component of the language explored within the unit. Learners would share new understandings they gained and how they came to understand it. Each participant was also to provide examples to demonstrate how this knowledge can be applied in everyday language and how they felt it would make them a better Kanien'kéha speaker.

Engaging the Texts Through Independent Learning Strategies

With the project's orientation behind us, we gathered to embark on our first pedagogical adventure where we would be analyzing written texts to retell and discuss community stories. I had printed and gathered all the materials in advance and I was eager to begin. The week prior, the group decided the best time to meet for the session would be at 4:00pm instead of 6:00pm to

best accommodate everyone's schedules. The goal for the evening was to provide the group with an overview of the first unit of study, discuss the strategies and to distribute the selected text.

In preparation for the earlier start, I cooked a supper of traditional corn soup, pan bread, and meatpie. My son knew we were gathering for the project so he helped out by baking us a homemade cake for dessert. As everyone arrived, Kanien'kéha filled the room as they helped themselves to some food and took a seat around the table in the Mohawk Nation Office. We had moved our session into the office, as the group preferred it due to the large white board and adequate size. I immediately knew it was the right choice because, prior to beginning the session, the group was already gathered around the white board discussing the verb *watió'te* [I work/I'm working].

It was great to see this group of women collaborating, sharing and discussing the many possible inflections[30] of this one verb. Wathahí:ne was writing and explaining concepts she had been teaching to her students the week before. Everyone was naturally engaged in this analysis, and as Kaia'tí:io arrived she immediately joined in and added *watió'tens* to the top of the list while providing the linguistic term for the habitual verb. Once everyone was satisfied with the analysis and confirmed their understandings, they got back to their soup and continued chatting and catching up about language teaching and learning. Again, I was excited to see the group in action and how the group had such a natural connection as they interacted in the language.

I began the session by recapping our orientation, underscoring how we would be carrying out the project collaboratively where everyone's expertise and input would shape the research activities. It was also reaffirmed that all our sessions would take place in Kanien'kéha so we

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[30] Inflections are grammatical changes or additions to the form of a word such as tense, person, number and location.

would create an immersive speaking and learning environment for ourselves. I then shared the first unit of study I designed for our group to pilot and guided us through each component of the unit.

The group discussed the strategies, affirmed they were clear about the unit and shared how they looked forward to the project overall. Although we understood that we were not likely to become superior speakers over the duration of the pilot, we were all excited to be in the learner's seat once again. As I locked up the building, I felt relieved that they had positive feedback and excitement for the plan I had put forward. Everyone left with their resources in hand, ready to put the independent learning strategies into action.

The reflective learning journals as well as the rubric feedback and discussions provided important insights on how the group engaged with the text during their independent learning time. They shared how they loved the text-based approach and that they felt the strategies combined with the prompting questions provided direction on how to analyze the text. Iakotetshén:'en shared that "the syllabus was a big help to guide and direct our learning… without direction I feel I would have been all over the place, and less learning would have took place." Similarly, in my reflections I noted that "I loved this pedagogical approach I felt clear about what I needed to do and what the goal was." Wathahí:ne also expressed that having independent learning tasks outlined for her was very helpful.

Ieronhienhá:wi felt that having the strategies combined with the goal of eventually re-telling the stories with our elder motivated her to make sure she was prepared. Similar to all the participants, Ieronhienhá:wi began her independent study by ensuring she fully understood the stories. At times she had to closely analyse the morphology for a thorough understanding. Wathahí:ne shared that she was challenged by the texts, saying, "wa'káttoke tsi iah kwah

tewake'nikonhraientà:'on óksa'k" [I noticed that I didn't fully understand initially]. Kanerahtóntha acknowledged that she had similar challenges, and both were able to refer to the English translations to help them understand challenging portions of the text.

Iakotetshén:'en's approach to understanding the text was to write complete translations of the stories from Kanien'kéha to English. Later Iakotetshén:'en expressed how she preferred the text-based analysis most because reading Kanien'kéha is her strength as a learner. Tsohahí:io shared that her strength has always been listening to elder speakers, but she enjoyed reading the texts for understanding and analysis. As for myself, I had shared that I enjoyed this approach and felt it was a very effective learning process. I also noted that "reading Kanien'kéha is challenging for me but it was good practice." With the first learning approach underway, it was clear that, although the learners share a similar level of Kanien'kéha proficiency, we have different strengths and preferred learning styles.

Similar to Iakotetshén:'en's example, learners used additional strategies to bolster their learning. While Iakotetshén:'en used a translation method, Tsohahí:io was writing and highlighting vocabulary that stood out to her, including those she noticed were used in different ways. My approach was similar to Tsohahí:io's, as I also took breaks from the text and practiced re-telling the story while I was cooking, noting instances where I had challenges with vocabulary or tenses. Kaia'tí:io summarized the process, saying that the individual learning strategies along with prompting questions provided in the unit "touched on different modes of learning, and left room for individuals to take initiative in how they want to analyze the text." This was valuable feedback, as I had hoped the participants would apply strategies that best suited them when analyzing the texts in this unit of study.

The unit included an important focus on lexical expansion and provided suggested strategies where learners would document vocabulary and make lexical groupings when analyzing the written texts. The unit suggested using a linguistic approach based on a morphological analysis to study and understand new vocabulary. This did prove to be a helpful approach for understanding new vocabulary when needed; however, learners were greatly concerned with appropriate vocabulary **usage,** not only with understanding. The vocabulary that learners focused on would later bring about discussions on language style, dialects, idioms[31], grammar of verbs, and synonyms.

For Wathahine, Kanien'kéha syntax[32] stood out within each of the stories, as she noticed vocabulary usage and word order within the texts. Tsohahí:io also focused on analyzing word use within the context of the stories, saying "hey I never heard it used that way, and what do they mean when they say it like that?" In hopes of expanding my vocabulary use, I focused on documenting synonyms. Both Kaia'tí:io and I noted familiar vocabulary that we heard and understood; however, we recognized that we did not habitually use them. The process had me realize that I stick to using familiar vocabulary and it is a limitation to me as a speaker. All learners documented the vocabulary, grammar and questions they would later share for follow-up with our elder.

For the independent study portion of the unit, learners were goal oriented and used the various strategies provided. They also incorporated their own strategies to learn through the text-

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[31] An idiom is a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from the meanings of the individual words, a form of expression common to a language or group of speakers (Keck & Kim, 2014).

[32] Syntax is concerned with word order and the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences. For Kanien'kéha the language does have some fixed syntax but also has somewhat of a free order that depends on the style of the speaker and the focus of the conversation.

based approach. They were not only in the learner's seat once again, they were a group of researchers piloting independent learning strategies and entering their reflections in their learning journals. Each of them surpassed the recommended two-hour independent study time to prepare for the group visit with our elder.

Visiting, Storytelling and Elder Support

The next time the group came back together I was excited to have our elder join us for our first visiting session of the project. I was a little anxious, knowing we only had four days to implement the independent learning strategies with the stories we had selected. Personally, I had felt it impacted my level of engagement with the stories and had decided I would focus on only one story to pilot the learning strategies. I was looking forward to hearing feedback on how the others engaged with the texts and to hear the group re-tell the selected stories. I was also anticipating the lively discussions we would be having with our elder speaker.

As the women arrived, the snacks were set up and we quickly took our seats around the table, eager to get started. Each time the group came together, their anticipation for language learning always created a comfortable and positive atmosphere. We were happy to visit in Kanien'kéha, to be studying together and to have time away from our busy schedules to focus on our personal language goals. Before the session began, the group was already discussing how they really enjoyed the independent learning. They were also sharing how they felt the text was very interesting, saying it was at their level of understanding yet challenging. All the women were very excited to welcome our elder speaker to the project, as we all knew we were very fortunate to have Konwaia'torèn:'en supporting our group's learning.

I opened up the session in Kanien'kéha with a short re-cap of what we were tasked to pilot for this first pedagogical approach, reminding the group that goal for the evening was to retell and share the stories we selected from the text. Our aim was to discuss the topics within the selected readings through natural conversation and to share how we connected to the stories. After telling each story learners would have opportunity to raise any vocabulary and components of the language for our elder to clarify. I aimed to ensure attention was given to orient our elder to our goals and process for the session. I proposed a loose schedule for the visiting and storytelling evening and suggested we jump right into the stories, seeing that two hours would pass very quickly.

The first story the group recounted was called Kaión:ni (KORLCC, 2017, p. 4), told by the late Joe Deer. The story was about how two men from the community attempted to bring back the traditional chiefs to Kahnawà:ke in 1924. The men garnered support from the community to invite an Onondaga man to assist them by reading a wampum belt that was held by the church. The priest at the time agreed that the men could borrow the wampum, with the condition that they return it promptly following their event. When the mayor heard of this he threatened the priest that he would be replaced if he didn't report them to the authorities and say it was stolen. In the story the priest refuses to lie and go against the agreement he made with the two men. The text is a rather brief account of what took place at that time, only four paragraphs, but it proved to be enough to engage us in our learning.

To get the group started, I offered to begin telling the story to our elder and I invited the others to join in to recount what we had read. Because I had studied the story and practiced re-telling it, I felt comfortable as I told about the efforts of the two men and their hopes to bring the Onondaga man to Kahnawà:ke. I noted in my journal that "retelling felt empowering because I

was able to recall new vocabulary from the text as needed to fill any gaps I had in my own lexicon… it made me feel and sound like a better speaker." Nonetheless, there were moments where I paused, hesitating to incorporate correct transitive pronouns or unfamiliar vocabulary. At those moments, our elder supported me by providing me the correct form. She did this seamlessly, not interrupting the story to explain but helping so the story would flow easily.

As I came to the point in the story where an agreement is made for the men to use the wampum, I struggled with the verb *enhonwatí:ni*[33]. Kaia'tí:io sensed my confidence beginning to waver and she joined in to continue the next part of the story. Kanerahtóntha also contributed as the group was recounting the events, laughing as we shared some of the dialogues verbatim and used phrases directly from the written text. The re-tell was successful with the group of peer learners collaborating to relay the story aóhskon Onkwehonwehnéha and discuss the historical events according to the storyteller. There were a few occasions where English was used, and either a learner from the group would provide the Kanien'kéha vocabulary or our elder would if needed. In one instance Kaia'tí:io was talking about the priest being pressured to call the authorities. She referred to them as *Onekwénhtara Ronatia'tawi'tòn:ne*[34] and translated it to ensure she was being understood by the group. Other times, if our elder sensed the learners were struggling, she would provide us with the needed vocabulary in a way that would not inhibit the natural flow of the storytelling. This process was challenging but as a group we were able to accomplish the task successfully.

The women shared both the second and third stories in a similar manner, with peer group collaboration, turn taking and encouraging support from our elder as needed. At times our elder

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[33] *Enhonwatí:ni* – they will borrow it from her or she will lend it to them.
[34] Onekwénhtara Ronatia'tawi'tòn:ne – the Red Coats, an older reference to the police.

would ask for clarity about the events to prompt more discussion, but her main role was supporting learners in their storytelling efforts. There were moments of laughter throughout, as we laughed at our own struggles as vulnerable learners. The community stories from the text also inspired learners to share additional stories about Kahnawà:ke history and about family stories passed down to them.

The second story, Sha'kawihstanó:ron'ne (KORLCC, p. 13) was a little shorter than the first. It was about how the people of Kahnawà:ke lived through the depression, helping one another, raising animals, planting gardens, trading goods and selling beadwork. Iakotetshén:'en felt more comfortable with the second text, saying "sénha watié:sen thí:ken tekeníhaton oká:ra" [that second story was easier]. She then volunteered to retell the story to our elder and carried the story through to the end.

Referring to her translated notes, Iakotetshén:'en took her time as she made her way through the events in the second story. When needed she used strategies such as circumlocution, and she was able to draw upon some specific language used within the text. Without disrupting the flow of her story, our elder supported her by providing needed vocabulary. At a few points, when Iakotetshén:'en showed a hesitance, others in the group contributed to her re-tell as well. Their collaborative approach was also seamless as learners transitioned from one to the other, but Iakotetshén:'en remained the primary storyteller in this iteration. As she brought the story to a close, the group began cheering, clapping and encouraging Iakotetshén:'en as she completed her re-tell.

Following the re-telling of all three community stories, the women were then sharing family and community stories of how Kahnawà:ke used to be. Together they were reflecting on the history of Kahnawà:ke and how many things have changed in the community, such as the

land, our way of life and more. Their abilities as advanced learners were apparent as they displayed an expanded discourse, speaking in various timeframes on a wide range of topics. The visiting approach flowed naturally as Tsohahí:io shared about how her late aunt's home was built, Kanerahtóntha shared a story about how farm animals roamed free and the others told stories passed down to them as well.

The group also utilized our time visiting with our elder to deepen our understanding of the language within the selected readings. Each of the women came prepared with their notes and ready to pose very specific questions pertaining to language patterns, vocabulary, verb forms, particles, and more with our elder speaker. Throughout the second portion of the visiting session our elder speaker provided feedback while also validating, correcting and modelling authentic use of Kanien'kéha.

The three selected written texts, combined, formed the small corpus for the group to analyze. With a common proficiency level, learners quickly realized that they shared many of the same questions to pose to our elder. They took a morphosyntactic approach for understanding aspects of the language presented within the readings that were either lexical or grammatical in nature. One example is the group's discussion on the meaning and usage of the word *rotirihwaió'te*[35]. The discussion begins with a question to our elder from Ieronhienhá:wi,

Ieronhienhá:wi - [Ok ne] *rotirihwaió'te*?

Kahtehrón:ni - Yeah!

Kanerahtónhta - Ne wakhiá:ton ó:ni!

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[35] Rotirihwaió'te is a noun verb incorporation with two lexical roots, incorporating rotiió'te [they are working] with orì:wa [an issue or matter] meaning they are working on it/something. The pronominal prefix roti- is a pronoun for 3 or more males or a mixed group of male/female.

Wathahí:ne - Í: ó:ni, ne tewakatonhontsó:ni akerihwakétsko ó:ni.

Kaia'ti:io – Né: ken… is that *the work that they were doing*?

Elder - Rotirihwaió'te. Tóka' shi ken… they have a matter. There is some kind of matter that has to be done, and ón:wa'k they're just working on it. Né: rotirihwaió'te ne ahaterihwakwatá:ko, they're fixing that matter. Rotirihwaió'te.

Wathahí:ne – They're working on a matter.

Ieronhienhá:wi – They're working on that matter. OK.

Tsohahí:io – Ok ne… tóka' tkaié:ri ahsí:ron *I'm working on it*?

Elder – Wakerihwaió'te.

Group – Aah! Ok!

Wathtahí:ne – Ok so enwá:ton enhsí:ron onkerihwaió'ten.

Elder – Hen onkerihwaió'ten.

Kahtehrón:ni – Yeah. Iah nowén:ton tewakátston thí:ken… *watió'te tánon orì:wa*.

Wathahí:ne – Í: ó:ni.

Ieronhienhá:wi – Í: ó:ni. Iah tewakateriièn:tarahkwe tsi enwá:ton. Haha! Ioiánere tasawennakhánion.

Kahtehrón:ni – So, tkaié:ri ken tóka akì:ron… *Iakotetshén:'en iakorihwaió'te ne watkèn:se aiehiá:ton*?

Elder – Hen.

Kaia'ti:io – Kawenní:io.

Group – Testing several other examples and elder confirming their attempts at applying the verb.

In this example of *rotirihwaió'te*, the group was most interested with the noun-verb incorporation as we were seeking confirmation of its meaning and applications from our elder. While words with more than one lexical root are very common for Kanien'kéha, the group was surprised to see the verb *to work* incorporated in this way.

An additional verb that was raised for discussion was *kaià:ti*[36]. In this case, the meaning of the verb was not in question, however, the application within the text was the issue. Wathahí:ne was sharing that she understood the word but within the context of the story it was confusing. She was not the only one that was confused by the use of *kaià:ti* when referring to the wampum belt being inside the glass display case. Wathahí:ne begins by saying:

Wathahí:ne - Sok ótia'ke, owenna'shòn:'a wake'nikonhraién:tas, nek tsi iah kwáh tewakenikonhraién:tas tsi nahò:ten kén:ton. Like kahiá:ton… *tsi nikaiá:ti.* Thí:ken kaión:ni, kaiá:ti.

Elder - Tsi nón:we kaiá:ti.

Wathahí:ne - Yep, but like iah tewakateriièn:tarahkwe, like… is it *ióhnhe*?

Kanerahtóntha - Iah nè:'e tsi *ieià:ti.*

Wathahí:ni - But tho ní:tsi kahiá:ton, so I'm like, tsi ni tsi…

Kahtehrón:ni - Oh nontié:ren tsi iah tekahiá:ton ne *í:wa*, ne wa'kataterihwanón:tonhse. Like ne…

Wathahí:ne – Hen.

Kanerahtóntha - It's encased í:kehre.

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[36] Kaià:ti – the body (of it) is in something.

Elder - Wahón:nise tsi ní:tsi rontá:tiskwe. Iah ki wahón:nise, shé:kon tho ní:tsi tewatá:ti. Tho ní:tsi enhontá:ti tsi ní:ioht ne, tóka' ón:kwe én:hontste ne oià:ta - it's like *the body of*. Tho ní:tsi ióhthare, it's the body. Ió:ien ne oià:ta. Kwah tsi nahò:ten, akwé: ió:ien.

Group – Simultaneously all expressing understanding… Aah... Hen... Hmmm.

Kahtehrón:ni - Iah kwah nek ón:kwe? Aaah!

Elder - Iah, iah nek ne ón:kwe té:ken.

Wathahí:ne - Né: wà:kehre, kwah nek ón:kwe.

Ieronhienhá:wi - Í: ó:ni.

Kahtehrón:ni - Yeah, ne wà:kehrek, ón:kwe tóka'ni [tsík nahò:ten] iónhnhe.

Elder - Tsi nahò:ten wakathón:te, kaià:ti ne tsi thó í:wa. Iah tewakateriièn:tare ka'ní:wa nek tsi í:wa. Rather than enhonní:ron tho í:wa, tho kaià:ti.

Group - All expressing understanding again.

This exchange showed that the group's use of the word *kaià:ti* was bound by a limited understanding of its possible applications. The learners were of the understanding that *kaià:ti* was used exclusively for living beings with a body such as people, animals, fish, insects or birds. They also understood that using the noun-verb incorporation *oià:ta + í:wa* was, in fact, required in these cases. It was thought that kaiá:ti did not apply to other inanimate nouns, but the text showed it can be used this way and our elder confirmed this.

During the visiting session both our elder and the learners provided input to support and confirm a collective understanding of various vocabulary items or grammar. Some inquiries led to discussions on dialect differences between speakers from different communities. One example

was centered on the word *enhontstáhsi*[37] from the text (KORLCC, 2017, p.4), the group quickly

provided examples of how it is used and the various tenses they are familiar with.

Kaia'tí:io - Nó:nen thé:nen enhsatstáhsi. When you're done using it.

Tsohahí:io - Ó:nen wakatstáhsi.

Kaia'tiio - Ó:nen wakatstáhsion.

Ieronhienhá:wi – Ó:nen ne kátstha nè:'e tsi Kahsén:note ióntstha, tánon Kanerahtenhá:wi.

Raotihwá:tsire né: róntstha.

Kanerahtontha - Ó:nen ken satstáhsion?

Kaia'tí:io - Onwáhstsi wa'katstáhsi.

Wathahí:ne - Wà:kehre tetiattíhen.

Kahtehrón:ni – Wakatstáhsion.

Wathahí:ne - Wà:kehrek kwah ó:nen'k tsi... wakatia'táhton.

Elder - Enwá:ton shé:kon enhsí:ron ne *shion*, nè:'e tsi é:so teionkwarihwakéhnha ne *shi* tánon

shion. Nì:'i én:katste *shion*.

Group - OK, háo' ki.

Wathahí:ne - Tió:konte ióntstha ne *shion*, yeah.

This conversation on the word *enhontstáhsi* brought clarity in terms of meaning as well as a

dialect difference between Kahnawà:ke and Kanehsatà:ke. The exchange was followed by a

discussion on which speakers use which suffix and from whom each participant learned it.

Tsohahí:io provided additional examples such as *senontékhsion* used by some in Kanehsatà:ke

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[37] *Enhontsáhsi* – he will be done using it.

[remove the lid] and *senontékhsi* in Kahnawà:ke [remove the lid]. Iakotetshén:'en shared that she

is accustomed to using both endings because she works with elder speakers from different

communities. She joked that they feel a need to correct her dialect, so she chooses to use both

depending on who is present.

At the end of each iteration, the learners would habitually summarize the information

together and recap various understandings and meanings. Our elder would also provide a

summary at times. Particularly when there were several tenses and morphemes being discussed,

she preferred to do a short recap for the group. Such was the case following our discussion on the

word *ionsásko [go back there and get it again],* where the group was focused on the

translocative marker '*i'*, then the repetitive '*onsa'*, followed by the various verb tenses. Our elder

summarizes saying

Ionsásko is you go back there and get it again, a command. You are

commanding them. *Iahá:sko*, you're commanding them [singular]. Go get it!

Iah né: shá:ken owén:na. *Saskóha*, go back and get it. *Ionsahá:ko*, he did go

get it again. It is not a command you are telling them he did it.

- Konwaia'torèn:'en, Elder speaker

Although we aimed for our sessions to be aóhskon Onkwehonwehnéha, in her summaries our

elder would sometimes use English to ensure everyone had clarity on the topic.

There were also instances where our elder would summarize gaps she noticed in our

language. She would encourage us to be mindful of how we speak. On one occasion the group

was discussing the verb *ia'shè:nonk* [go call them or get them] and several times she noticed the

group dropping the '*ia*' prefix. She then stressed for us to be attentive to fully completing our words. She cautioned us saying "Tehsatewennoktáhkwa. Ó:nen'k tsi akwé: enhsawén:naren ne owén:na, ó:nen ki' akwé: enio'nikonraienténhton" [You shorten your words. You must fully pronounce the word, in that way it will be completely understood], pointing out the issue with the translocative marker '*ia*'. What our elder was calling attention to was that *shé:nonk* on its own is not a word. It must include the translocative marker because the person to be called or picked up is always at a distance or in an alternate location. She further explained for the group,

> Iah [shè:konk], ia'shè:nonk. Tóhsa tehsawennahará:ko, you don't cut your
> words. Ia'shé:nónk, nè:'e tsi it's over there. Ó:nen'k tsi enhsì:ron '*ia'*. We're
> going to lose that tóka' thó ní:tsi entewatá:ti. Ó:nen'k tsi owennakwé:kon
> énhsatste… shè:nonk is not a word, because you have to go there or its over
> there. There are some words where you have to use that '*ia*'. …nè:'e tsi
> onkwawén:na, it's very specific nó:nen thé:nen nahò:ten sáhthare. It's
> giving you that vision, ka'nón:we kí:ken… nó:nen ónhka shéhró:ri, they can
> see ka'nón:we sahtharáhkwen. - Konwaia'torèn:'en, Elder speaker

Konwaia'torèn:'en often described language in this way, saying Kanien'kéha is very specific and the words a speaker chooses are very thoughtful with the intention of establishing a setting or scene for the listener. Her summaries were not frequent in this session, as she would allow the peer group to carry themselves through their learning process, but when she noticed a need she provided these focused clarifications for the group. With years of experience supporting second

language learners, our elder recognized our abilities in the language and knew strategies to strengthen our understandings of the language.

Throughout the second component of the visiting session, learners used various strategies with our elder to elicit language samples, clarifications and direct translations. Our elder would recast, rephrase and model correct verb forms and vocabulary for the group. She would instinctively provide examples of verb patterns and examples that illustrate vocabulary usage. Often times, when learners would request direct translations of vocabulary, it would lead to expanded discussions based on complex morphological structures or pragmatics.

Discussions on more advanced morphology were ongoing, Kaia'tí:io would often support the group's understanding by building on the elder's examples and conjugating verbs for the benefit of the group. Although the group chose to not focus on using formal linguistic terminology, we still used terms that the group was familiar or comfortable with. Occasionally our elder would acknowledge her learning as well. Here is a short example of the group discussing the command *séhrhek* and Kaia'tí:io sharing her conclusions,

Elder – *Séhrhek*, think it. *Enhséhrheke*, you will think. *Tóhsa séhrhek*, don't think.

Kaia'ti:io - Oh!! Because *íhsehre*, that "*íh*" is just a filler because '*ser*' is too short a word.

Íhsehre. *Séhrhek*, think it! It becomes a command. Alright? Yeah! Right?

(Group laughing)

Wathahí:ne - Tó:ka, you're way above me.

Kanerahtóntha - You're above my paygrade! Hahaha

Wathahí:ne - Yep! Í: ó:ni. Hahaha

Elder - Kenòn:wes tsi niieia'tò:ten, ó:nen ne wa'kahahseró:ten.

Kanerahtóntha – An 'a ha' moment.

Within the peer group, individuals frequently shared their thought processes and new understandings of the language at the end of our learning exchanges.

Occasionally the group struggled to come to an understanding of some verb forms or were challenged concerning vocabulary usage. They would approach the issue using various strategies to elicit examples from our elder. When one strategy would be exhausted the women would transition to another strategy. Here I suggest that we focus on listening to examples from our elder modeling vocabulary in context. She agrees and then requests we provide sample English sentences for her to translate:

Kahtehrón:ni – Tóka' entewatahónhsatate ne a few example sentences. Tó: takwahró:ri [tsi ní:tsi aietewátste].

Elder – Há' ki', takwahsnié:nen ki, tióhrhèn:sha shehró:ri sok Í: takawennaté:ni. Because iah teke'nikonhrastó:re! (laughing)

Ieronhienhá:wi - Enwá:ton ken enkate'nién:ten énska? Iah tewakaterièn:tare tóka' tkaié:ri nek tsi enkate'nién:ten. Enwá:ton ken enhsì:ron…

When the group struggled with understanding a concept, our elder would also suggest a different approach that she felt would help. As in Ieronhienhá:wi's response above, learners would volunteer to take risks and apply new vocabulary in new contexts. As our elder provided explanations of new vocabulary or grammatical concepts, the learners did not hesitate to provide

our elder with samples to verify. They would take turns, giving several tries, until they were satisfied they had a wholistic understanding of the word or phrase.

Throughout the visiting session our elder cautioned us on our use of verb tenses and how we navigated between tenses when speaking. She also stressed that as learners it was important to stay within one tense when the group was collaboratively working towards formulating new understandings. She recognized moments when the group was becoming confused or overwhelmed when testing out too many verb forms simultaneously. She would say "Iah, iah. Tóhsa tehsté:ni because nó:nen sótsi é:so tenhstenión:ko, akwé: you all get mixed up… tsi ní:tsi tetewatewennatenión:ko" [No, no. Don't change it because when you make too many changes, you all get mixed up… the way we are changing the words]. This would often be the case when all seven learners were eager to test their sample phrases and new knowledge.

The peer group of women were often able to formulate understandings when questions about the texts arose. As advanced learners with years of learning experience they were able to provide clarity for one another and collaborate to resolve uncertainties about aspects of the language. However, throughout the project our elder speaker was greatly needed and an invaluable support. Such was the case with the verb *wa'tharihò:roke*[38]. As Iakotetshén:'en put it forward for discussion, the group was incorrect as they offered the literal translation *he covered up the issue/matter*. Together they attempted to use the context of the story as well as their existing knowledge to infer meaning. Our elder disagreed with our inferences; however, she did not have an English equivalent to offer. In an attempt to provide clarity of the meaning, she motioned by shrugging with her shoulder to try to help the group understand:

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[38] Wa'tharihó:roke – he disregarded it.

Elder - Nó:nen ken' náhsiere (shrugging her shoulder). Tehserihó:roke. (Laughing) Tó:ka. Oh

ní:tsi tensewennaté:ni thi:? (Laughing)

Wathahí:ne - Shrugged it?

Ieronhienhá:wi - He shrugged it off?

Elder - He could have, but there's probably a better way ne sénha aiesewa'nikonhraién:ta'ne. Nek

ne wa'tharihó:roke, (showing that she is shrugging). Nó:nen ónhka taierihó:roke, they're just

gonna (shrugging her shoulders again), thó: naié:iere. Iah thaié:ren thé:nen, iah thé:nen

aiesahró:ri. Kwah nék ne they go around about the matter.

Kahtehrón:ni – Man, wà:kehre *'he covered up the issue'*, literally.

Ieronhienhá:wi - Né: Í: wà:kehre ó:ni.

Kaia'tí:io - That's the literal eh? Nék tsi iáhten.

Elder - Iáhten. Kwah ne ne wa'tharihó:roke (shrugging her shoulders again)

Kanerahtóntha - (Texting her husband for his insight) Kahrhó:wane wahèn:ron *'he was against it'*

Kaia'tí:io - It makes sense in this context.

Elder - It's more like he shrugged it off, yeah, it's more like that (shrugging). Tho náhsiere tánon

iah thahsró:ri nothé:nen. Because nó:nen thé:nen nahò:ten, nek ne tho nénhsiere iah thahsathró:ri

ne thé:nen. Kwah nek ne tenhsatkwatá:se ne orì:wa, iah téhsehre thé:nen nahsí:ron.

Wathahí:ne - He avoided it.

Elder - Yeah, kind of like that.

This passage shows how idioms can be challenging for learners to derive meaning

without a first language speaker. It is also a reminder that as advanced learners the group still

requires opportunities for ongoing vocabulary building and exposure to new vocabulary in

various contexts. Importantly, as Kanerahtóntha showed by texting her husband, there are superior second language speakers who are very capable to support advanced learners as well.

The most notable challenge of the evening for the group and our elder was concerning the verb *kenién:te*[39] found within the first story Kaión:ni (KORLCC, 2017, p 4). It highlighted that, although the group understood the meaning, they were unclear how to incorporate it into their own lexicon and apply it in various everyday contexts. The discussion took many twists and turns as the seasoned learners applied numerous elicitation strategies. Learners requested examples of word use, conjugated into various tenses, attempted to apply various grammar rules, discussed synonyms, and listened to many examples from our elder. The group was determined to reach a breakthrough and after much effort and many attempts, finally were successful.

After a dialogue of just over 30 minutes surrounding the verb *kenién:te*, the group agreed that we would continue studying it independently and follow up in various ways. The extensive discussion surrounding the verb *kenién:te* reminded us that language learners at all levels can face extremely challenging moments, and it is not always a smooth process even with an experienced peer group. It was also an example of how despite having texts, peer support, and knowledge of grammar and morphology, a first language speaker is crucial to advanced levels of learning.

The group wrapped up the visiting session with a few final words for translation from our elder and casual conversations around the table. I closed the session, thanking everyone and encouraging them to continue working with the stories as we prepared for the following week. The women were laughing and joking as they were washing any remaining dishes and tidying up

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[39] *Kenién:te* [I am here for the purpose of something] was discussed; however the verb form in the original text is *ratinién:te* [they are here for the purpose of something].

our space. Everyone was in good spirits, saying it was a good session and they were happy to be speaking Kanien'kéha and learning together again.

Extending, Reviewing and Peer Sharing

As with each unit, we concluded the first pilot approach with individual knowledge sharing and reflections on the learning approach. The purpose of this component of the unit was to have the group review and extend their learning following the visiting session with our elder. The learners were to share new knowledge they gained through the text-based learning approach and elder feedback, focusing on one or two components with their peer group.

With snacks set out and the group[40] gathered around the table, I opened the session with an agenda for the evening. I provided a brief recap of the learning plan, reminding the group that we would begin by sharing what we learned from the approach and putting the evaluative rubric tool into practice for the first time. It was exciting that we would be bringing our first pedagogical approach to a close that evening. The process unfolded as a natural conversation, as the group did not hesitate to begin discussing their experiences with the learning approach as well as their strategies for extending their learning.

Kanerahtóntha began by sharing that she was always thinking about the project we were carrying out together as advanced learners. Kanerahtóntha's approach to extending her learning was through a reflective practice where she spent a lot of time reflecting on the stories and thinking about all the things our elder taught us. She was thinking about using the verb *kaià:ti* in various contexts and reviewing applications of translocative markers '*ia'* and '*ien*'. Her method

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[40] Iakotetshén:'en was not well so could not attend; however, she shared her feedback through her reflective learning journal and by completing the evaluative rubric on her own. The rest of the group was present and continued as planned.

of extending and reviewing also had her in the mindset of a learner once again. She shared that it brought her back to when she began as a student in the adult immersion program saying, "everything around me seems more vibrant, more alive." The group was agreeing, saying they noticed that change as well.

Kaia'tí:io shared that her main focus for extending and reviewing was on the particles. She shared her motivation, saying "wa'káttoke tsi ótia'ke iah só:tsi tekátstha… tanon wa'káttoke tsi akwé: tetiattíhen tsi ní:tsi wá:hontste sók kwah tokèn:'en wakka'én:ion" [I noticed that I don't use some of them so much… and I noticed that they all used them differently, so then I took a closer look at it]. She reviewed each of the three selected texts from Old Kahnawà:ke (KORLCC) and did a comparison of the how the three speakers use different particles based on their style of speaking.

The second area of focus for Kaia'tí:io was on the verb *kenién:te* where she reviewed it by reflecting on her notes and getting clarifications from her grandfather, saying "wa'tiakenithá:ren ne rakhsótha ó:ni tánon sénha wahake'nikonhraientáhsten tsi ní:tsi ioió'te" [I spoke with my grandfather as well and he helped me better understand how it works]. Following their discussions, she made verb charts and then shared them with the peer group. She shared some of the clarifications her grandfather provided:

Rakhsótha wahèn:ron ne ne iá:we ne *wahanién:te*, enwá:ton ó:ni nahsí:ron wahèn:ron, nék tsi raónha wahèn:ron tsi én:ratste sénha ne *wahonnien'tónhne* - he had gone there for the purpose of it. Tánon ó:ni… tóka' thó: iénhse, your on your way there kwah ó:nen'k, *wa'kenien'ténhne.*

Ken nonkwá: habitual *kenién:tes*, future *enkenién:te*, optative *akenién:te*. So

nè:'e wa'kón:ni, enwá:ton éntewatste. So it's all in there. – Kaia'tí:io Barnes

The group was appreciative of the review and clarifications provided by Kaia'tí:io. They

discussed how we are fortunate to have access to the different speakers who can clarify and

expand our understandings of Kanien'kéha. They provided different perspectives that build a

wholistic understanding of vocabulary and concepts.

Ieronhienhá:wi felt that, because she works with first language speakers daily, she was

"hyper focused" on listening for all the vocabulary and particles the group covered within our

sessions. One particle that stuck out to her was *iá:ken* [it is said]. She was paying attention to

how it was being used in natural conversations. She shared that the particle "*iá:ken*, [translates

to] *it is said*. But really it's used when you're not sure because you weren't there, or you don't

remember it, but you're not doubting it." Ieronhienhá:wi described how her time working with

elders has shifted, saying that prior to being part of the research group "I'm listening, I'm

understanding, I'm speaking back, but I'm not analyzing every single word that they're saying."

Her process of reviewing and extending was building on the previous peer group sessions where

she was "looking at the story, talking about it and discussing it, and then being in the presence of

a speaker, they're using *iá:ken*, now I'm paying more attention." She shared that through the

learning process she is much more "conscientious" as a language learner when interacting with

Kanien'kéha speakers.

Having the group's shared google drive as well as her mother's support was helpful for

Wathahí:ne as she was reviewing and extending her learning. She felt her main challenge was

conjugating some of the new verbs from the selected stories, so she focused on the verb *ionsásko*

to extend her learning. She conjugated the verb for the peer group, listing it in the shared google document. She also reported that her main approach was focused on applying what she learned and speaking more in the home with her mother. She stated that "ó:nenk tsi sénha akà:ronke… né: takatáhsawen, skátne ake'nihsténha" [it is imperative that I speak more [Kanien'kéha]… that's what I started to do, with my mother].

When reviewing the texts, Tsohahí:io shared that she was able to understand the stories and felt as though she can even hear the elders telling it in their voices. She shared that she preferred to learn Onkwehonwehnéha by listening to other speakers and can easily pick it up, paying attention to how they use certain words in context. Learning in that way, she realized that she had "missed a lot of the ken'nikawenná:sas[41]." She enjoyed coming together with the group to learn using the prescribed method because the group would draw attention to words that she otherwise would have just passed over. She was noticing more about the language, saying "there's parts that you guys pick up and I think, *hey I didn't even notice that*."

It was difficult to choose only a few points to share with the peer group, as I had really enjoyed all the topics we had covered together. I had decided to focus on extending and reviewing the verb *kenién:te* by listening to our recorded peer group sessions. As I listened to the recordings, I compiled all the examples our elder had provided as well as the correct attempts made by the group. I also shared my notes in a google document created for group sharing. Listening to the session was amazing, as it brought me right back to our group visiting around the table. I was able to hear how we were building our collective understanding, discussing how we were thinking about the language together. Using the recording from the visiting session, I

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[41] *Ken'nikawenná:sas* means small words or particles.

also listed and studied the verb *enionkhí:ni* that the peer group had conjugated with some help from our elder.

An additional verb I reviewed was *rotirihwaió'te*. I really liked the incorporation and wanted to ensure I continue using it. I practiced applying the verb to relevant situations, and I shared some of my examples with the group saying "Iakotetsén:'en Kanien'kéha Reading Assessment iakorihwaió'te, Kanien'kéha cookbook iakorihwaió'te ne Ieronhienhá:wi, tánon curriculum wakerihwaió'te" [Iakotetsén:'en is working on the Kanien'kéha Reading Assessment, Ieronhienhá:wi is working on a Kanien'kéha cookbook, I am working on curriculum]. Others also reviewed the verb *rotirihwaió'te* and stated they enjoyed hearing the examples I had provided. Through this sharing process we were able to validate that we were growing as learners by implementing the learning approach.

Unit One Summary, Evaluation and Feedback

Following the peer sharing component of the evening, the group transitioned to assessing the unit plan using the evaluative rubric (see Appendix 2). The group discussed each criterion as they reflected on their experiences piloting the learning strategies. The group felt that the learning approach was suited for advanced level learners and expressed that it was accessible, yet challenging enough to help scaffold their proficiency. Although it was only a four-week pilot, they expect that it would have greater impacts if it was implemented over a longer period of time.

The group shared that having the learning plan provided them with guidance and direction, while the clear tasks supported them to focus their individual learning. When considering the learning targets, the group felt the targets provided in the unit plan were clear.

They appreciated having the guiding questions for the independent study activities and noted that including additional guiding questions connected to the tasks could be helpful in the future. The learners also affirmed that the unit supported them to expand their knowledge of Kanien'kéha grammar, morphology and new vocabulary, saying they had to think in the language to analyze, understand, reflect and summarize their learning.

The learners emphasized that the peer discussions with our elder and having her consistent support was invaluable. Each of them felt Konwaia'torèn:'en's participation was truly an asset to the success of the pilot. Her patience and experience working with Kanien'kéha language learners helped the group feel comfortable to ask questions and share within the peer group. The chosen theme of the unit connected us to our community history and our elder often shared her knowledge as well. The group was comfortable engaging in natural conversations and storytelling. They shared that it felt like a natural way of learning. They expressed that the unit was very engaging, with meaningful content, and the selected text was a strength of the project as well.

The participants provided feedback throughout the piloting process, suggesting various ways the unit could be improved upon. The first suggestions were concerning the language used within the unit plan. Because of the curriculum-focused discourse, those unfamiliar with curriculum development needed to be carefully guided through the text. The group felt the unit plan could be revised to be written in more lay terms, so it could be readily accessible to learners beyond this research project. They recommended that the discourse within the pilot's evaluative rubric be revisited as well.

Although the unit provided helpful methods for analysing the texts, the participants felt the unit could be improved by adding an additional resource to help learners to do this in their

independent study. A Kanien'kéha reference grammar to support learners when verifying transitive pronouns or conjugating verbs in various stems and tenses was suggested to accompany the unit. A second tool was suggested to help learners with organizing new vocabulary. Learners are concerned with having lists of vocabulary and feel that a unique method or visual tool can be helpful to organize and review new vocabulary.

All the participants felt the unit was successful, because they were very engaged as learners and the strategies helped them improve their language skills within the short timeframe of the piloting process. It was suggested that the unit and strategies be implemented over a longer period of time for learners to fully benefit from the learning plan. In this way, proficiency assessments could be used to measure progress and impacts of the learning strategies.

As the developer of the unit, there were also two additional strategies I would add to the unit. The first is in regard to one participant's feedback saying she is sometimes embarrassed to ask for clarifications or to say she struggled to understand the meaning of some words in our group discussions. To remedy this, I would add in peer group norms intended to acknowledge learners' feelings of vulnerability and to foster a safe and encouraging space for all learners to ask questions.

The second unit upgrade I would make is to highlight the recorded sessions as a key resource. I recommend that peer learning groups record all their learning sessions, especially those where their elder speakers are participating. The recordings become an invaluable resource for reviewing and extending our learning. Strategies would include listening to conversations and reviewing elder speakers providing clarifications, examples and stories. The recordings can also be shared with learners who may not have access to a peer group or to first language speakers in the future.

The next sections describe the second unit that was validated and piloted by the peer group of women. It provides insights on how learners engaged in an audio-visual approach learning approach and sheds light on how our elder speaker supported the peer group learning. Dialogue from the transcriptions are used to highlight key findings.

Unit Two: Tewaterò:rok Tsi Iakokaratónnion – Analyzing Audio Visual Sources to Retell and Discuss Community Stories

The second unit of study piloted focused on applying an audio-visual approach with the advanced group of Kanien'kéha learners. The peer group of women were to examine how listening and analyzing audio visual resources can help advanced learners progress in their language learning. The plan, as seen in Appendix 4, followed a very similar design to the first, also a four-week plan. It aimed for a wholistic learning approach by including strategies focused on advanced level language forms and functions. Once again, the unit included strategies for collaborative peer group learning as well as for independent learning. As with all the units, the learners were to maximize opportunities for elder supported learning.

The following sections provide an overview of the unit, including the learning targets, objectives and learning strategies for the audio-visual approach. Following the description of the unit plan I provide an account of how the participants engaged in collaborative learning and how they applied the independent study strategies. Excerpts from the group discussions have also been included to illustrate moments of focused language learning and to call attention to how our elder speaker supported the group's language development. The section concludes with a summary and reflections on the unit plan.

Unit Overview- Elder Storytelling of Community Life, Change and Resilience

A uniform design was used for all units of study within the project. The theme for the second unit of study (see Appendix 4) was Elder Storytelling of Community Life, Change and Resilience. This theme proved to be truly engaging for the peer group of learners. It provided them with a wide-ranging topic and inspired learners to listen, share and discuss stories about history, community and family life in Kahnawà:ke and beyond.

The **Learning Objectives** were once again developed to include both a structural and communicative approach as defined within the Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Centric Pedagogy (see Figure 1, p. 63). It explained the objectives of the unit so that learners would be able to:

- Develop their vocabulary by **listening and analyzing audio visual storytelling** and documenting lexical groupings/themes including Rotinonhsión:ni cultural understandings and meanings.

- Refine their use of past, present and future timeframes by analyzing more complex grammatical structures to explain and apply this new knowledge with peers.

- Discuss experiences, community stories and cultural knowledge with peers through natural conversation using new vocabulary and appropriate timeframes.

- Summarize and share cultural stories, oral history and knowledge with grammatical accuracy and fluency.

The unit also defined the **pedagogical approaches** for the group to pilot in order to achieve these learning objectives. Focused on learning from audio-visual resources, the strategies were to be applied through independent study, group visiting with our elder, extension and review, and final group reflections and sharing. Each pedagogical approach included opportunities for learners to

focus on both the forms and functions of Kanien'kéha, while defining the learning activities for them to engage in.

Independent Study – Viewing and Listening for Understanding with Content Analysis. The unit plan began with participants learning by applying independent study approaches. Unique to this second unit, learners would begin with a focus on understanding the material by watching and listening to the selected audio-video resource. While viewing, they were to note interesting phrases and vocabulary, including timestamps so they could revisit the utterances later. Learners were prompted with options to focus on vocabulary, verb forms and morphology used by the elders in the video. Finally, they were to note parts of the elders' speech that they understood but recognized as currently above their level of proficiency. The unit called for the learners to consider the following general questions to help guide their learning:

- What do you notice?

- What was easy to understand?

- What parts of their speech or word use make it difficult to understand?

- How can you use these verb forms or particles in your own speech?

- What contexts call for the use of these particles?

The questions were open-ended once again, to allow for differentiation for this peer group of advanced learners.

To solidify their understanding of the stories, the learners were to watch or listen to the video a second time. With their notebook handy, they were to do this while tending to daily tasks

such as cooking, doing beadwork, folding laundry or washing dishes. While listening, they were to also focus on oral production by repeating vocabulary and phrases they were noting. This approach was included in response to participants expressing that it is often challenging to find time to study when they have many work, community, familial and other responsibilities.

In preparation for the peer group visiting session with our elder, each learner was to create an abstract for the video by summarizing it into three sentences and providing four key words to best represent the themes within the stories. The learners had one week to apply these independent learning strategies to reach the learning objectives for the unit.

Elder Visiting – Conversations and Clarifications. The second week of the unit shifted from independent learning to peer group learning with an invited elder speaker. It would once again be divided into two main activities. The first component of the visiting session was focused on a natural conversation approach where the group would discuss the stories and themes within the video. They would also be able to draw upon the abstract they developed if needed. The main objective was natural conversation connected to the theme of the unit.

The next portion of the visiting session with our elder would be an opportunity for learners to elicit feedback based on the challenging vocabulary, phrases or morphology encountered within the selected audio-visual resource. The peer group would use various elicitation strategies so that our elder speaker could provide feedback as well as validate, correct and model authentic use of Kanien'kéha.

Independent Study – Reviewing and Extending. Building upon the visiting session with our elder, the peer group would then transition back to an independent study approach. This

time the goal would be on reviewing and extending what we learned from the whole group session. Learners were prompted to review the application of various grammatical forms, patterns, and how they can be applied in their everyday speech. They were to select one or two examples of what they learned through the unit to share back to the peer group and explain how it would help to improve their overall spoken proficiency.

Peer Learning and Reflections. To bring the unit to a close, to group would do a collaborative review of the unit by sharing what they learned through the various learning approaches. Each learner would explain and demonstrate a language component they explored and provide examples of how it is applied in various contexts. This would also be a reflective practice, as learners would also share how this new knowledge has made them a better Kanien'kéha speaker.

The Resources - Oral Storytelling Videos

For the audio-visual learning approach, resources were selected from the Ionkwaronkha'onhátie[42] Elder's Storytelling Project. The collection of resources is comprised of several audio-visual recordings of first language Kanien'kéha speakers sharing various stories on a variety of topics. Ionkwahronkha'onhátie created the collection in order to provide an open access video resource for second language learners of Kanien'kéha that is readily available on YouTube. The participants would be presented with a number of videos to choose from for this unit of study.

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[42] Ionkwahronkha'onhátie is a grassroots initiative initiated by a group of second language speakers who are dedicated to creating spaces and resources to support advanced level Kanien'kéha language learning (Jimmerson, 2021).

The following sections describe how the peer group of women implemented the second unit for this study. It recounts their learning experiences, interactions and discussions pertaining to the prescribed learning strategies. It also includes feedback on the selected resource and highlight the integral role of elder support for advanced level language learning. Dialogues are used to place emphasis on important aspects of their language learning experiences and to show how the group centered their efforts through the theme of Elder Storytelling of Community Life, Change and Resilience.

Ska'nikòn:ra Wa'akwá:ton – Affirming Learning Approaches and Activities for Unit 2

I was excited to share the second unit I had developed for the project, as I anticipated the women would enjoy learning through the audio-visual approach. The start of the second unit marked the fifth week of our research pilot and I felt good about how the project was progressing. I noticed the group had also become more comfortable engaging with the research processes with each passing week.

Since we planned to have an early evening session, I decided to cook a Kahnawà:ke style boiled dinner for the group. I went out to the gardens that afternoon to pick fresh yellow string beans and Kahnawà:ke Pole Beans for the meal. As I walked past the bushes of Mohawk Red Beans, I picked a few even though I knew they were a little over-ripe. I thought I would add them to the pot so we can compare this bean with the other varieties that we commonly use in boiled dinner. When the food was ready, my youngest son brought it out to my truck and I was off to the Longhouse to launch another round of guided language learning.

As the women arrived each of them took their regular seat around the table. Everyone was speaking Kanien'kéha and we were all being sure to keep it aóhskon Kanien'kéha along with

our elder. It was uplifting to hear everyone just naturally speaking Kanien'kéha and visiting with one another. We were catching up, talking about things such as work, gardens, children, and even international events, including the pope's controversial visit to Canada to deliver an apology. There was surely a lot of discussion on that topic and nobody seemed to find peace with the issue.

With the group conversing on a wide range of topics as we shared the meal together, it was a very relaxed atmosphere. It was appropriate to just enjoy spending time with everyone and visit in the language instead of interrupting to introduce the next unit of study. It was clear that sitting and sharing a meal was in important part of our language learning. As we ate, I told them about my adventures in the garden and how I added the additional bean variety to compare it to the others. I pointed out that those green beans were a little stringy, just as I had predicted. I asked Konwaia'torèn:'a how to say they were over-ripe and she replied "iohká:rare", meaning *they have a woody texture*[43]. She said it is iohká:rare because of its stringy texture. We spent a moment talking about that word and how it can be applied to different situations. I felt grateful I cooked that meal, and appreciated how it added to our learning.

The conversations and stories flowed in Kanien'kéha for the majority of the evening with our elder supporting us when needed. Since we only had thirty minutes remaining, I transitioned the group's attention to the new unit we would be piloting. I introduced each section of the unit and the group validated and accepted the plan without any additions or modifications. The

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[43] Our elder offered the word *iohká:rare* to describe the over-ripe beans, saying I waited too long to pick those ones. I had assumed it meant *over-ripe* and found my assumption was incorrect. Still unsure, I had followed-up later for clarification and it was shared that *iohká:rare* "has the same noun root for grain of wood, *iotahkaraién:ton* it is a heavy/twisty wood, like elm wood. *Tehotahkarotáhrhon* - he's tough like the grain of wood [is another example of its use]" (Kahrhó:wane Cory McComber, personal communication, August 5, 2022).

women were familiar with the components of the second unit, as it followed the same format as the first. They expressed that they were looking forward to piloting the audio-visual approach.

I then presented several video resources we might use for the study by sharing a brief description of each. The group discussed and selected the recording with Alice McDonald and Elizabeth Sunday (Ionkwahronkha'onhátie, 2022), two elder speakers from Akwesasne, Mohawk Territory. They were unanimous in the decision, stating that they appreciated that two women would be featured. They shared that it felt appropriate because our peer group consisted of all women and they wanted to explore how that may impact their learning through this approach. This would prove to be beneficial throughout the piloting of the second unit.

The group had positive feedback while the second unit was being introduced and I was relieved to hear them express their excitement to watch the video and to continue learning through the pilot project. They were looking forward to applying the new strategies and shared how they were inspired by the project to push themselves in their learning. They were discussing different learning styles and anticipated that they would enjoy the audio-visual approach. As the evening came to a close, the group was back to telling stories and talking about the week ahead.

That evening it was clear how, for this group of women, our research is so closely connected to our way of being and doing in our everyday lives. From preparing the meal with homegrown foods to talking in Kanien'kéha about how things are going with our families, the research and our everyday lives were all inter-twined. Tsohahí:io's daughter, sitting with us in our sessions, added to that sha'oié:ra way of doing things. Such a patient little one, listening to us sharing a meal, and watching us working in the language. We enjoyed being together; we created a supportive environment, learning, sharing, laughing and sometimes struggling towards our

goals of becoming better speakers. I was enjoying the journey and it was uplifting to be in the learner's seat once again.

The following sections describe how the peer group of learners applied the learning approaches detailed in the unit plan. Their feedback provided valuable insights based on their reflective journals, evaluative rubrics and peer group discussions.

Independent Learning Strategies for Audio Visual Resources

As described in the unit plan, the independent study began with a focus on understanding, then analyzing, the selected video resource. All the participants, including our elder, watched the video of Alice McDonald and Elizabeth Sunday (Ionkwahronkha'onhátie, 2022) sharing stories. The learners reported watching and listening to the video several times and that they enjoyed learning and analyzing language though this approach. They also simply listened to the stories for the enjoyment and appreciation of hearing Kanien'kéha storytelling by two elder speakers.

The learners felt it was easy to navigate the video and to re-listen as needed. It was accessible to view, or one could just listen to the audio. All the participants agreed that they connected to the stories and history shared by the two speakers. Tsohahí:io echoed the sentiments of the group, saying that when studying the video "tsi ne shi thó: kitskó:tahkwe skátne thí: tekenón:kwe" [it was as though I was sitting right there with the two women].

Reflecting on the independent learning strategies, Kanerahtóntha shared that she began by casually viewing the video before attempting to analyze any specific components of the language. Following the initial viewing of the video, she watched it again with a closer focus on certain aspects of the language used in the video. Wathahí:ne described a similar process, saying that she immediately enjoyed listening to the recordings and that she understood the stories

shared by the elders in the video. As indicated in the learning plan, all the learners began their

independent learning with a focus on understanding the stories followed by a more focused

analysis of various components of the language.

Wathahí:ne noted that she favored the audio-visual learning approach because she was

able to watch, listen and re-listen to the video. Hearing the elder women sharing their stories

inspired her to keep studying, and, although she recognized the value of learning through written

texts, she felt the audio-visual resource was an easier medium than the text-based approach in the

previous unit. Tsohahí:io agreed, saying "Kwah tokèn:'en é:so onkonwéskwen, ísi' nón:we ne

akewennahnó:ton ne oká:ra" [I really enjoyed it more than to read a story]. This point was

echoed by the other participants as they expressed a preference for the second learning approach.

Tsohahí:io summarized her independent learning experience, saying it was very

enjoyable, and easier for her to learn by listening than through a text-based approach. Reflecting

on her learning, she shared that

> É:so nì: onkonwéskwen kí:ken, nè:'e tsi wá:kehre tsi sénha watié:sen
>
> akatahónhsatate tánon enwá:ton... enhskáhkete tóka thé:nen iah
>
> tewake'nikonhraientà:'on tóka' thé:nen iah kwah tewakathontè:'on ne orì:wa.
>
> Sók ne ó:ni wa'káttoke tsi sénha watié:sen enwatéta ó:ni. Haha like
>
> owenna'shòn:'a. Tsi ne shi shé:kon wakathón:te tsi ní:tsi tekenithá:ren… .Tánon
>
> í:kehre sénha, tsi ni' nì:'i wakeweientehta'onhátie ne owén:na, sénha watié:sen
>
> akatahónhsatate tóka'ni akaterò:roke. I learn better through listening and
>
> watching, tsi ní:ioht ne akewennahnò:ten tió'k nahò:ten.

Tsohahí:io's experience illustrates how the participants maintained their preferred learning styles; however, they were very willing to experiment with other modes of language learning as outlined within the unit.

Iakotetshén:'en also enjoyed the approach; however, she reiterated that her strength was learning through reading and writing as in the text-based approach. She explained that she preferred the reading approach because she can determine the pace by breaking the text up in to manageable sections to think, reflect and then write. She felt the independent audio-visual learning was challenging, having too many distractions with using the earphones on her device, and too many activities taking place around her at home. Her strategy was to transcribe the video and study from the written text. Ieronhienhá:wi also shared that she had also some challenges with watching the video. She felt it was easier to just listen to the audio without watching the video, so listening while driving was her solution.

Considering that time was reportedly a constraint for the peer group, the unit called for the learners to study independently by re-listening or viewing the video while tending to various daily tasks such as cooking or doing beadwork. Several of the participants used their time to listen to the recording while commuting to work or travelling. Ieronhienhá:wi reported that she listened to the recording several times and shared that she enjoyed learning by listening to the audio while driving. Tsohahí:io agreed that it was very enjoyable to listen to the women's stories while travelling. She shared that it was easy to listen because it was interesting and the sound was very clear in the car to hear each spoken word. I also listened to the recording while travelling. I found the content very interesting so I translated it to my partner so he could understand. That was when I realized how much history was embedded throughout the stories.

As per the recommended individual learning strategies, learners focused their studies on significant vocabulary, phrases and grammar within the audio-visual resource. They documented their areas of focus and noted timestamps to make it easier for reviewing the language samples when needed. Additional strategies were also applied by individual learners as exemplified by Iakotetshén:'en's learning approach. She listened to the videos several times and, using her strengths as a learner, she wrote very detailed transcriptions to help her better understand the stories shared within the video.

The audio-visual learning approach led learners to focus on various features of the language during their independent study. Lexical development was central for the each of the participants as they engaged in this second unit of study. The learners noted a multitude of vocabulary items used by the two elder speakers as they discussed a variety of topics including playing in the woods, farm life, raising families, and history. The group would later present the vocabulary for clarifications with our elder, or discuss vocabulary that invoked deeper understandings of the language with peers.

Through the audio-visual learning approach, the participants were also attentive to the speaking styles of the elder women. The learners viewed the video, noting how the two elders were very descriptive in their style of speaking as they would draw the listener into their stories. Wathahí:ne shared that the video analysis was beneficial for hearing vocabulary in context, as well as for hearing the two elders' style of speaking with very descriptive word choices. She added that because she was accustomed to speaking and learning primarily with her mother, it was initially challenging to adapt to how they spoke in the video; however, once she adjusted she understood them much more easily. Kanerahtóntha really liked the video we selected to analyze

because of the mannerisms of the two elder women featured in the video. The group agreed, as she recounted how they spoke with a calm and very respectful nature.

As the learners were engaged in their independent studies, they were becoming more aware of their needs as advanced Kanien'kéha learners. All participants surpassed the recommended study time once again and were well prepared for the peer-learning and visiting with our elder speaker. This was evident through the group discussions, as questions about vocabulary and various grammatical concepts were raised.

Visiting, Storytelling and Elder Support

The visiting session for the second unit was filled with stories, laughter and discussions on a multitude of topics. As the women arrived everyone was chatting in Kanien'kéha and catching up as we were getting settled in. My daughter stopped in to drop off snacks that evening. She offered to help knowing I was a little overwhelmed with tasks that day. Everyone greeted her warmly and thanked her before she left us to our work. It was nice to hear her speak Kanien'kéha with the women as she returned their warm greetings.

For our visiting session with our elder, we were scheduled to discuss the video we watched and analyzed. To help guide the process, the unit plan called for each of us to provide four key words to describe the resource. The majority of the group did not follow the plan as presented; however, they arrived prepared to share stories, discuss the content of the video and present any subject matter they hoped to clarify with our elder. The first part of the visiting session followed a natural visiting approach where the group was sharing food, recalling childhood memories and telling stories on many topics.

The resource certainly brought the theme of the unit to life as it prompted many stories throughout the visiting session. The video resource was the center of our discussion, as Kanerahtóntha began by saying she greatly enjoyed the video because of the content and themes. The group was unanimous as they enthusiastically praised the resource and the elders featured in the video. Kanerahtóntha also expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to watch and listen to two women sharing their life experiences in Kanien'kéha.

The group felt the selected resource was integral to the success and enjoyment of the audio-visual learning approach. Our elder was especially impressed with the resource, as one of the speakers was her cousin who shared stories that reminded her of many childhood memories. Kanerahtóntha really enjoyed the video because they spoke about topics relative to her everyday family life, such farming and raising animals. I noted that I appreciated the oral history they shared, and that I related to their stories because it brought back many memories of how I grew up on the land, in the woods and in the gardens with family. All the learners related to the stories of the two elder women in the video, saying they brought up many memories for them.

Our elder shared her thoughts about why our peer group of women made many connections to the stories and experiences of the elder speakers in the video.

> Á:kehre nó:nen skátne sewaká:raton ne konnón:kwe, akwé:
> sha'tewanonhtonnionhtsherò:ten. Akwé:kon sha'té:iot tsi ní:tsi
> tewanonhtónnions, tánon iah tesatshé:iaron nahò:ten ahsí:ron tsi nonkwá:ti
> ne konnón:kwe. Nè:'e tsi akwé:kon ne sha'onkwa'nikòn:ra. Akwé:
> ionkwawí:raien, akwé:kon sha'té:iot tsi ní:tsi tewaterihwa'tetià:tha ne
> kanónhskon, akwé: thóha sha'tewaia'tò:ten. Ne rón:kwe ó:ia ki nè:'e

nihotirihò:ten. É:so kwi nè:'e átste nonkwá:ti roió'te tánon iah ne

sha'ka'nikòn:ra té:ken. Tetewattíhen. - Konwaia'torèn:'en Deer, Elder

speaker

In this passage our elder explained that women generally share many of the same life

experiences, which makes the stories in the video very relatable. She also elaborated, saying that

men and women have differences because of their different responsibilities and life experiences

in community.

As mentioned previously, Kanerahtóntha observed how the two elders in the video were

soft spoken with a very respectful discourse. The group agreed with her observations, and our

elder elaborated about how that level of respect when speaking Kanien'kéha is beginning to fade.

Konwaia'torèn:'en encouraged the group to always speak respectfully and she reminded us that,

culturally, there are things that women talk about amongst ourselves that we should be mindful

not to discuss when men are present. She elaborated, saying that

Iah kwi konnón:kwe aotirihwahswá:tha sathróia'te ne raohén:ton. Tho

niiohtón:ne wahón:nise… .nek tsi tho ní:tsi teiotonhontsóhon akénhake,

nè:'e tsi karihwakwennienhstátshera iohtonhátie. Né:e aorì:wa

ioton'onhátie, nè:'e tsi iah thé: tetesewatsteríhstha ónhka nahò:ten aié:ron.

Ó:nen'k tsi entewaten'nikón:raren tsi ní:tsi tewatá:tis.

                                        - Konwaia'torèn:en Deer, Elder speaker

She continued, saying we must also be mindful of how we speak when children are present,

Tánon nó:nen skátne ratikhsa'okón:'a tetiattíhen ni' nè:'e. Nó:nen ekhsà:'a

kén: í:iens, tóhsa entewathróia'te nahò:ten ne ekhsà:'a eniakothón:te'ne

tánon só:tsi niiakà:'a shé:kon. Ne ni í:ken, é:so tsi ienonhtónnions

tánon iah árokh thia'kaié:ri tsi tiakó:ien ne aieia'tó:rehte. Ó:nen'k tsi

ieia'tó:rehte ne tsi nitiótte ne ekhsà:'a. So, thó: ní:tsi teiottenionhátie.

- Konwaia'torèn:'en Deer, Elder speaker

As an elder supporting many language learners throughout the community, she notices that a

high level of respect when speaking Kanien'kéha is not as present as it was in the past. She

encouraged the group to be mindful of this part of our culture as Onkwehón:we, saying that

together as speakers, we can maintain that high level of respect.

As we were visiting that evening there was a lot of discussion about change, changing

times and language change. Ieronhienhá:wi asked our elder if she felt our group was over

analyzing the language. Konwaia'torèn:'en replied no because she feels it is important for us to

really analyze the language to ensure we are using it correctly; otherwise, the language will

change greatly. She shared that sometimes new speakers use vocabulary in the wrong context

because they do not have a full understanding of how it could be applied. Because of this, she

noticed that the language is already beginning to change.

É:so'k nà:'a teiottenionhátie. Tánon ó:nen'k tsi í:se entsisewakwatá:ko ne

onkwawenna'shòn:'a. Enkwahsnié:nen tsi ní:kon ionkwakwénion ne tsi

niionkwátion shé:kon eniakwakwé:ni. Né: ki' aorí:wa tóhsa nowén:ton

setshá:nik serihwanón:ton. Tánon é:so sewateriién:tare tsi ní:tsi

sewateweienhstonhátie ka'niká:ien tkawennaié:ri. Tho ní:tsi

enhsa'nikonhraién:ta'ne. Ne ki' nì:'i tió:konte khehró:ris. Nè:'e tsi tóka

akwé: okáhsere owén:na tánon sa'nikonhraién:tas ne ki' tkawennaié:ri.

Nè:'e tsi é:so ken'shitewatión:ha akwé:kon... .akwé:kon

sha'teionkwa'nikonhraién:tas, iah thé: teiontierá:ne ne thó: shikahá:wi, But

ne nón:wa iontié:ren nè: tsi ón:wa'k akwé: tsonkwateweienhstonhátie

So iontié:ren nón:wa. – Konwaia'torèn:'en Deer, Elder speaker

[There is a lot of change. And it is imperative that you all fix those

vocabulary words. We will help you as much as we can, us elders, we can

still do it. This is why you should never be afraid to ask a question. And you

all know very much the way you are all studying proper

vocabulary/language together. That is how you will all understand. Because

there were so many of us when we were young, we all understood the same,

we didn't have to do that back then, but today it matters because now we are

going along studying/analyzing it, so it matters today.]

    As we listened to our elder, she reinforced that learners need to expand their learning to

include analyses of the language. Wathahí:ne responded saying that she always felt that if she

just spoke Kanien'kéha habitually then she will improve as a speaker, but now realizes that

various strategies to analyze the language are necessary. Ieronhienhá:wi replied saying "tetsá:ron

sha'teiorihowá:nen, iorihowá:nen enhska'én:ion tánon iorihowá:nen ahsatá:ti [both are equally

important, it's important to analyze/look at it and it is important for you to speak]." The group

agreed with Ieronhienhá:wi's viewpoint as they transitioned to presenting various areas for

clarification with our elder.

As with the first unit of study, learners recognized vocabulary they can easily incorporate

into their own everyday speech. I unexpectedly found myself noticing and documenting loose

synonyms[44] once again. Some prominent examples taken directly from my notes included

kheio'ténhse – I work for them; example KEC kheio'ténhse – I work **for** the KEC

tewatió'te – I work there, example KEC tewatió'te – I work **at** the KEC

shikekhsà:'a – when I was a girl

ken'k shí:ka – when I was small

ken'k shikatenonhkwaré:ta – when was little (when I was messy haired)

Wateriien'tatsherí:io – a good idea (it is a good thing to know)

Wanonhwarí:io – a good idea (it is a good brain)

Wate'nikonhrí:io – a good idea (it is a good mind)

Konwaia'torèn:'en later expanded for the group saying that *ononhkwaré:ta* is referring to *just the*

hair, and that *ken'k shikatenonhkwaré:ta* is also used if someone did not fix their hair. She

provided an exemplar for the group saying "há:ke satkátho tsi niiakononhkwaré:ta, ken'k

niiakononhkwaré:ta" [Gee, look at how her hair is like a child's hair, like she has baby hair].

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[44] While synonyms are considered to be words with similar meanings, *loose synonyms* are a type
of synonym "that show overlapping meaning but cannot be used interchangeably in all contexts"
(Jackson & Amvela, as cited by Petcharat & Phoocharooensil, 2017).

Through these examples, the peer group recognised that we needed to put more effort into speaking with a diverse vocabulary. Noticing synonyms was one helpful approach.

Our elder summarized for the group, saying that there are often many ways of saying the same thing. Speakers have options and make many choices for word use. She encouraged the group to practice being creative in their storytelling, saying that we have the ability and knowledge to do this "Í:se sewanónhton ka'niká:ien ísewehre kawennaié:ri. Ka'niká:ien sénha io'nikonhraién:ta't. Né: ísewats tsi niká:ien io'nikonhraién:tat" [It is up to you what you think is the appropriate word. Which one makes the most sense. That is the one that you will use, that which makes the most sense]. She added that some speakers are more descriptive than others based on their style of speaking and it can make them good storytellers. She ended with a reminder to study vocabulary and particles in context because the context can change the meaning of the words.

Throughout the group discussions, having our elder with us to provide supporting vocabulary continued to be invaluable. As recounted within the first unit of study, learners would request direct translations of vocabulary or she would provide the needed vocabulary as she noticed one of the learners hesitating or struggling. She was very observant and attentive to the needs of the learners as she would seamlessly provide needed vocabulary in order for the learners to maintain the flow of their stories. This would take place when there was hesitancy pertaining to correct morphology or when a learner showed a true knowledge gap of specific vocabulary. When needed she would provide explanations of new vocabulary by giving examples in context. Vocabulary support was apparent due to the natural visiting and conversational approach that extended across many topics related to the theme. Centering the

unit upon one common theme led to the development of a thematic vocabulary set for the learners.

Similar to the previous unit, all the participants focused on **grammar analyses** using the audio-visual resource. In one example, Ieronhienhá:wi shared that as she listened to the audio several times, she gained clarity on how speakers use present tense when telling stories in the past. Although she understood this narrative technique, the examples provided by the elders solidified how the timeframe gets established at the start of the story and then present tense is introduced once the speaker draws in the listener. In this way, the use of past tense is not adhered to throughout the whole story. The group discussed this characteristic of storytelling and how it can be challenging to put into practice with confidence for second language speakers even when reaching an advanced level of proficiency.

Our elder described how speakers establish the scene when relating a story by creating the visual in the mind of the listener,

Tenhatí:ren tsi nahò:ten, tsi ní:ioht thí:ken ohná:ken tiohrén:ton wáhi… .Tho ní:tsi thatiráhsta, nia'té:kon thó: ní:tsi enhontá:ti.

Tsi ní:tsi enthatí:rahste, tho ki' ní:tsi enhonthró:ri. Kí:ken tsi nahò:ten wa'é:ron, kén: nikahswén:tes. So, tsi ní:tsi ionttkáthos, nek tsi iah kwah tho té:ioht, kén: ní:iens. So tho ní:tsi tewatá:tis ne Onkwehonwehnéha.

Sewatié:ren enhsí:ron 'akwe: iah tha'tettiatén:ron nahò:ten wa'é:ron akwe:', ne tsi tho ní:tsi entká:ra'ne nó:nen enhská:raton. Nè: aorì:wa tho ní:tsi rontá:tis. Ó:nen'k tsi Í: ó:ni entewattkátho nó:nen ónhka iokoká:raton.

Enhsatkátho tsi nahò:ten kén: tkaráhston ako'nikòn:rakon, tho ní:tsi

eniontá:ti. - Konwaia'torèn:'en Deer, Elder speaker

The group shared that the descriptive style of the speakers did indeed draw them right into the stories. As they were listening, they could easily picture it, and their stories brought them back to their own experiences.

As part of her grammar analyses, the suffixes *-kwe*, *-kénhne*, *-tòn:ne* and *-tónhne*, all signifying remote past, stood out to Kanerahtóntha. Tsohahí:io also focused on past tense markers, saying there are many examples used in the context of their conversation. I focused on the verbs in the text that negated the repetitive 's' to mean *not anymore/no longer*. Some examples listed in my journal were *iah tehskonteweién:te* [they no longer know how to do something], *iah tehskahkwí:io* [the food is no longer good] and *iah kén: téhsres* [he is no longer here]. For this visiting session there was some grammar discussion; however, not to the same extent as for the text-based approach in the first unit. As the group was engaged in sharing and discussion, our elder supported by recasting, rephrasing and modeling correct verb forms or morphology.

Extending, Reviewing and Peer Sharing

Following our visiting session, learners were to extend their learning by continuing to study individual areas of focus and by reviewing feedback provided by our elder speaker. All learners reported that they listened to the video several times following the visiting session. They felt there was a lot of content to review within the thirty-minute video. Re-listening to it further solidified their understandings. Kaia'ti:io shared that listening to the selected video recording

following our discussions reinforced aspects of the language for her and, similar to the others,

she recognized her progress as a Kanien'kéha language learner. All learners continued to study

the same components of the language as the previous week, primarily by reviewing the past tense

markers and vocabulary. Tsohahí:io elaborated, saying

> I listened to the video about four times. Thia'tekákonte sénha watié:sen
>
> akewennatshén:ri, tsi ní: ne "ok, thó ní:tsi wá:ontste." Nek tsi shé:kon ó:nen'k tsi
>
> aonsakatahsónteren akatéweienhste. Ó:nen'k tsi enkate'nién:ten ne én:katste tsi
>
> nikawennó:tens, iah ki kwáh tekewennaienté:ri. Nék tsi ioiánere tsi enwá:ton enhskáhkete
>
> tsi nón:we wá:tiatste, enwá:ton á:re ahskatahónhsatate.

The other women also listened to the video several times following our visiting session and

agreed that it greatly reinforced their vocabulary learning. They also shared that they intended to

continue listening to and learning from the video on their own.

Relative to the *extending* component of the unit, Iakotetshén:'en shared that she used the

recordings of our group visiting session to review what was discussed with our elder. Although

she initially struggled with the audio-visual learning approach, she felt that listening to the

recorded group sessions made her studying much easier. I agreed that using the recorded group

sessions were invaluable for extending and synthesizing my learning. It was impactful, as the

recordings bring the learner directly back to those moments of inquiry, struggle, discussions and

peer learning. I was able to hear the group co-creating knowledge. As each story was told and

each question was asked, learners were learning through one another's processes of

understanding."Sénha karihwahní:rats" [it further solidifies our learning] is how I had described the impacts of reviewing and learning through the recorded group sessions.

I had once again encouraged the group to access our recorded sessions that I shared following each of our aóhskon Kanien'kéha gatherings. I encouraged the group, saying that they were beautiful recordings of our stories, natural storytelling and visiting filled with laughter while we discussed many topics in Kanien'kéha. Kanerahtóntha agreed that the recorded peer group learning sessions with our elder speaker were very valuable. She shared her worry that we, as L2 speakers, will not be able to pass on the language as richly as our elder speakers. Referring to the recordings of our learning sessions with our elder, she elaborated saying "ó:nen'k tsi sénha akaién:take ne kí:ken" [it is imperative that there be more like this]. Kanerahtóntha pointed out that the all Kanien'kéha recordings can be invaluable resources for new learners in the future, as they would have the same questions but possibly no elder to help clarify for them. She felt it should be highlighted as a key outcome of the study. The group concurred, affirming that future learners will need unique resources as first language speakers continue to become less available.

Strong feelings of worry and sadness were expressed at several points during this visiting session as the women were reflecting on the state of the language. Teiottenionhátie [things are changing] was the topic of discussion while the group confided in one another about their worries for the future, for their grandchildren and next generations. Wathahí:ne shared that we can already predict that there will be shifts in the language, and, because of the influences of a fast-paced changing society, our cultural teachings are also at risk. She pointed out that we are very fortunate to have first language speakers supporting our learning; however, our next generations will not have this option readily available to them. For this reason, she re-iterated that these recordings can be of great value to them because all our sessions were in Kanien'kéha.

She took some comfort in the idea that future learners can have the opportunity to learn through our learning if we plan and adequately prepare the resources for them. Our elder agreed, saying we need to do this work of recording advanced learner and elder interactions and aóhskon Kanien'kéha learning sessions.

While our elder encouraged us to take up the task of developing this specific resource, she also cautioned us, saying that it is urgent because we are losing many great speakers. She also offered to help saying "Tóhsa tewanonhiá:ni'k. Nahò:ten tesewatonhontsó:ni tóka' enkkwé:ni enkwahsnié:nen" [Don't hesitate, whatever you all need I will help you all if I can]. She also reminded us that we have worked to become advanced level speakers and we are very capable of becoming highly proficient. She told us we can do it, but stressed that it will take continued work and commitment to achieve it.

Our elder also acknowledged that as women it is challenging to make time to study because we are living in very busy and demanding times. To remedy this, she reminded us of the importance of slowing down and encouraged us to practice it even in the way we speak:

Ón:wa wenhniserá:te só:tsi akwé: teionkwaweienhnharà:'on. Ne wahón:nise iah tho teiohtón:ne. Nè:'e tsi akwé: kahentà:kes rotiió'tehkwe tánon akwé: skennen'shòn:'a tsi ní:tsi… skennèn:'a tsi ní:tsi iakoteriiá:neron nón:kwe. Ok nón:wa wehniseraténion, sótsi akwé: kanó:ron tánon ó:nen'k tsi tehniiáhse enhiatatia'takéhnha ahotiió'ten ne iatathróna. So, iohsnó:re tsi ionatoriiá:neron. Iáhten ta' kén: tahatí:ta'ne tánon skén:nen… tsi ní:ioht ne shá:ken tekenón:kwe iotiká:raton. Nè:'e tsi tho ní:tsi tionatehiá:ron, ne wahón:nise tsi náhe, kahentà:ke, ki' nà:'a tetsá:ron ionatehiá:ron. Ón:wa

wenhniseraténion só:tsi teionkwahstarihèn:'en. So ne ní: ó:ni, ó:nen'k tsi

entsitewatéweienhste oh ní:tsi… ohstón:ha aontitewa'serón:nehte

skenen'shòn:'a… um, skén:nen tsi ní:tsi aonsetewatá:ti. - Konwaia'torèn:'en

Deer, Elder speaker

The group agreed, acknowledging that dedicating time to study is indeed challenging even when

language learning is a high priority for them. They also shared that they were grateful to have the

peer group to meet regularly and felt it was helpful to keep progressing in their learning.

The women also discussed the importance of keeping our ways of learning and passing

on knowledge intact. They expressed being appreciative of the project so we can explore

Onkwehón:we ways of learning more deeply. Kanerahtóntha suggested that we should be doing

the group language sessions in our homes, visiting in the language as our elders and families did

before us. Through the group's reflections, Kanerahtóntha concluded that it was a key

component needed to enhance the study, to bring the language sessions into our homes. She felt

it would be a more natural approach to gather and visit in our homes so our children and families

can witness it and be part of it as well. The group agreed, and Wathahí:ne added that

"iorihowá:nen ne ratikhsa'okòn:'a enhontkátho tánon enhontahónhsatate tsi nahò:ten

sha'oié:ra… .Tánon enwá:ton. Iokwaterahswí:io tsi shé:kon iontionkwé:taien… enwá:ton

eniethirihwanón:tonhse nahò:ten karihwanóntha" [it is important for the children to see and hear

what is natural… .And it is possible. We are lucky that there are still people… we can ask them

questions]. Wathahí:ne then invited the group to her home for the next session.

Throughout the peer sharing component of the second unit, learners expressed that they

were becoming more aware of their abilities as well as their needs to progress as Kanien'kéha

speakers. In addition to gaining new knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, the women shared

many personal stories, experiences and history prompted by the audio-visual learning approach.

In addition to language support, there were many instances where our elder provided

encouragement, guidance and teachings to the group of learners.

Unit Two Summary, Evaluation and Feedback

With the peer sharing complete, the group turned their focus to evaluating the unit plan

guided by the evaluative rubric (see Appendix 2). Once again, we reviewed the rubric together

and discussed each criterion relative to our experiences with the second unit piloted. The group

began by affirming that the unit, *Elder Storytelling of Community Life, Change and Resilience*,

provided them with a clear plan, including explicit learning targets. Implemented over four

weeks, Iakotetshén:'en shared that even with the short timeframe, "we were adequately able to

cover the targets."

As a key indicator of the efficacy of the unit, all learners affirmed that the unit was suited

for advanced language learners. The audio-visual approach incorporated focused learning

activities that were challenging and highly engaging where learners were dependent on their

listening skills to analyze the language. All participants agreed that the unit was applied

wholistically, as learners focused on speaking as well as explicit learning about the structure of

the language.

A focus on vocabulary development in this second unit was more prevalent than in the

previous unit of study. The group felt it was due to the very descriptive speaking styles of the

women in the video, as well as the increased time spent engaged in natural storytelling,

discussions, and teachings from our elder. Learning from the video resource also provided the

learners with an exemplar of authentic language used in context. With less focus on grammar, the learners were not using many elicitation strategies as per the first unit; however, learners focused on speaking with vocabulary support and clarifications from our elder when needed.

It was also noted that listening to different L1 speakers exposed learners to additional vocabulary and speaking styles. Participants felt that the audio-visual approach provided opportunity to learn from speakers in other Kanien'kehá:ka communities and affirmed that exposure to a multitude of speakers is an important component of advanced level vocabulary building. As we listened to the elder speakers and shared within the peer group, we were also learning history, stories and teachings in the language. At advanced levels of proficiency, lack of language was not a barrier to our additional learning.

The group agreed that selecting the right video resource was important to the success of the unit. The resource was appropriate for advanced language learning and, in this case, led to analyses of past tense markers and analyses of natural storytelling discourse. The group felt that, because the video was 36 minutes long and depicted two elder women visiting and sharing stories, as opposed to answering scripted interview questions, it allowed them to strengthen their understandings of storytelling discourse. This was an important finding for the peer group of learners, as it can inform future resource development specific to advanced language learning.

The group strongly felt that, although it began with an audio-visual method of learning, the unit took on an oral tradition approach through the peer group learning and visiting sessions. The all Kanien'kéha conversations within the group sessions incorporated language, culture and knowledge acquisition through storytelling and oral histories. For this reason, the participants affirmed that the unit aligned with Rotinonhsión:ni ways of knowing, including learning through respectful listening and discussion.

Reflecting on the unit, the group felt that it provided learning outcomes that could be evaluated using various assessments in the future. They also shared that, although we were not formally assessing our own growth for this project, they knew they improved as speakers even with the limited time spent piloting the unit. The group affirmed that the prescribed learning approach enabled them to learn independently as well as within the peer group. It was a very flexible unit, and, although it could be suitable for both independent and group learning, it would be most beneficial used by a peer group of learners. Having an elder to support and expand our understandings of Kanien'kéha idioms, vocabulary, sayings and grammar was truly an asset.

Based on their experiences implementing the second unit, the participants provided feedback on how the unit may be strengthened for future use. First was to ensure all peer group sessions are recorded and available to each member of the group. The recorded sessions should then be included as a primary resource for reviewing, extending and solidifying learning.

The next suggestion was to provide prompts for learners to engage in conversational storytelling analysis. At this advanced level, the audio-visual approach can provide learners the means to develop their storytelling ability relative to tense switching in Kanien'kéha. To complement this addition, the visiting and peer learning sessions should also call for conversational and oral storytelling activities.

Because lexical development was prominent, it was suggested that the unit provide additional prompts calling for learners to document synonyms as a concrete method for expanding their vocabulary use. A shared google document can serve as an interactive, collaborative space for learners to develop a bank of synonyms with examples of how they can be applied in various contexts. An organized bank of new vocabulary can also be co-developed by the peer group of learners.

Finally, important upgrades to the unit would be to underscore learning through Rotinonhsión:ni centric pedagogies. This would include placing greater attention on the importance of oral storytelling traditions where respectful listening is part of our language learning and analysis. The act of visiting and sharing a meal together should also be positioned as Rotinonhsión:ni pedagogy within the unit. This would highlight the importance of creating and maintaining an aóhskon Onkwehonwehnéha space where, most times, there are three generations gathering together for the purpose of speaking and learning Kanien'kéha.

The following sections describe the third unit of study developed and implemented by the peer group of women. It provides the results on how learners applied various language learning strategies by studying and analysing traditional Kanien'kéha names. It also describes examples of structural and communicative approaches enacted through Rotinonhsión:ni centric pedagogies.

Unit Three: Kahsenna'ón:we Aietewahsennón:ni– Analyzing Kanien'kéha Names to Expand Vocabulary and Create New Names

The third unit of study (see Appendix 5) was focused on learning by analyzing Kanien'kéha names and formulating new names based on traditional cultural protocols and understandings. The peer group of women were to use text-based and land-based strategies for advanced-level language learning to expand their vocabulary, study Kanien'kéha morphology and deepen their cultural understandings. The unit was to be carried out over four weeks; however, due to the high level of interest, it was agreed to extend it one additional week. Consistent with the previous units of study, participants were to engage in independent study, peer group study and visiting sessions to learn with our elder speaker.

A description of the unit is provided in the following sections. Following the overview of the unit, I describe how the participants engaged with the unit and applied the various strategies. Portions of the group discussions and feedback from the learners are included to elaborate on their experiences and highlight the success and recommended areas of improvement. A summary and reflections conclude the section.

Unit Overview - Women's Roles and Responsibilities for Traditional Naming Practices

The third unit of study was developed under the overarching theme of **Women's roles and responsibilities for traditional Kanien'kéha naming practices and protocols**. This theme considered the specific needs of this peer group of women and the important roles they carry out pertaining to naming new babies in their families and within the Longhouse through traditional protocols and ceremony. Because traditional names derive from what is observed in our natural environment, everyday life and Rotinonhsión:ni worldview, the topic provided an opportunity to discuss a vast corpus of vocabulary. This particular vocabulary entails high levels of unique noun verb incorporations which are very descriptive and creative. The theme was of great interest and importance to the women and proved to be very impactful in their learning overall.

Consistent across all units within this study, the learning objectives for this unit aimed to incorporate balanced learning opportunities through a structural approach as well as a communicative approach. In alignment with the Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Centric Pedagogy (see Figure 1, p. 63) the objectives guided the learners to

- Develop their vocabulary by **analyzing traditional Onkwehonwehnéha names**, documenting vocabulary through lexical groupings/themes and applying Rotinonhsión:ni cultural understandings and meanings.

- Refine their use of past, present and future timeframes by analyzing more complex grammatical structures to explain, share and apply this new knowledge with peers.

- Discuss experiences, community stories and cultural knowledge with peers through natural conversation using new vocabulary and appropriate timeframes.

- Create new Kanien'kéha names that are in alignment with traditional naming protocols, cultural understandings and meanings.

Pedagogical approaches were identified within the unit to support the learning outcomes. These included text-based analyses and observations of the natural world applied through independent study, group visiting and discussions. The learning approaches and activities are described in the following sections.

Independent Study – Analyses and Land-based Observations for Creating New Names. The unit began with learners studying through independent learning strategies. The plan directed learners to begin with a focus on understanding by reading, analyzing new and interesting vocabulary and morpheme usage. Participants were to make connections and lexical groupings based on names with similar meaning, or patterns within the noun-verb incorporations, and were to include page numbers to reference as needed. Learners were to then practice applying incorporations to form new names. To help guide their analyses, the unit provided the following open-ended questions:

- What do you notice?

- What parts of the names make them difficult to understand?

- How can you use these verb forms and incorporations to produce new names?

- What contexts call for the use of these incorporations?

Continuing their independent study, the unit then called for participants to bring their learning out on the land or on/by the water. The purpose was to observe our environment, nature, and the elements of the natural world, in order to gain inspiration for possible names that can be formed based on what was seen or noticed. It prompted learners to practice making new names, being very mindful of the changing inflections, verb/noun incorporations and meanings. Learners were to note any newly inspired names, questions or topics of interest to raise with the peer group and our elder speaker.

Elder Visiting – Conversations and Clarifications. Transitioning from independent study, the unit then called for peer group learning strategies using a natural conversation approach. The unit specified that the group begin by discussing the themes and Kanien'kéha names within the selected resource through both a historical and a cultural lens. To deepen our understanding of verb forms and patterns of the language, learners were to then discuss the grammatical concepts, incorporations, meanings and vocabulary of selected exemplars with our elder and peer group. The unit included the opportunity for feedback on new names they created where our elder speaker would validate, correct and model authentic use of Kanien'kéha.

Independent Study – Reviewing and Extending. Important to each unit of study, learners were to extend their learning through independent study by reviewing the information and new insights provided by our elder speaker during the group visiting session. The suggested strategies were for learners to examine how various names and patterns of the language are applied in different contexts. They were to prepare a summary of the grammatical patterns and names reviewed in order to share with their peers by showing examples of how patterns and teachings are applied in creating new names.

The Resource – Cooke's Manuscript of Iroquois Names

For the unit on analyzing and creating Kanien'kéha names, the Cooke Manuscript of Iroquois Names (Cooke, 1951) was selected, as well as the introduction to his work (Cooke, 1952). The manuscript is a compilation of over 6000 predominantly Kanien'kéha names, documented by Charles A. Cooke from Kanehsatà:ke Mohawk Territory. Born in 1870, Charles spoke only Kanien'kéha until the age of twelve and would later complete the manuscript as part of his life's work (Barbeau, 1952).

The names within the manuscript (Cooke, 1951) are listed in alphabetical order and include definitions as well as morphological and linguistic explanations. Most of the names Cooke documented are accompanied by brief stories and historical accounts regarding the origins

of the name. Cooke also included descriptions of the names in accordance to cultural significance, worldview and history.[45]

The following sections describe how the peer group of women utilized the texts and strategies as they implemented the third unit of study. I recount how learning through analyses of traditional Kanien'kéha names engaged them as advanced learners. Insights, feedback and important teachings discussed regarding the theme of *Women's Roles and Responsibilities for Traditional Kanien'kéha Naming Practices and Protocols* are also included.

Ska'nikòn:ra Wa'akwá:ton – *Affirming the Approaches and Activities for Unit Three*

I was looking forward to launching the third unit of study with the group due to my personal interest and practical need to explore the content area. As I presented the unit *Analyzing Kanien'kéha Names to Expand Vocabulary and Create New Names*, I recounted how I was inspired by the selected resource and anticipated that the group would be inspired as well. I explained that I envisioned the pedagogical approach because of the importance to my personal learning as well as to my ceremonial responsibilities, and I felt the women would have similar interests and needs.

I shared that making new names, and sometimes understanding the older names, is challenging for me at times. This is because traditional Kanien'kéha names consist of an

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[45] The manuscript used for this study is not to be confused with the abridged versions created by the Kahnawà:ke Onkwawén:na Cultural Center or the Six Nations Polytechnic. The abridged version, known as the Cooke Manuscript in Kahnawà:ke, or "book of names", includes the names listed in alphabetical order with simple translations and supposed clan affiliations as noted by Cooke (1951). It is comprised of three volumes, one for each of the Kanien'kehá:ka clans, and does not include the histories of the names or the insightful linguistic descriptions. Many Kahnawa'kehró:non refer to these volumes as a means to assist in selecting Kanien'kéha names for their children.

abundance of verb-noun incorporations and most often it is more challenging to determine the verb. I then provided several examples for the group to consider. Our elder speaker described that it is also challenging for first language speakers to translate or describe the meaning of some names because they are very old names, passed down through generations. She provided an example,

> Tsi nahò:ten rón:ton ne owennakaiòn:seron, iah kwah akwé:kon thaiesathón:te'ne ne akwé: kawennakwe'ní:io. Só:tsi iowannakaión:shon. Nón:wa iah akwé: tetsonkwateriièn:tare. Tsi ní:ioht ne *tehsaháhserohse*, wentó:re enhsa'nikonraién:tehste. Tsi ní:ioht, só:tsi teiohswáthe tánon it's too strong for your eyes. Iah thé:nen owén:na té:wa, aiesahró:ri that *it's too strong for your eyes*. - Konwaia'torèn:'en Deer, Elder speaker

The example she shared put a focus on the importance of analyzing Kanien'kéha names to expand our vocabulary. She also stressed the significance of looking at the meanings of the names from various perspectives because they can have various interpretations. Our elder was very pleased with the unit and encouraged us to carry out the work, saying "iorihowá:nen, tánon enwá:ton tentewaia'tó:rehte nahò:ten kwah kén:ton" [it is important, and we can decipher their true meanings together].

A goal of the unit was for us to expand our vocabulary, which would in turn develop our skills to create new Kanien'kéha names. I explained that our ability to formulate new names is bound by the limits of our lexical knowledge, and, although we can manage the task as advanced learners, we are still limited. Ieronhienhá:wi agreed, saying that sometimes we may think that we

will run out of names, but it is endless when one has rich descriptive language skills. Our elder was also looking forward to implementing the unit, and added that "ensewawennaientéhrha'ne tánon sénha ensewa'nikonhrhowáhnha'ne" [you will all gain knowledge of vocabulary words and you will expand your minds further].

An additional factor important in determining new Kanien'kéha names is knowledge of our environment and the natural world. The unit called for learners to go out on the land and to be observant of the natural world, as it would provide the inspiration to create new names connected to nature. They were to do this in the daytime as well as at night, with naming new babies in mind. Our elder encouraged the group to be very observant, saying "nahò:ten satkáthos, tsi ní:tsi ontorià:neron, oh ní:tsi takà:nio, tsi niiohserò:ten ó:nen… tho ní:tsi enwá:ton kahsén:na enhsón:ni, tsi nahò:ten attokháhtshera [what you see, the way things move, how it grows, the time of year it is… that is how you can make a name, it is what is observed].

As we continued to discuss the unit of study, I shared how the theme was tied to our roles and responsibilities as women to make new names. As Rotinonhsión:ni women we are also responsible to continue in accordance to our traditional teachings to maintain the basket[46] of names as per our naming protocols and ceremonial practices. The group agreed that including this theme in the project was very significant and they were enthusiastic to begin. They were also very eager to bring their studies out on the land for this learning approach. Due to their high interest, they proposed that the unit be extended, to allow for an additional week of study using the independent learning strategies. After much discussion on the significance, and excitement

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[46] One central role of the Rotinonhsión:ni clanmother is to carry a symbolic basket which contains all the names of her clan family. The names within her basket hold certain characteristics affiliated with the clan as well as names previously held by those within her clan.

about the learning approaches and the resources, the group endorsed the unit with the added

week for implementation.

Independent Learning Strategies to Analyze and Create New Kanien'kéha Names

The learners applied the independent learning strategies as outlined in the third unit of

study. They selected various names from the Cooke (1951) manuscript to focus their studies and

observed their outdoor environment for inspiration to create new Kanien'kéha names. The

participants reported being very engaged and challenged in their learning.

The group shared that reading the introduction to Cooke's work (Cooke, 1952) was very

enlightening, as he described categories of names and how they pertained to Rotinonhsión:ni

worldview. They felt the resource was very thorough, with detailed translations and interesting

interpretations that broadened our understanding of Kanien'kéha and the true beauty of our

traditional names. Listening to the group discussions, our elder pointed out that

"wahahnhotón:ko ne sa'nikòn:ra [he opened up your mind], nia'té:kon wahsatkahthóhseron [you

saw many things]… .tho nikaia'tò:ten ne onkwawén:na, kwah tho nikaia'tò:ten, entisaráhsten,

enhsana'tón:hahse, enhsáttoke akwé: tho ní:ioht ne onkwawén:na [that is the way our language

is, that is just the way it is, it will create a picture for you, it shows you, you will notice

everything is like that in our language]. Our elder described our experience very accurately, as

she emphasized how reading Cooke's work opened our minds to think deeply about the

importance and beauty of our Onkwehonwehnéha names.

As we began to discuss the independent study strategies for the unit, I shared that I

learned so much from the process, and, as I was reading through the names, I also realized how

much learning I still have ahead of me. Others agreed that there was a lot of information to cover

within the text. Our elder encouraged us to keep moving forward, and reminded us that even first

language speakers learn things about the language as an ongoing process.

Wathahí:ne expressed that, although she enjoyed the two previous units, the third unit of

study was her favorite one. She shared that learning in this way helped her to become more

confident in the language. She described the resource as greatly interesting and engaging, saying

"man, kenòn:wes kí:ken, kwah tokèn:'en kenòn:wes" [man, I like this one, I like it very much].

She also felt that the immense manuscript, with over 6000 names, was somewhat overwhelming.

Similar to the others, her approach was to focus on a small portion of the text to study. As she

analysed the names, she noticed there was an abundance of information within each theme. She

worked closely with her mother to examine the many noun-verb incorporations, tsi ní:tsi

tesawennákhen[47], as well as the prefixes and suffixes associated with various tenses.

As Wathahí:ne focused on Kanien'kéha grammar she felt that she had made significant

progress in her language learning. She shared that analysing the written names with the

descriptions provided in the resource gave her the tools to apply the intended learning strategies,

adding that the descriptions provided by Cooke (1951) were excellent. She expressed that it was

precisely what she needed to solidify her understandings of verb tenses, and acknowledged that

she would still have to spend more time applying the approach. She felt confident that she would

continue to improve in this area, given the resource and the learning strategies.

Similar to the others, I enjoyed this learning approach and I felt it increased my linguistic

knowledge and skills as a Kanien'kéha learner. For my independent study, I selected a small

sampling of names from the extensive text. I began analyzing them by focusing on understanding

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[47] *Tsi ní:tsi tesawennákhen* means *the way the words are put together* and is a term the group
used when referring to incorporations or morphology.

the verb and noun roots based on their meanings and various interpretations provided within the text. I selected the verbs that I was less familiar with and practiced forming various noun-verb incorporations by changing either the noun or the verb to create new names. With each new word formation, I would then review the name to ensure it was grammatically correct as well as culturally appropriate in its meaning. There were some incorporations I had challenges with. I noted them for discussion and verification from our elder speaker. The following is a practice sample taken directly from my personal study notes incorporating the verb *tetiatera'né:ken* meaning *two are side by side*:

Name listed **T**hayend**anegen** – He places 2 bits of wood **side by side** (Cooke, p. 429)

Otsì:tsa [flower] – tekatsi'tsané:ken – 2 flowers side by side

Onèn:ta [pine tree] – tekanen'tané:ken – 2 pine trees side by side

Ó:nenhste [corn] – tekanenhstané:ken – 2 corn side by side

A'én:na [bow] – tewa'ennané:ken – 2 bows side by side

Óhere [corn stalk] – tekaherané:ken – 2 corn stalks side by side

Ohtè:ra [root] – tekahtehrané:ken – 2 roots side by side

Karón:ta [mature tree] – tekarontané:ken – 2 trees side by side

Karáhkwa [orb] – tekarahkwané:ken – 2 orbs side by side

These nouns, along with many others, were used as exemplars to incorporate additional verbs such as iotékha [burning], aiehá:ren [to hang up or suspend], aierónkwas [to un-hang something, detach or remove], aiehá:wihte [to take something away or to move something aside], and

taiowíshon [to quake, tremble, quiver]. As I applied this process, I listed questions I would pose to our elder speaker and noted names I hoped she could provide feedback on or validate.

The group discussed how the unit led them to analyze names to understand how they can be translated and interpreted in many ways. I shared that the learning approach helped me to deepen my understanding of names as well as how to look at their meanings from various perspectives. It reminded me that when giving and making names, we have to take the time to look at it in that way. Wathahí:ne shared that she also studied in this manner. Together with her mother, she was observing the trees, and they discussed how one name can have various interpretations. One example Wathahí:ne shared was *kanerahtakwe'ní:io* and how it can be interpreted to mean *the main leaf* or *there is only the one leaf* or *it's the first leaf*.

The group enjoyed their independent study time, using the text-based analyses as well as observations of our natural environment. Kaia'tí:io felt that the process caused her to slow down and be more observant of the natural world. Ieronhienhá:wi agreed, reiterating that she was happy we were piloting this learning approach because she was mindful in her interactions with the natural world each day, as she observed nature through the lens of traditional Kanien'kéha naming practices. Ieronhienhá:wi stated that it was her favorite learning approach so far and added that studying traditional naming practices and protocols was a "dire need in our community."

Visiting, Storytelling and Elder Support

Following the independent learning week, the peer group came together for the visiting session with our elder. All the women were very excited to launch right into discussions regarding the names we had studied as well as the historical accounts and stories provided within

the selected resources (Cooke, 1952; Cooke, 1951). The group was small[48] this evening, however, the conversations were rich and our learning was productive as we focused on the theme of Kanien'kéha naming practices and protocols.

As everyone was settling in, the members of the peer group were catching up and the stories were flowing between them. I was always appreciative for each of the women and their contributions to the project. They continued to give their time each week and together we created a positive environment to learn and immerse ourselves in language.

Turning our focus to the theme of the week, I began by sharing that I learned so much through the study of Kanien'kéha names. I restated that, while analyzing the text, I also realized that there is still so much more to learn:

Kahtehrón:ni – É:so wa'katéweienhste, é:so wa'keweientéhta'ne. Tánon

wa'káttoke tsi ó:nen'k tsi é:so shé: akatéweienhste!

Elder – Akwé: ne ionkwateweienhstonhátie, shé:kon ne ionhrónkha.

Enhsátkátho í:i tánon akhtsì:'a nó:nen taiakenithá:ren, tsi náhe kenh

nonwá:ti sha'kátien, é:so sewa'nikonhrhèn:'en ne owenna'shòn:'a. So akwé:

ionkwateweienhstonhátie.

Kahtehrón:ni– É:so tho kahiá:ton wáhi, kwah kahiatonhserá:tens thí:ken.

Nek tsi é:so tsi kahiatonhserí:io wáhi. Ion'wésen ahsataterihónnien. Tánon

wentó:re ó:ni sonhà:'ak ahsataterihónnien.

Ieronhienhá:wi – Hen kahiatonhserí:io, tánon hen wentó:re tóka' kwah nek

sonhá:'ak ahsatéweienhste.

Elder - Wakaterihón:ko ne tió:konte ne ká:ton nek tsi, nó:nen

enhsataterihón:nien ténhserahst sa'nikòn:rakon. *Tekaientané:ken*, satkátho

thi ó:iente, satkátho tsi tetiatera'né:ken. So tho ní:tsi entéhsarahste ne

sa'nikòn:rakon. Kwah tokèn:'en wa'tehsón:konhte tsi

wahsa'nikonhraién:ta'ne. Tsi ní:ioht ne *tekatsi'tsané:ken*, satkátho thi

otsì:tsa, tetiatera'né:ken. So kwah tokèn:'en sateriièn:tare nahò:ten kén:ton.

Ne thó: nikawennò:tens ne Onkwehonwehnéha, ó:nen'k tsi enhsatkátho

nahò:ten kontí:ton. Tóka iah tesa'nikonhraién:tas ne nahò:ten wá:ton, ne ki'

aorí:wa ó:nen'k tsi ohstón:ha sénha enhserihwì:sake wáhi.

As we raised the challenges of studying in isolation, our elder encouraged us. She also reminded us that when studying for understanding we must always visualize what is being said, because Onkwehonwehnéha is very descriptive and specific. Using the example of *tekatsi'tsané:ken*, she said we should picture it and be able to see those two flowers side by side. She also added that when it is challenging to gain a full understanding of vocabulary for Kanien'kéha names it is important to research it further.

Throughout the visiting session, the learners continued to provide examples of names[49] they had created for our elder to verify. Together we discussed the various interpretations as well as the appropriateness of the names. Our elder approved of the names we presented; however, the group was surprised at the expanded interpretations she provided. The group was in awe at how many of the names had much deeper meanings than we had envisioned as second language speakers.

The learners also discussed the importance of studying Kanien'kéha names and how it is tied to our traditional protocols and responsibilities as women to make new names. Within the article on Iroquois Personal Names, Cooke (1952) describes the significance of Kanien'kéha naming practices and how our names are a reflection of our worlview. The peer group discussed how, although it was written for a non-Indigenous audience, they felt inspired by his descriptions and it caused them to think more deeply about the importance of recieving a Kanien'kéha name through ceremony.

The group raised several points Cooke (1952) touched on in his article. We reflected on his description of recieveing a traditional Kanien'kéha name through ceremony. He referred to it as the moment a person becomes a spiritually conscious being (Cooke, 1952). Although he does not make mention of the **Atón:wa ceremony,** the group knew it was what he was referencing, one of the Kaié:ri Niiorí:wake[50] which aims to foster a spiritual connection between men and all of the natural world.

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[49] The names discussed are not being shared at this time as many of them are currently in use or have been added to the basket of names to be assigned by the women of each respective clan. For samples and inspiration for new names see Cooke (1951).

[50] *Kaié:ri niiori:wake* is what we call the four sacred ceremonies of the Rotinonhsión:ni and includes the Atón:wa ceremony where the men sing their personal song of thanksgiving to the natural world and re-affirm their place within it. During this ceremony, names are given to new babies and individuals within their respective clan family.

As the peer group discussed the practices and protocols of our traditional naming ceremony, we focused on the importance for it to be upheld for our future generations. As Rotinonhsión:ni women we share in the responsibility for it to continue; therefore, it is integral for us to have the ability to create and verify new names as needed. Our elder added that

Ó:nen'k tsi enhsanonhtonnión:ko tsi nenieia'to'ténhake ne ekhsà:'a entehsé:ion ne káhsén:na. …Iah kwah nek kahsén:na té:ken, ken? Sénha ísi' nón: kén:ton tsi ní:ioht ne kahsén:na. Sénha io'shatstenhserowá:nen, iah nek ne kahsén:na té:ken. Nia'té:kon enhska'eniónnion. -Konwaia'torèn:'en Deer, Elder speaker

The group agreed that it is important to remember that, as per our teachings, when giving a name the recipient will embody the name and it will become part of their character as a person.

As we continued to reflect on our teachings surrounding traditional naming protocols, I had raised the issue of when a person passes away, saying "tánon nó:nen ónhka eníheie, kèn:'en enkaién:take ne kahsén:na tánon akó:ren éntsontste" [also, when someone passes away, the name will stay here and another will use it][51]. I added that it was very remarkable the way Cooke (1952) described how the men would strive to live righteously with the goal of leaving behind a good name that represented pride, strength and great respect. Our elder expanded, saying this is why there is a great level of respect for one's name:

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[51] Our teachings also say that when a person dies, the name will go back into their clanmother's basket and can only be used again after a year has passed and the mourning period is over for the family.

Elder – Enkahsennaién:take ne ne kwah tokèn:'en karihwakwenniénhstake. Enhóntka'we ne kahsén:na.

Kahtehrón:ni – Nè:'e tsi ónhka'k ó:ia entseié:na ne kahsén:na tánon enhatiná:ieke tsi ne wahotihsennaién:ta'ne. …Enióhnheke thí: kahsén:na.

Elder – Rón:tons kwi wáhi, éntshere ne sahsén:na. Ensatkátho ki, tho niiakorihò:ten... iorihowá:nen tenhsia'tó:rehte ne kahsenna'shòn:'a, nè:'e tsi io'shatstehserowá:nen ne kahsén:na, kwah í:ken tsi io'shatstehserowá:nen.

Our elder re-affirmed that because the name remains here for the next generation to use, there is great respect given to one's name. She also reminded us that because a person embodies their name, we need to be careful when selecting a name because it has a power to it. She also cautioned us to not give names that assume a child will have abilities beyond what a human can naturally have, like superpowers.

There were many interesting names, stories, histories and teachings presented within the texts selected for the unit. It led the group to have in-depth and thought-provoking discussions throughout the visiting and peer group sessions. Ieronhienhá:wi shared her reflections, saying that people often want to give fancy, elaborate names and they need to be reminded that names can be so simple yet are so beautiful. She added that "akwé:kon sha'tekanó:ron" [they are all equally precious].

Extending, Reviewing and Peer Sharing

For two weeks following the visiting session, the women studied and developed new names as they continued going out on the land to observe nature through the lens of traditional naming protocols. Several of the learners shared that they also discussed new names and their interpretations with other Kanien'kéha speakers. Wathahí:ne worked closely with her mother, Ieronhienhá:wi with her son, and Iakotetshén:'en had several discussions with her colleagues at the immersion school. It was felt that others enjoyed the topic of traditional Kanien'kéha names as well. They readily contributed to the conversations regarding new and old Kanien'kéha names.

Although the many names discussed and created are not shared here[52], the learners were very successful in developing a multitude of new names. They took the time to be observant of the natural world and shared that they were very attuned to what was happening within their environment, as the summer months were soon coming to a close. Through the peer group sharing the women expressed that taking time to slow down and be observant of nature was very rewarding and helpful to improve their ability and confidence to create new Kanien'kéha names.

Unit Three Summary, Evaluation and Feedback

To bring the third unit to a close, the group assessed the effectiveness and relevancy of the unit using the elaborative rubric (see Appendix 2). The unit on *Women's Roles and Responsibilities for Traditional Kanien'kéha Naming Practices and Protocols* was reportedly a very impactful and positive learning experience. This section provides a summary of the peer

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[52] As per Rotinonhsión:ni teachings a given traditional name is held by one individual and great effort is put forward by clan families to avoid any duplications. Because there are some people who do not practice or understand those protocols, the names discussed amongst the women will not be published here.

group's experiences implementing the learning strategies and concludes with suggestions for improving the unit plan overall.

The participants began by affirming that the unit had clear learning targets in accordance with the needs of advanced language learners. It was also noted that reviewing the plan together with the group was very helpful to thoroughly understand the aim of the unit. The group confirmed that the unit was appropriate for advanced language learning and that studying traditional Kanien'kéha names was very relevant to them as learners. They also felt that, although it was developed for advanced learners, it could be adapted for all levels of learners.

The group was unanimous as they affirmed that analyzing and creating Kanien'kéha names contributed to their lexical development. In addition to expanding their vocabulary it also helped to understand noun/verb incorporations that are unique to traditional Kanien'kéha names. The task of creating new names also led them to increase their ability to interpret their meanings through various perspectives and cultural understandings. It was noted that the method was an advanced vocabulary-building exercise that was greatly enhanced by the group discussions and the stories included throughout the texts (Cooke, 1951.; Cooke, 1952).

All participants reported that the learning approach provided an opportunity to refine their Kanien'kéha grammar. Analyses from a Rotinonhsión:ni perspective were a central component of the unit. The learning approaches deepened their understanding of Kanien'kéha grammatical concepts and provided them the opportunity to practice applying what they learned to create new Kanien'kéha names. Learners reported that it was very engaging and they were looking forward to continuing learning through this method after the study.

Participants unanimously reported that the unit strengthened their communal and spiritual relationships with the natural world. It inspired them to discuss Kanien'kéha names with other

L1 and L2 speakers and to be observant of the natural world every day. They expressed that intentional observation was an important component of the unit as they connected language to the land and the natural world. They shared that the unit provided them with a reminder to see the beauty of their surroundings in their everyday interactions and to think about how to describe it in Kanienkéha. All participants reported that the unit was highly engaging and interesting. It had very meaningful relevant content and was directly connected to their roles and responsibilities as women of the Longhouse.

The group felt the learning approach provided the means to learn wholistically through a balanced approach focused on structural and communicative learning targets. The wholistic learning approach also included cultural understandings and connections to the land and the natural world. For this reason, the learners affirmed that the unit was closely aligned with Rotinonhsión:ni cultural perspectives and ways of knowing.

The group affirmed that the unit provided mechanisms for independent learning and could be used within a peer group model as well as by individual learners. However, they asserted that a speaker is needed to explain, clarify and scaffold learning to the next level. They stressed that the learner must put in the work to study independently, and explained that, because of the level of complexity, support and feedback from an elder L1 speaker is needed. In addition, they shared that it would be most beneficial if the speaker had a thorough understanding of traditional naming protocols, similar to our elder's.

The participants felt the resource was invaluable and perfectly suited the unit. It inspired them to extend their learning and provided thousands of examples to analyse. The group expressed the importance of having resources that reflect and present linguistic information through a Rotinonhsión:ni worldview. They shared that the resource of Kanien'kéha names was

highly engaging and pushed them to think deeply about language, history, cultural protocols and teachings.

The women all agreed that the unit incorporated language, culture and knowledge acquisition through stories, histories, and traditional teachings. It encouraged learning through observation of the natural world and fostered a connection to our surroundings. It created a space for the group to discuss and share about the beauty they see in the natural world, including topics such as the changing leaves, seasons, birds singing, gardens growing, winds, stars, and waters. Transferring what they observed into the practice of creating Kanien'kéha names further showcased the beauty of the language. The group felt the learning approach was excellent, with the discussions, stories and history connected to our traditional naming practices and the protocols connected to giving and receiving traditional Kanien'kéha names through ceremony.

In summarizing the overall strengths of the unit, the group felt it was highly engaging and directly addressed their roles and responsibilities as Rotinonhsión:ni women. Having the peer group and our elder for support and discussions was invaluable for feedback and collaborative learning. This learning approach made clear connections to the land and the natural world, while also reinforcing knowledge of traditional naming protocols. The unit includes grammar studies, extended conversations, and observations that allowed for all learners to focus on their own needs and areas for language growth. The group also reaffirmed that the Cooke manuscript (1951) was the highlight of the approach and aligned precisely with the theme.

All participants recommended that the unit be implemented over an extended period. Because of the size of the manuscript and because having samples of over 6000 names can be overwhelming, it would be best for peer groups to select a specific section each week for all to focus on. To support the independent study activities, the resource should also be provided as a

hard copy, as opposed to a digital version where learners are required to constantly scroll back and forth between pages. Within the unit, *observation* should be underscored as central to the learning and should be featured more prominently as an important Onkwehonwehnéha pedagogical approach.

Analyzing and reflecting on traditional names entails important cultural understandings of Rotinonhsión:ni worldview as well as environmental knowledge of the natural world. Creating new traditional names is not only about linguistic knowledge, but is also dependent on understanding our worldview and understandings of the land. As women, it is our responsibility to give traditional names that are unique, culturally aligned and linguistically acceptable according to Kanien'kéha naming practices. This approach proved to maintain a balance between vocabulary building and grammar analysis. It also centered analyses through cultural protocols, teachings and Rotinonhsión:ni worldview. The peer group will continue using the strategies and working with speakers to refine their abilities to create new Kanien'kéha names and understand their layered meanings and interpretations. Wathahí:ne encouraged the group, saying it is important to continue this because "we still have the speakers here willing to help us."

The next sections provide the results of the final unit of study that was implemented for this dissertation research. It begins with an overview of the unit, which highlights advanced Kanien'kéha learning through oral tradition and elder centered learning. The upcoming sections also show how the peer group of women engaged in the pedagogical approaches through independent and peer group learning strategies.

Unit Four: Eniethiiatahónhsatate ne Thotí:iens tánon Tentewatharón:nion – Oral Tradition and Elder Centered Learning

The final unit of study (see Appendix 6) was centered on learning through an oral tradition approach by discussing traditional Rotinonhsión:ni teachings and worldview. The peer group of women were to listen to elder speakers sharing their knowledge to study more complex language and formal oratory as well as to extend grammatical, lexical and cultural understandings. The unit was piloted over three weeks and was consistent with the format of the previous units.

Unit Overview **- Traditional Teachings and the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen**

The fourth unit of study also had three long-term learning targets aimed at advanced level language learning. The theme for the concluding unit of the study was on *Traditional Teachings and the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen*. This theme created a focus for discussion and allowed the peer group of learners to sufficiently apply the strategies in an engaging manner. It inspired their learning and guided them to discuss Rotinonhsión:ni worldview, teachings and their understandings of the natural world as part of their everyday life.

The learning outcomes for the unit were grounded in the project's Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Centric Pedagogy (see Figure 1, p. 63). Once again, they included learning through a structural and communicative approach. The unit's outcomes aimed for learners to be able to:

- Develop their vocabulary by **listening to and discussing traditional teachings** and documenting vocabulary through lexical groupings/themes as well as applying Rotinonhsión:ni cultural understandings and meanings.

- Refine their use of past, present and future timeframes by analyzing more complex grammatical structures to explain, share and apply this new knowledge with peers.

- Discuss cultural understandings and knowledge with peers through natural conversation using new vocabulary and appropriate timeframes.

- Retell and share cultural stories, oral history and knowledge with grammatical accuracy and fluency.

The final unit required learners to explore how studying our foundational teachings through oral tradition can help us to deepen our cultural knowledge and refine our use of more complex grammatical forms of Kanien'kéha for ceremonial and interpersonal communication. Focused on traditional knowledge and teachings, learning strategies were to be applied through independent study, peer group visiting, elder-centered learning and peer group reflections and sharing. The pedagogical approaches for the unit included daily observations, reflection and giving greetings to the natural world.

Independent Study – Observation and Connections to the Natural World.

The final unit focused on exploring Onkwehón:we ways of knowing and began with learning through observation and reflection. The unit outlined a warm-up and review where learners were to begin by reading through the written text of the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen (Tom Porter, 2008). They were to then note any new vocabulary or interesting phrases, as well as document important cultural reflections and grammar concepts that were of interest. The unit included the following guiding questions:

- What do you notice?

- What was easy or complex to understand?

- What parts of the text make it difficult to understand?

- How can you use some of the vocabulary in your own personal thanksgiving and teachings?

The text and prompting questions would allow learners to prepare for learning both language and teachings through Rotinonhsión:ni cultural perspectives.

The unit also guided learners to offer their own personal words of thanksgiving each day. They were to take their learning out on the land, by the water, in the garden, etc. It called for learners to **observe and understand** our environment, nature, and the elements of the natural world, as well as to reflect on our teachings based on what was observed. Additional guiding questions were provided within the unit:

- What thoughts and reflections were challenging to express?

- What grammar or vocabulary caused these challenges?

They would note questions or topics of interest to raise with the peer group and our elder speaker.

Elder Visiting – Listening, Conversations and Clarifications

The fourth and final unit of study also highlighted peer group learning strategies that centered around our elder speaker. The unit plan called for an elder speaker visit with us to share teachings, reflections and stories of our traditional Rotinonhsión:ni ways. Through natural

conversation the strategies called for learners to listen and discuss the teachings presented in order to interpret and expand our understandings together as a peer group.

For this approach, the unit guided learners to focus on **listening** to the teachings from our elder speaker with minimal interruptions and to listen as she modeled natural language and use of contextualized vocabulary, verb forms and patterns of the language. The peer group were to then discuss the grammatical concepts and vocabulary relevant to the teachings being discussed. Learners were to then pose any questions and discuss language patterns, meanings, verb incorporation, etc. with our elder speaker. Our speaker would also provide feedback while validating, correcting and modelling authentic use of Kanien'kéha.

Independent Study – Reviewing and Extending

Independent study was an important design feature of each unit. Following the peer group visiting session in unit four, learners were to focus on **reviewing and extending** their knowledge of any new grammatical forms and vocabulary. This independent study time would ensure that learners would review and reflect on the language and teachings learned from our elder, including vocabulary, grammatical patterns and how they are applied in various contexts. Learners would prepare to share and discuss what they had learned through the final unit of study.

The Resources – Our Elders Our Cherished Resource

For the final unit of study, a handout of the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen[53] was selected to inspire learners to reflect on our traditional teachings and worldview. Although the unit did not feature a text-based approach, it was a recommended reference for participants to review and practice some of the specific vocabulary often used by individuals when giving thanks or greetings to the natural world. The primary support for the unit of study called for a first language speaker willing to share traditional teachings and knowledge. The following sections describe how the peer group implemented the fourth unit *Oral Tradition and Elder Centered Learning*, showing our elder speaker at the center of our learning.

Ska'nikòn:ra Wa'akwá:ton – Affirming the Approaches and Activities for Unit Four

The evening we launched the final unit of study was very exciting. As everyone was arriving at Wathahí:ne's home, the women were catching up and talking about a multitude of things. Work, golf, health, the rainy weather and more. As conversations flowed easily from topic to topic I felt a sense of gratitude thinking about how the women came together for each session, keeping the project in motion. Wathahí:ne offered us all tea as we were gathered in her home around the long kitchen table. It felt comfortable to be in such a welcoming, familiar place and everyone was eager to hear what the fourth unit of study would entail.

I began by distributing the unit plan and sharing that the main methods of learning would be focused on listening, oral tradition and conversation. I explained that the final unit would be centered on learning through an oral tradition approach by discussing traditional Rotinonhsión:ni

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[53] The *Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen* loosely translates as *the matter before all else,* also referred to as the *Thanksgiving Address*. A detailed description can be found in the methodology section (p. 73).

teachings and worldview. I shared that we would be doing this within the theme of *Traditional Teachings and the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen*. I offered a rationale for the unit by pointing out that it is not often we have discussions or teachings about our ways exclusively in Kanien'kéha. In most cases, when such group discussions take place it is done predominately in English so everyone can understand. I added that listening to elder speakers share their knowledge would enable us to study more complex language and formal oratory as well as to extend our cultural understandings.

Continuing the rationale, I pointed out that listening is critical to Onkwehón:we ways of knowing and understanding, and aligns with an elder centered learning approach. I shared how having advanced level Kanien'kéha skills allows us to understand the teachings embedded within ceremonial oratory. We are fortunate to enjoy hearing the variations and speaking styles of our Kanien'kéha speakers. I shared examples of how some speakers get very descriptive with their words and create such beautiful imagery in our minds, helping us to see how they experience the world as well. Our elder agreed as she offered her insights:

Elder – Ótia'ke kwah í:ken ieweién:te ne aiontá:ti. Tsi ní:tsi

entierihwakè:ron nothén:nen… .Kwah enhsáttoke tsi nahò:ten

iakotharáhkwa. Wakateriién:tare, wakatahónhsatate nó:nen Kahrhó:wane

ahahnhotón:ko, tokani' thé:nen nahò:ten, tió:konte kwah í:ken tsi ióhskats

tsi ní:tsi enhatá:ti, tsi ní:tsi tharihwakè:ron ne othé:nen.

Kahtehrón:ni – Nó:nen enhatiwenno.. enhatiwennóhetste, there it is. É:so

ronateriièn:tare, iah kwah nek owén:na tánon owenna'shòn:'a. É:so

ronateriièn:tare ne tsi niionkwarihò:tens, tánon é:so ronateriièn:tare ne…

nè:'e tsi tho ní:tsi ronónhnhe. Enhatiiéntho… .thikawenní:io nahò:ten.

Nó:nen é:so ronteriièn:tare, enhsáttoke nó:nen…

Elder – Nè:'e tsi sha'oié:ra tsi ronateriièn:tare. Iah nek ne kahiatonhserà:ke

tekahiá:ton, kwah tokèn:'en tho ní:tsi ronónhnhe. Tho ní:tsi ronateriièn:tare

tsi ní:tsi ratihiá:tons. Tsi ní:tsi ratiiénthos, tsi ní:tsi ronónhnhe

thia'tewenhniserá:ke, ne tho nón:we enthatíhawe tsi ní:tsi

tenhontenonhwerá:ton. Ne tsi ní:tsi rononhnhétie. Iah nek ne tsi ní:tsi

kahiá:ton. Ne tsi ní:tsi tóka', tsi ní:tsi raienthós, tho ní:tsi entháhawe ne

ahshakohró:ri tsi ní:tsi tenhontenonhwerá:ton.

Our elder's descriptions prompted a lengthy discussion. The group expressed their appreciation

for the speakers who are very knowledgeable and skilled in this area so that our ceremonies can

continue. They also shared their understandings and observations pertaining to ceremonial

oratory. They then pointed out how they enjoyed listening to two very eloquent ceremonial

speakers over the years and how their speaking styles were very notable.

Elder – Kwah tokèn:'en. Ia'teká:ien. Ia'teká:ien nó:nen enhawennóhetste

thé:nen. Tho ní:tsi wakateriièn:tare, nè:'e tsi nó:nen thí:ken, iah ki Ohén:ton

Karihwatéhkwen té:ken, ónkha khók wahontóhetste tho nikahá:wi. Tánon

tsi ní:tsi tahaterihwakè:ron, tsi ní:ioht nék sha'oié:ra, iáhten tsi nahò:ten

wa'è:ron… .iah tehoteweiénhston, kwah sha'oié:ra tsi ní:tsi wahatá:ti.

Nia'té:kon owenna'shòn:'a wa'kaiá:ken'ne ne iah thia'tewenhniserá:ke

thaiesathón:te'ne. Kwah tokèn:'en raweién:te.

Kahtehrón:ni – Tánon skennèn:'a tsi ní:tsi ratá:tis ó:ni. Kè:iahre

shontakatáhsawen akatéweienhste, man, onke'nikonhraién:ta'ne. Nè:'e tsi

ní:tsi skennèn:'a ratá:tis. Io'nikonhraién:tat.

Ieronhienhá:wi – Ioiánere nó:nen tho ní:tsi rontá:tis, like skennèn:'a tsi

ní:tsi…

Elder – Raweriien'tí:ioht.

Elder – Sénha enhsa'nikonhraién:ta'ne nó:nen Onkwehonwehnéha ónhka'k

aiontá:ti. Nè:'e tsi kwah tokèn:'en enhsa'nikonhraientáhsten tsi nahò:ten

iakotharáhkwen. Iah sha'té:ioht ne Tiohrhén:sa. Kwah í:ken tsi tetiattíhen

nó:nen Onkwehonwehnéha ensathón:te'ne.

The group continued to talk about the importance of oral tradition and how, when it comes to our

traditional teachings, it is important to learn in this way. They agreed that, as advanced

Kanien'kéha learners, having the ability to participate in deep discussions about our

Onkwehón:we teachings in our own language is what we have studied for all these years. They

were appreciative that the unit included connections to the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen and

learning strategies from a Rotinonhsión:ni perspective. They validated the unit and were very motivated to begin.

Independent Learning Strategies

The independent learning strategies for the final unit of the project consisted of various land based and observational tasks. Participants were to review the short text on the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen as a warm up to the theme. Then they would spend time out on the land observing and offering their own words of thanksgiving each day. The group shared that they were exceptionally busy this week and focused on their independent learning primarily through observation of the natural world as opposed to reading the text.

All learners, including our elder speaker, shared that they spent more time outdoors observing and noticing the beauty of their environment. They gave thanks each day in their own words, and included what they were observing in their surrounding environment. Kaia'tí:io shared that the task reminded her of her relationship with the natural world and she spent more time thinking and reflecting on those relationships. The women agreed and shared similar experiences, adding that it was calming and peaceful as they would look out the window each morning and think about those things. Our elder was also in agreement that being intentionally observant of the natural world was an enjoyable reflective process.

> Elder – Niá'té:kon sehiaráhkwen ken? Nè:'e tsi nó:nen sonhà:'ak iah
> nonwén:ton thahsanonhtónnionhwe ne nahò:ten ahsatkáhtho ne átste .
> Né: ne wahón:nise tsi náhe í: tánon akhtsì:'a, kén: teniatiatohtáhrho í:ken,

Sok khé:re'k ake'nihsténha akonaktà:ke, sók tho… [unintelligible]. Sok átste iontiaké:tote. Sók wa'è:ron, "sateriièn:tare nahò:ten? Iah nonwén:ton tekka'én:ions tsi niió:re tsi ióhskats nátste. Kwah hé: ia'satkátho nikatsi'tsí:io's, satkátho otsì:nekwar nikatsi'tsò:ten's"

(Laughing)

Nia'té:kon tsi, énhsehre ta' nón:wa, but tó:ske. Ó:nen'k tsi kwah tokèn:'en enhska'eniónnion, oh ní:tsi tiotáhsawe nahò:ten. Akwé: nahò:ten . Nek tsi ó:nen'k tsi enhsatatenaktóthahse. Tóka iah thahsatatenaktóthahse, tenhsatohétsten.

Group – (agreeing) Yeah, hen.

Elder – Tenhsatohétsten, iah thahsáttoke ken'niwatorì:wa. Nek tsi, tsi niió:re tsi iorihowá:nen ó:nen'k tsi ténhsta'ne tánon satón:rie, ska'eniónnion, akwé: satkahthóhseron nia'té:kon, ken?

Ieronhienhá:wi – Hen, ne thí:

Wathahí:ne – Wahsì:ron niá'té:kon akatkáhtho, nó:nen wahsì:ron ahsatón:rie tánon ahsanaktóthahse nè:'e tsi tió:konte teionkwahstaríhens. Tió:konte nia'té:kon saionkwa'nikónhrhen. Nek tsi nó:nen ténhsta'ne tánon

enhska'én:ion átste, ne wa'kathkátho. Ne okwire'shòn:'a, karonta'shòn:'a,

Nó:nen ahsatahónhsatate ne onerahte'shòn:'a watorià:nerons. Iah

thahsáttoke tsi ni… (makes sound of leaves fluttering)

Elder – Ioneráhtakahre.

Wathahí:ni – Hen ion'wé:sen tsi ioneráhtakahre. Enwá:ton ken enkì:ron

ionerahtakahrí:ios?

Elder – Enwá:ton enhsì:ron. Ionwé:sen aiesathón:te'ne ioneráhtakahre,

kwah tsi ní:tsi skén:nen ionatorià:neron ne onerahte'shòn:'a.

In this passage our elder told us a story of when her and her sister were little and her sister pointed out how beautiful the yellow flowers were. They were very young, talking about the beauty in nature as they were looking out the window from their mother's room. She told us about the importance of slowing down and paying attention to the beauty of the natural world. It is important to be connected in that way, otherwise we will miss the beauty all around us. The group agreed with her and continued to discuss what they had observed and how the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen helps us to stay in relationship with the natural world. They affirmed that it supports our wellbeing, ne skén:nen aietewanonhtonnniónhseke [so that we will continue to think in a peaceful way].

Visiting, Storytelling & Elder Support

Following the independent study, the group come together once again to visit with our elder speaker. The goal was to engage in natural conversation pertaining to the theme of *Traditional Teachings and the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen*. It was nice to have everyone gather at Wathahí:ne's home once again. Most of the women were present with the exception of Kanerahtóntha who was unable to attend that evening.

Everyone was very comfortable gathering at Wathahí:ne's, including our elder. It is her former residence, now her daughter's; she lives just next door and could easily walk over. Having our sessions in Wathahí:ne's home was significant for us. Within our homes is where we want our language to live and thrive and that night was a fine example of this as our group came together. Ieronhienhá:wi's son, Katsenhaién:ton, also joined us that evening. It was his birthday, and his only request was to join us in our learning that evening. He is such a kindhearted young man, a keen language learner, who we all know from when he was little. Ieronhienhá:wi asked if he could join us and everyone agreed he could attend our session that night. It was notable that we had three generations sitting around the kitchen table once again that evening.

As per the beginning of every group session, the women were greeting one another and catching up on their week. As everyone arrived they transitioned to their reflections on the tasks for the unit – to reflect, observe and refine our language through the practice of giving thanks each day. Several of them shared that they had not read the text I had provided, but alternatively they gave closer attention to the natural world, to family, to nature and reflected on the words of thanksgiving. They talked about a heightened awareness of their surroundings and made comparisons to mindfulness practices.

The group had extensive discussions on the teachings of the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen and how it helps them to stay grounded in their relationships with the natural world. Our elder also shared many teachings with the group, connecting them to her lived experiences, while the group listened intently.

Tho ki' naiá:wen thí:ken tsi niwakénhnhes átste takátien akahskwen'nà:ke[54]. Akwé: rotiiakén:'en kwah nék tho kítskote tánon ion'wé:sen wenhniseriióhne. Shi iaó:tehkwe, kwah nek ne tsi sathón:te ne thí:ken ónerahte, ioneráhtakahre wáhi. Sók kwáh ne ne shá't í:ken kwah skén:nen tsi ní:tsi ahsanonhtónnionhwe. Ion'wésen. Kwáh nek ne skén:nen tsi ní:tsi ahsanitskó:ten. Iah tha'tiotonhontsóhon ónhka taiesenithá:ren. Kwáh nek ne tahsatkahthónnion ne sha'oié:ra. Ne ki nì:'i aonhá:'a tewakonwéskwani nó:nen iaó:te, ne aonhá:'a tewakonwéskwani.

We were listening to her stories as well as to the language she used to describe her experiences and understandings. Our primary method of learning throughout our visiting session was through an **elder-centered approach** where the group was actively listening with no interruption to our elder's stories and teachings. Once her stories were done, we followed by asking her questions or adding to the conversation. Throughout the visiting session the group discussed how the language learning strategies connected them back to the earth. Learners shared that language on

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[54] Akaskwen'nà:ke is Kanehsata'kéha where the 'w' is not pronounced in the first person possessive pronoun as in Kahnawà:ke's equivalent akwahskwen'nà:ke [on my porch]. However, "some idiolects in Kanehsatà:ke and Wáhta still pronounce the 'w' (R. DeCaire, personal communication, July 17, 2024).

the land required being very observant of nature, noticing what is all around us and thinking about the language required to describe it.

The evening was also emotional for one participant as discussions led to the topic of being thankful for the people. The Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen includes an acknowledgment of all those gathered as well as all peoples on the earth. Essentially the learner was saying that it's sometimes hard to be grateful for all peoples because they are lost in this world and cause harm to others with greed and disrespect. Those feelings were validated by others in the group and words were shared on how others approach this reality.

Iakotetshén:'en - Ì:'i takatáhsawen tsi nón:we ne akhwá:tsire tánon kheien'okòn:'a. Tánon tewakwé:kon tsi ní:tsi shé:kon skátne ionkwaio'tátie, tsi nihá:ti ronhrónkha ne tiotierénhton raotiwén:na, tsi nihá:ti ronhronkha'onhátie, tsi nihá:ti enhatiwennóhetste tsi kanonhsésne, tánon tsi nihá:ti iah árekho tehatitshén:ri ne Skén:nen, takhenonhwerá:ton tánon aiá:wen's kátke enwá:ton enhatiié:na.

Wathahí:ne – Wow!

Kahtehrón:ni – Niá:wen.

Kaia'tiio - …Wake'nikonhraién:tas tsi nahò:ten tsí:ton. Wentó:re aiesateriièn:tarake oh nontié:ren nè:'e takhenonhwerá:ton tánon ken' nihatiiéhrha. Tánon watié:sen enwakenà:khwen nek tsi ó:nen'k tsi

aonsahsehià:rake tsi ón:kwe ó:ni nè:'e. Arenhátien tsi nihatiiéhrha, yeah iah

teioiánere, iah teion'wé:sen nek tsi ón:kwe nè:'e tánon enwá:ton

tahsatenonhwerá:ton tánon tsi ní:ne ahsheianonhtónnionhwe. Tsi ní:ne

ienhsóhetste thí:ken ka'shatshenhserí:io raotirihwá:ke, ronónha ó:ni

enhatiié:na tóka'. Nè:'e tsi nó:nen sénha skén:nen tewanonhtonnniónkwas

tsonkwe'tátson, sénha enwathará:tate that collective energy. Tho ní:tsi ni:'i

kanonhtonniónkwas. I know wentó:re.

Wahtahí:ne – Tó:ske tsi nahò:ten tsí:ton.

Learners described how they give greetings to all peoples through words of encouragement so

they might find a peaceful path in their lives and, although it is difficult considering that greed

and hate exist, we have to look to our teachings. As Rotinonhsión:ni our ways guide us to put our

minds, actions and energies towards Ka'nikonhrí:io [a Good Mind] and our collective vision is

that one day all people would possess Ka'nikonhrí:io. Through the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen

we put our minds together and send greetings to all peoples so they will live in a good way, to

have peace in relation to one another and the natural world. As the learners shared their thinking

with one another, the overall the discussion covered how the words of thanksgiving provide us a

path to mental wellness, healing and peace in our lives.

Many teachings and stories were shared by our elder that evening and the group was very

grateful to have her supporting us. We acknowledged her for being so patient, kind, and

knowledgeable. We expressed our deep gratitude to our elder speaker for working with us and

giving us so much of her time and attention. We all agreed that we were so fortunate to have her

supporting us and for being so giving to the group each time we met. We learned so much from her and continue to be uplifted by her guidance and support.

Extending, Reviewing, and Peer Sharing

Following the visiting session the participants were to review the material discussed in order to extend their learning. The unit called for a review of new vocabulary and grammatical patterns. Learners primarily focused on continuing their observations and applying the teachings our elder speaker had shared. The group also studied by reviewing some of the various resources provided throughout the study.

Wathahí:ne shared that she worked closely with her mother to study a text developed by the late Kawinónhshen Audrey Nelson (2019) from Kanehsatà:ke who had passed away only two weeks prior. She wrote out all the verbs in volume one and sorted them according to verb form. The group was greatly impressed with Wathahí:ne's efforts. She added that her plans were to conjugate each of them in various tenses, including the progressive form to express an ongoing action.

To review and extend my learning I listened to our peer group recordings. In doing so I paid close attention to the corrective feedback I was provided by our elder. For example, as the group was discussing the resource developed by Audrey Nelson (2019), we noted that the lexicon was not organized in alphabetical order nor by categories. An excerpt from the discussion provides an example of my incorrect choice of **verb tense**:

Kahtehrón:ni – …Tsi ní:tsi kahiatónnion, iah tekakwatákwen in any [specific] order.

Elder – Tsi ní:tsi wa'onnonhtónnion wáhi?

Kahtehrón:ni – Hen, tho ní:tsi **wa'ehiá:ton**.

Elder – **Iakohiá:ton.**

Kahtehrón:ni – Iakohiá:ton. Tho ní:tsi iakohiá:ton.

In the example, I used the factual aspect verb *wa'ehiá:ton* [she wrote it] and our elder corrected me by providing the more appropriate stative aspect form *iakohiá:ton* [she has written it]. Although they are very close in meaning, the latter was more appropriate for the context because I was talking about a specific time when the author was writing it.

An additional example of elder support shows how I was provided with an alternative word choice to better depict what I was referring to about the size of the text. Our elder was **providing more accurate vocabulary** to better describe what I was trying to convey:

The group was discussing the Cooke manuscript of names and Kaia'ti:io was recalling how it was challenging to use the digital PDF version and she was scrolling on her phone to study the text.

Kahtehrón:ni – Kaio'tenhserowá:nen kawennaráhstha nonkwá: wáhi? Nek tsi iah tháhserek tsi tho nikahiatonhserowá:nen wahi?

Elder – Tókani enwá:ton enhsí:ron *tho nikahiatonhserá:tens.*

Kahtehrón:ni – (Repeats) Hen, tho nikahiatonhserá:tens.

Here I used the word *nikahiatonhserowá:nen* [it is such a big book] and was then provided with

nikahiatonhserá:tens [it is such a thick (extensive) book] by our elder. As she provided the

alternative vocabulary, I immediately knew it was a much more accurate description and

created a specific visual for the listener.

Our elder also provided new vocabulary. In one instance I was sharing about the

importance of our wampum belts and how they serve as reminders for us every day, they are here

for us to pick them up and talk about them. Referring to the Beaver Belt or Dish with One

Spoon, I was saying that it connects to the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen where our worldview and

understandings of sustainability are reinforced within the belt. I shared that it is a reminder of

how the hunters take animals in a sustainable way saying "…ne enwatahsónteron

akonnónhnheke ne kontírio" [it will continue to be that the animals will continue to live on]. At

that point our elder provided us with specific vocabulary that describes sustainability:

Elder – (Gives Kahtehrón:ni the vocabulary) ***Iah thiatahséhsa'ahte***. Nè:'e tsi

nó:nen akwé:kon ienhséhsa'ahte, ne kén:ton iah ki' thé:non

aonsaionkwaién:take [Don't finish them off. Because when they are finished

off, that means we will no longer have any of it].

Group – Quietly sounding out, writing in their notebooks.

Elder – Né: kén:ton, ***you're not going to finish all of them***.

When reviewing the recordings, I also noted how learning through an elder centered approach provided learners with the opportunity to acquire new vocabulary used naturally in context. I was sharing about the importance of having discussions about our traditional ceremonial protocols aóhskon Onkwehonwehnéha, saying that it is not often that we get to do so and it would help us to use and study that specific language. I added that we do not use that specific language in everyday contexts. Our elder then replied, saying that we should be using those words in our everyday conversation; however, some of it has fallen out of use.

Elder – Aowenhkénha, aowenhkénha ne thia'tewenhniserá:ke ne tho

nikawennò:tens áhsatste. Nek tsi é:so tsi iah tetsatewennaienté:ris, né: aorí:wa.

So wahón:nise tho niiohtón:ne. Enwá:ton ì:se tentisewáhawe.

Thia'tewenhniserá:ke énsewatste ne owén:na, tánon téntewe.

Ieronhienhá :wi – Oh nahò:ten wahsí:ron? ***Aowenhkénha*** ken?

Kahtehrón :ni – Hen aowenhkénha.

Elder – Hen, ***supposed to***[55]. Aowenhkénha.

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[55] *Aowenhkénha* can be translated more accurately to *should/should have* and is specific to Kanehsatà:ke and Wáhta, who also use *aó:wen* meaning *should* (R. DeCaire, personal communication, July 15, 2024.

Group – (repeating) Aowenhkénha.

Ieronhienhá:wi – Aowenhkénha, iah nowén:ton tewakathontè:'on thi.

Elder – Hen, aowenhkénha, *supposed to*.

In this short example of elder-centered learning, we are listening to her story, teachings, reflections, and learning what she is sharing, simultaneously noticing her language use. We listened intently, we did not interrupt her. When she completed sharing, we then ask for clarifications on something that may have stood out, be it the topic or the meanings and translations.

Other examples of elder centered learning show how learners are fully understanding what is being shared; however, they are attuned to her style of language use. This short example is taken from the group's conversation about shopping for blankets:

Elder - Iah teion'wé:sen tóka' só:tsi wahsí:ratens. Nó:nen só:tsi wahsí:ratens, só:tsi iókste tánon iohtá:nawens. Sók ne sa'tarihèn:'en. So, né: ion'wé:sen, iah só:tsi tewahsí:ratens.

[It is not nice if the blanket is too thick. When the blanket is too thick, it is too heavy and hot. Then you get sweaty. So it is nice when the blanket is not too thick]

As the group was agreeing that thinner blankets are more comfortable they were also quietly repeating some of her words. This is an additional example of how keen listening is a key component of elder centered learning, as she is always modeling natural language use. In this case, learners easily understand and are actively listening to her words and how they flow so easily and naturally.

Listening to our conversation about blankets, I had shared that the nights were getting cooler so I was shopping for a new blanket at a store in the city. I was saying that I went there before but never really looked around at their various linens and blankets. Our elder noticed I left out the contrastive *tha'* marker for negation and corrected me saying "Iah nonwén:ton **tha**'tewakatkahthónnion" [I had never looked around]. I echoed her words as I continued my story. Listening back on the recordings I was able to hear the moments our elder supported me with either grammar or vocabulary. As I listed to the vocabulary based on her feedback, I was able to recognize areas of the language that I needed to improve upon. I also noted some words our elder provided to support others within the peer group. The following list was taken from my personal study notes:

Verbs Corrected

Iah nonwén:ton tha'tewakatkahthónnion– I never looked around

Iah nonwén:ton tewakatatninòn:se – I have never bought it for myself

Aonsakatatehiahráhkwen – I should/ought to remind myself

Wa'ehiá:ton/ Iakohiá:ton – She wrote vs she had written

Incorporations Modelled

Ioneráhtakahre – the leaves make noise

Nia'teierihwaienté:ri – she knows (how to do) a lot of things

Vocabulary Provided

Iakawenhntorà:se – she struggles/it is challenging for her

Eniakowennotáhrho'se – she will get caught up on her words

Entiesaráhsten tsi nahò:ten – she is articulate/very descriptive

Iah thiatahséhsa'ahte – you will not finish them off (referencing sustainability)

Aowenhkénha – supposed to [should]

Ia'teká:ien – it's right on/accurate

Teieiáhse – both of them

Reviewing the peer group recordings was very beneficial to solidify my learning and it also reinforced the teachings that were discussed amongst the women or shared by our elder speaker. I was inspired to hear each of the women talk about their connections to nature, the natural world, the people and the land. Hearing it being shared in Kanien'kéha was poetic and beautiful as I re-listened to each of them talk about those kindred relationships. Translating it into English, just does not connect in the same way, it loses its depth and brilliance. Our recorded sessions will continue to be an unexpected treasure generated from this project.

Unit Four Summary, Evaluation and Feedback

With the last visiting and peer learning session of the project complete, the group's final task was to evaluate the unit plan using the evaluative rubric (see Appendix 2). They also shared their reflections and feedback on the project overall. That evening was the final session for the group. I was excited and grateful to be at this point. I hosted it at my home and cooked a celebratory dinner as a way of honoring all the women for their time, expertise and commitment to the project. We had moose stew, homemade bread, meat pie, pumpkin pie and of course some homemade lemon pie as an ode to the speakers who shared their stories[56] in unit two. I wanted everything to go perfectly and hoped I would end the project with everyone feeling appreciated for their time and contributions. It felt like an ending to a long journey and, at the same time, felt like the beginning of a new chapter for my language learning.

Once everyone had arrived we all sat and ate together, sharing stories as we had been doing for weeks throughout the summer months. Our elder was the only one who couldn't attend and sent a message saying she was feeling under the weather. I felt a little sad that she could not be there to hear our reflections and appreciation for all her time and support. When our dinner was complete, I provided everyone with the rubric to evaluate the unit on *Oral Tradition and Elder Centered Learning*. The women continued to chat and tell stories as they filled in the final rubric.

Consistent with all the previous units of study, the peer group felt the oral tradition and elder centered learning approach was very suitable for learners with advanced levels of proficiency to progress towards superior learning targets. Iakotetshén:'en wrote that "visiting,

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[56] The audio visual resource used in unit two of the study featured elder speakers Alice McDonald and Elizabeth Sunday (Ionkwahronkha'onhátie, 2022) where they discussed how they preferred lemon pie made from scratch as opposed to a boxed commercial variety.

speaking and working with a speaker is key for advanced to superior language learning." Having a first language speaker at the center of their learning helped them to harness their listening skills and provided authentic language use for the learners to emulate.

The learners shared that the learning approaches for this unit were very enjoyable and noted that a very high level of understanding is required for this learning approach, based on listening, natural storytelling and conversation. The peer group felt that it engaged them to practice their listening, understanding and speaking skills and felt it was very effective. The learning targets were very well suited for advanced learners as opposed to those with lower levels of proficiency. The peer group affirmed that this final unit of study greatly contributed to their ongoing lexical development and the vocabulary was very contextualized to Rotinonhsión:ni worldview.

The group felt that the learning approach helped them to refine their knowledge of Kanien'kéha grammar and particle usage through listening, storytelling and discussions. Polysynthetic linguistic refinement was present throughout as our elder modelled authentic language use and provided corrective feedback throughout the peer group sessions. All learners agreed that the unit strengthened their connection to the natural world as well as their relationships with one another. The learning strategies fostered respect towards the natural world and to our elder speaker.

The women reported that the elder centered approach was fulfilling, as many stories and teachings were shared amongst the group. It also engaged the learners to share their knowledge of Onkwehón:we ways with one another. Learners remarked that studying through oral tradition was enlightening. It was very rewarding to learn language through stories, extensive discussion and lots of laughter. They affirmed that it expanded their thinking about how we all see similar

things within the natural world, yet experience or interpret them differently. They enjoyed

hearing the various perspectives, histories and stories focused on Onkwehón:we worldview and

teachings.

All learners indicated that the unit provided them with a wholistic learning approach.

With the focus on oral tradition and communication, learners were harnessing their listening

skills while also analyzing our elder's language use. They took advantage of their time with our

elder to follow up and ask for clarifications when needed. The use of the recordings was an

additional opportunity for linguistic analyses.

Participants validated the relevancy of the unit, saying that it was aligned with

Rotinonhsión:ni cultural perspectives and ways of knowing. They shared that it provided them

with a very reflective process that fostered connections to the natural world through a

Rotinonhsión:ni worldview. All learners expressed that it expanded their knowledge about their

language, teachings and ways of knowing. The unit also provided appropriate criteria for learners

to reflect on their progress and abilities associated with the learning targets.

All learners reported that the independent and peer group learning strategies were very

engaging and effective. They felt that, although the unit was intended for advanced learners,

some components can be adapted for learners at all levels of proficiency. They asserted that it

was very impactful to have an elder speaker supporting them and that the strategies were very

helpful and meaningful to them as they gained new knowledge of the language, history, land and

everyday life. For this learning approach, our elder speaker was the primary resource. Without an

elder speaker, many additional resources would have been needed, including audio visual

resources and available descriptive grammar-based resources. Our elder, Konwaia'torèn:'en

Deer, was our cherished source of knowledge, encouragement and support for this project and

beyond. Akwé:kon sha'teionkwa'nikonhrò:ten tsi tiakorihwaierihkó:wa ne Konwaia'torèn:'en tánon kwah í:ken tsi ionkwaterahswiióhston tsi ní:kon wa'onkhirihónnien[57].

The unit evaluation came to a close as the peer group identified some key areas of strength as well as areas for growth. The opportunity for natural conversation focused on a culturally grounded topic was deemed a strong point of the unit. The learners also felt that learning from each other through peer conversation was a virtue, and, to a great degree, having all the women contributing to the conversations and learning enhanced their level of engagement. Finally, our elder speaker was the pillar of the unit, due to her knowledge, patience, experience, encouragement and support.

The participants provided feedback on how the unit may be strengthened for future use. The main suggestion was to implement the approach for a longer period of time and to continue focused teachings through in-depth discussions aóhskon Kanien'kéha following the Rotinonhsión:ni cycle of ceremonies. Another suggestion was to invite additional speakers who possess specialized ceremonial knowledge to join the visiting sessions. In this way there would be a pool of speakers supporting the group's language development and knowledge of our traditional Rotinonhsión:ni ceremonial teachings to ensure they continue into the future.

As the evening came to a close, our last session of the study, there were no big celebrations or feelings of closure for the women. They saw it as a beginning and shared that they now had a pathway for continued learning. They resumed planning and talked about what was next. Wathahí:ne extended an invitation to host the next learning session at her place. It almost felt uneventful. I felt lonesome when everyone left and the house was quiet. I was so

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[57] This phrase is loosely translated as, "We are all of the same mind, in agreement that Konwaia'torèn:'en is a great woman and we are very fortunate for how much she has taught us all."

happy and grateful we would be continuing. It didn't need to be eventful, just continuing. As it should be.

The next chapter provide a discussion of the results. I focus on the implications of the Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy further and expand upon the emergent themes that came to light through piloting the four units of study. I also discuss the impacts of advanced learning using a peer group and the pedagogical approaches that came to light through the study.

Chapter 6: Discussion

This doctoral research documented how a peer group of women with advanced proficiency in Kanien'kéha piloted and analyzed four units of study grounded in a new Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy. The purpose of the study was to identify advanced Onkwehón:we language pedagogies to scaffold learners from advanced levels towards a superior level of spoken language proficiency (ACTFL, 2024). It is hoped that the findings will contribute to community-based efforts and successes championed in my home community of Kahnawà:ke. This chapter discusses the implications of the Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy further as well as the emergent themes that came to light through piloting the four units of study.

Onkwehonwehnéha Aietewanonhtonnniónhseke – To Think as Rotinonhsión:ni – A Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy

In preparation for the research pilot, a Rotinonhsión:ni centric pedagogical framework was created, target proficiency benchmarks were defined, and existing Kanien'kéha resources were identified. The results show that establishing the Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy (see Figure 1, p. 63) was a crucial step needed as it identified essential components of advanced Kanien'kéha language learning and guided the development of each subsequent unit. Having a culturally grounded framework that centers Rotinonhsión:ni worldview and ways of knowing led to highly engaging units of study that directly addressed the needs and interests of the learners. The new pedagogical framework proved to be successful, as the learners were engaged in lengthy Kanien'kéha discussions to analyze language and discuss everyday life, cultural teachings, histories, and worldview throughout each unit of study. It also contributed to

the learners gaining a heightened awareness of Rotinonhsión:ni ways of knowing, such as intentional observation, visiting and oral storytelling. This aligns with the work of Indigenous scholars Cajete (1994) and Cornelius (1999) who advocate for strong educational frameworks to ground Indigenous teaching and learning. The planning phase is thus a key step that allows us to think deeply about the needs of the learners, as well as our worldview and values as Rotinonhsión:ni people.

Balancing a Structural and Communicative Approach

The Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy established important cultural foundations while also emphasizing a balance between structural and communicative approaches for advanced Indigenous language learning. The framework ensured learners were engaged in a wholistic learning approach that included conversation and language use, while also leveraging pedagogies that take into account the highly polysynthetic nature of Kanien'kéha. Green (2020) and DeCaire (2023) also strongly advocate for this balanced approach as they describe their successes teaching through Kanien'kéha adult immersion programming. The results are consistent, showing that both grammar analysis and ongoing communicative tasks are effective and invaluable for extending advanced learners towards higher levels of proficiency. In addition, having a participant who is very knowledgeable of Kanien'kéha grammar was an asset to the group, helping with conjugations and grammar analyses to complement our elder speaker's efforts. This demonstrates how second language speakers who are highly proficient in Kanien'kéha can play a significant role in teaching and learning Kanien'kéha.

Planning for language learning takes into account the existing skills of the learners in order for them to participate with a high level of engagement. The framework ensures planning is

targeted and purposeful, resulting in units of study that provide a clear pathway for advanced learners to increase their proficiency. As shown through the pilot, planning also prepares learners to maximize their time learning together with elder speakers. This collaborative learning is a particularly important component of language planning (Foxcroft, 2016), as discussions and storytelling through peer group learning and gathering with our elder were determined to be the most impactful and enjoyable for the participants.

Contributing to the field of Indigenous language revitalization, a pedagogical framework for Indigenous language learning provides a map for understanding the fundamental components required advanced levels of language learning. Planning empowers learners with the knowledge of where they are going and provides pathways to get there that are derived from and applied within an Indigenous worldview, cultural perspectives, and ways of knowing. This shows that planning for Indigenous language learning is focused primarily on language development with cultural understandings intrinsic to the learning. It is much more than planning activities in the target language (Wiggins & McTighe, 2015). The next sections discuss key points that arose through the four units of study employed by the peer group of learners.

Peer Group Learning Model

Studying within a peer group, learners habitually gather to speak Kanien'kéha and collaborate towards a common goal of improving their language skills. The peer group learning sessions are vital for advanced learners to progress to higher levels of proficiency. Together they create an intentional, consistent, and immersive learning environment. Supported by an elder speaker, this challenges learners by providing a space for them to engage in extended conversations where listening is paramount when elder speakers are sharing stories and

teachings. Through these immersive interactions, the learners must be purposeful in their learning in order to notice language (Keck & Kim, 2014; Lightbown & Spada, 2013) and expand the areas where they are lacking, be it vocabulary, idioms, or more complex tenses.

The peer group model (see Figure 4, p. 231) puts into practice Rotinonhsión:ni values and ways of knowing by fostering kinship between families, learners, and elder speakers. With each passing session the group grows closer, sharing stories, experiences, childhood memories, hopes for the future and more. As seen throughout the results, learners display a high level of trust in one another where they feel safe to share their stories, to make mistakes, and to be corrected as needed. This places great importance on forming a peer group that can foster this kind of positive learning environment. Ideally learners would determine the peer group for themselves and invite individuals they feel would work well together.

The model for this project was designed for learners to analyze vocabulary and grammar through independent study strategies as well as together within the peer group based on an identified corpus or theme. This collective learning proved to be a notable benefit. As learners focused on various components of the language and discussed what they discovered in the group, in turn, they expanded and raised the collective understanding of the whole. As each story was told and each question was asked, learners learned through one another's learning. Advanced level learners also can support one another when needed, offering corrections and modeling the language for one another to fill individual knowledge gaps. The peer learning model takes advantage of the group's collective knowledge of Kanien'kéha, where authentic language is modeled by elder speakers as well as fellow learners, supporting one another to become better speakers.

Peer learning provides a space for advanced level learners to gather and socialize in the language as they continue on their language learning journey together. It provides an opportunity for learners to "look outside of the classroom, to ourselves and to other avenues" (Foxcroft, 2016, p. 10) in order to create a learning opportunity based on our specific interests and needs. Through visiting, conversation and storytelling, learners apply and refine their language skills. The peer group model promotes togetherness and strengthens relationships amongst the learners and speakers. For Indigenous language learners with advanced levels of proficiency, a peer group learning model has proved to be a viable option that can be established with little or no institutional support, programming or funding. Consolidating the participant feedback, group interactions as well as the evaluations from each unit of study piloted, common components of peer learning were identified. Figure 4 was developed to synthesize eight key principles of a peer group model that emerged throughout the research.

Figure 4

Principles of a Peer Group Model for Advanced Indigenous Language Learners
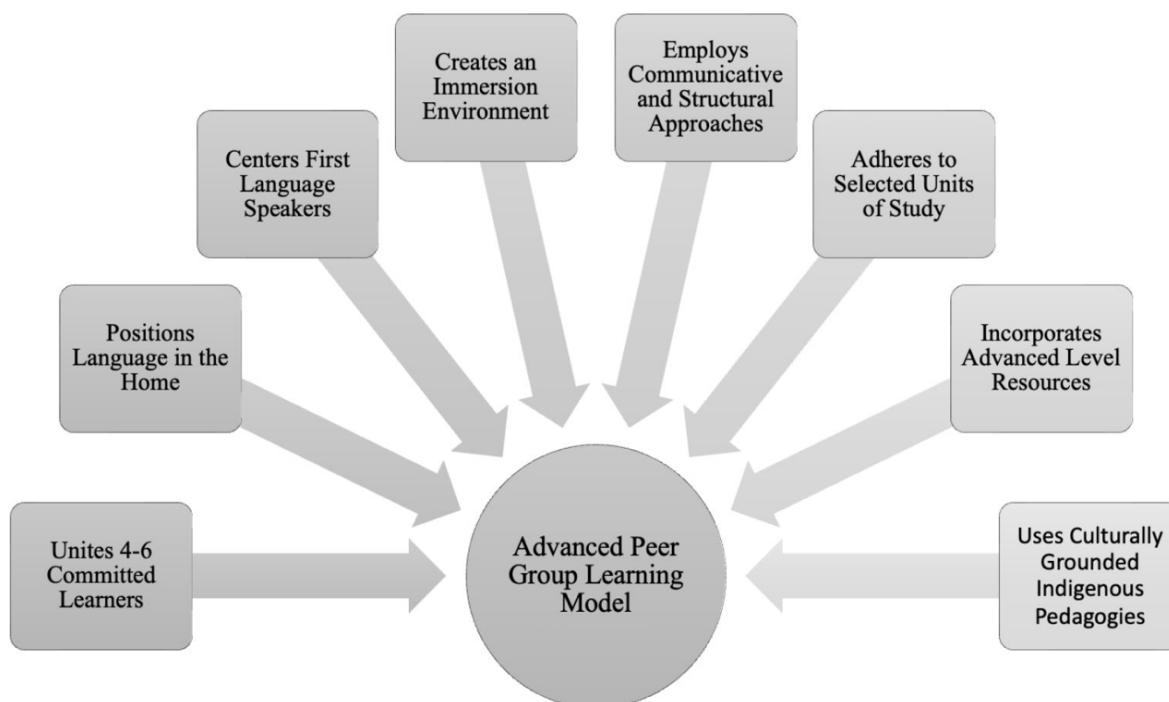
Note: This figure depicts eight key principles of a peer group model for advanced language learners.

Guiding Questions for a Differentiated Approach

The study shows that planning for learning within a peer group learning model should include opportunities for differentiated learning. This means that, while the group remains focused on targeted advanced language skills and functions, learning can still be tailored, based on individual strengths, interests and needs. This is important to consider, because, although the

learners are at advanced levels of proficiency, they still possess varying linguistic knowledge, learn in different ways and have diverse interests. While differentiation empowers learners to focus their attention on their individual needs and interests, it can also be seen as a motivational factor to keep learners inspired to continue learning.

The study shows, therefore, that guiding questions can be used to incorporate a differentiated approach within a peer group learning model for advanced learners. Using open-ended questions within each unit of study allows learners to determine the focus of inquiry within each unit, based on the gaps in their linguistic knowledge and interests. The results show that learners appreciated having the guiding questions included in each unit, and repeatedly stated that they felt empowered as learners, as the units provided them a roadmap to progress as speakers. The process was summarized by Kaia'tí:io, saying that the individual learning strategies, along with prompting questions provided in the unit, "touched on different modes of learning, and left room for individuals to take initiative in how they want to analyze the text." This was valuable feedback. It showed that the participants applied the strategies and focused their learning on what best suited them when analyzing the various text types. Wiggins & McTighe (2015) describe several functions of what they call an "essential question," saying "it *helps students effectively inquire and make sense* of important but complicated ideas, knowledge and know-how… .[and] helps the learner to arrive at important understandings as well as greater coherence in content knowledge and skill" (p. 109). Including guiding questions[58] for the learners proved to be an important inclusion for the study overall.

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[58] See chapter 5 for a description of the purpose of the guiding questions, as well as those selected for each unit of study.

In summary, a peer group model requires various learning strategies that target advanced-high to superior language functions. Focused units of study that incorporate open-ended questions provide advanced learners with direction to improve their Kanien'kéha skills and knowledge. While fostering self-directed and life-long learning, well-planned units must also promote deeper understandings of Kanien'kéha through Rotinonhsión:ni worldview and ways of knowing.

Pedagogies Emerging from the Framework

In alignment with the new Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy, I developed four thematic units of study for the research. The units featured learning approaches that aimed to bring Rotinonhsión:ni ways and values to the forefront while addressing the linguistic needs of the already advanced learners. This was done through carefully selected themes that were wholistically grounded within the framework in order to explore my main research question that asked **what Rotinonhsión:ni language pedagogies can support Kahnawà:ke's advanced second language speakers to progress towards superior proficiency in Kanien'kéha**.

The themes I developed for each unit incorporated the interests of the participating group of Rotinonhsión:ni women. The themes created the means through which the language learning targets would be attained. The results affirm that selecting appropriate themes is integral to ensure that the pedagogical approaches are relevant and interesting to the specific learners. Placing myself as an active participant proved to be helpful in the process. I was able to reflect upon my linguistic needs as an advanced learner while keeping the proficiency targets in the forefront. This aligns with the backwards design model as described by Wiggins & McTighe

(2015), who underscore the importance of having relevant and interesting themes to engage the learners.

Unit development for the research also considered the advanced level resources needed to complement the units and engage the interests of the peer group of women. To accompany each thematic unit, existing Kanien'kéha resources with varying text types were selected in order to explore different learning approaches. The resulting units were created using the following four themes:

- Kahnawà:ke - Stories of Community and Resilience

- Elder Storytelling of Community Life, Change and Resilience

- Women's Roles and Responsibilities for Traditional Kanien'kéha Naming Practices and Protocols

- Traditional Teachings and the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen

The results show that learning through carefully selected themes with targeted proficiency goals contributes to a high level of engagement. This was evident through the sustained participation and positive feedback from the peer group of learners.

There was much knowledge gleaned about Onkwehón:we language pedagogies for advanced peer learning through piloting each of the thematic units. Each of them could have easily been given its own chapter or been studied exclusively as a stand-alone research topic. Altogether the results emphasize the importance of utilizing pedagogies that are developed based on our own values and ways as Onkwehón:we people. I have selected central points from the project that can enhance our understandings of pedagogies for Indigenous language learning, specifically those aimed at scaffolding a peer group of learners towards a superior level of proficiency.

Ionkhi'nihsténha Ionkhirihonnién:ni – Language on the Land Pedagogy

From the start of the research into Rotinonhsión:ni language pedagogies, several key understandings began to show themselves and take shape with every passing learning session. Each time we gathered, new insights stood out that felt very profound and meaningful to us as a peer group of Rotinonhsión:ni women. The research created space for us to slow down, to notice, to re-connect, and to remember as we explored advanced Indigenous language pedagogies.

One of the key impacts of the present study shows that Rotinonhsión:ni language learning must be purposeful in strengthening our relationships and connections to the land – Ionkhi'nihsénha. As described in the results section, land-based language pedagogies require learners to be intentionally observant of the natural world, notice what is all around us and think about the language required to describe it. For Rotinonhsión:ni language learners, this also means observing, noticing, and thinking about these things through a Rotinonhsión:ni lens. This is especially apparent within the results discussing the women's experiences as they studied Unit 3: *Traditional Naming Practices and Protocols* and Unit 4**:** *Traditional Teachings and the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen.*

As described within the results, the peer group studied many unique noun-verb incorporations and the characteristics of traditional Kanien'kéha names. As a key component of the unit, learners were also required to study their environment, the seasons, weather patterns, animal life and more. This purposeful observation leads learners to think through an Onkwehón:we perspective and apply this thinking through the practice of analyzing and creating new Kanien'kéha names. This is a concrete example of how land-based language pedagogies contribute to ensuring that our diverse knowledge systems, spiritual connections and worldview

expressed through the nuances of Kanien'kéha will continue. It also underscores why careful planning is paramount to set the stage for this deep learning to take place.

The results from unit four show that observing the natural world and refining language skills in order to describe it contributes to strengthened spiritual relationships with all the elements within the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen. Focusing on the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen at advanced levels is important for maintaining our traditional practices and contributes to the overall well-being of the learners. This is consistent with the work of ILR scholars Sampson (2014) and Rorick (2019) who both share similar experiences learning through Indigenous land-based pedagogies, saying it profoundly impacted them as Indigenous language learners by renewing their spiritual connections to their ancestral lands and waters. Dr. Lorna Wanosts'a7 Williams asserts that this way of learning language is essential for the continuation of Indigenous languages, saying "when we bring our languages to those activities, to those ways of being, it helps us to understand and to appreciate the beautiful ways in which we see the world, it's [in] the way that we name the world that we realize our uniqueness" (Williams, 2019).

As Rotinonhsión:ni, we strive to maintain and foster our kindred relationships with the natural world as well as with one another (Antone, 2013; Cornelius, 1999; Porter, 2008; Elijah, 2020; Stacey, 2016). Language on the Land Pedagogy supports us to maintain our distinct worldviews and continue our relationship with the land. Advanced level language pedagogies must support these values and can be achieved by combining traditional land-based practices with the targetted language functions. This combination results in Rotinonhsión:ni land-based language pedagogies, language on the land, that target the goals of traditional land-based practices and language learning simultaneously.

Applied broadly to the field of Indigenous language revitalization, Language on the Land Pedagogy is grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing and fosters spiritual growth through understandings of Indigenous ecological knowledge. The project exemplifies how these forms of Indigenous pedagogies connect us to our homelands and contribute to the maintenance of our kindred-relationships with the natural world. The project also shows how learners with advanced levels of proficiency can communicate their understandings and relationship to the natural world. Listening to the transcripts, I was inspired to hear each of the women talk about their connections to nature, the natural world, the people, and the land. Hearing it in Kanien'kéha was poetic and beautiful as they shared their understandings of those kindred relationships with depth and brilliance. This is significant as it shows the importance of incorporating Language on the Land Pedagogy into advanced levels of learning. Planning must also be purposeful and intentional to (re)gain a corpus of language that is directly tied to the skills, ecological knowledge, and relationship to our homelands.

Visiting As Onkwehón:we Pedagogy

Visiting as pedagogy is essential for learners to foster Kanien'kéha speaking relationships, building kinship through language learning. As advanced learners visit in the language, they also bring their families together so Kanien'kéha can be spoken in their homes and around their kitchen tables once again. Prescribing visiting as part of the peer group learning model was strategic to ensure the learners would create an immersive environment for themselves where they could hear and use Kanien'kéha to socialize and learn together. Participants expressed that the visiting sessions were the most impactful and enjoyable overall.

They greatly valued the discussions, storytelling and interesting conversations that were shared. In addition, it provided precious time together with our elder speaker.

Considering the advanced proficiency benchmark descriptors (ACTFL, 2024), in general, learners at this level have the ability to engage in conversations with extended discourse. To progress in their language skills they need to refine and extend their knowledge of more complex grammar, continue expanding their vocabulary and use the language with other Kanien'kéha speakers. The visiting sessions were designed to take full advantage of their linguistic abilities by engaging the advanced language functions of the peer group through ways that align with Onkwehón:we ways of knowing.

Visiting as Rotinonhsión:ni pedagogy puts into practice Rotinonhsión:ni ways of gathering, socializing, storytelling and passing on communal or historical knowledge. For advanced learners studying within a peer learning model, visiting in the language creates an authentic immersive environment supported by elder speakers. Visiting begins with social greetings that act as informal wellness check-ins, leading to conversations about everyday life and storytelling aóhskon Onkwehonwehnéha. As demonstrated throughout the study, visiting as a peer group fosters kinship amongst Kanien'kéha language learners as they share about themselves, their families, and many other topics. The model provides learners with a consistent community of speakers with whom to learn and interact in the language. The advanced Kanien'kéha learners in this project greatly enjoyed one another's company and coming together for the joy of speaking Kanien'kéha along with our elder.

Considering visiting as pedagogy also brings to light the importance of Rotinonhsión:ni teachings relative to hospitality. In our communities, it is still customary practice to offer a drink or a meal to visitors in our home and within the Longhouse. Within our traditional gatherings,

food is always prepared and shared with all in attendance; food is always prominent in Rotinonhsión:ni ceremonial life. Looking to the words of the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen, it is clear why food continues to be intertwined into our social, political, and ceremonial gatherings. Our natural foods are associated with our well-being as we acknowledge them and their purpose to provide sustenance "ne tóhsa aietewatonhkária'ke tánon skén:nen aietewanonhtonnniónhseke" [so that we will not be hungry and can continue to think in a peaceful way]. When we gather and food is offered to share, we are thus acknowledging that we care for one another's health and well-being. The role of food and sharing food amongst everyone present during the visiting sessions is a continuation of these cultural practices. Visiting as pedagogy supports intergenerational cultural continuity where knowledge is passed on through oral histories and maintained through our connections to one another.

Piloting advanced pedagogies within a peer group learning model shows that visiting in the language is a fundamental component of Indigenous language revitalization. Visiting as pedagogy creates the means to overcome our greatest challenge—returning the language to the home (Williams, 2019). As learners come together, visiting and learning together in our homes, our families become part of that shared space; a natural intergenerational environment. The project created this ideal situation where we were sitting around our kitchen tables to share a meal, tell stories and fill the house with language and laughter. Dr. Lorna Williams emphasizes the importance of returning language back into our homes and amongst our families, saying that

> To bring our languages back into everyday use, we need to be imaginative,
> we need to be courageous, we need to be persistent in being able to create
> those spaces within our families. And that is a huge challenge because of the

world that we live in, ...[especially] when we have come into the habit of

not visiting (Williams, 2019, 16:44).

Visiting as pedagogy within a peer group model provides the means for advanced learners to grow as speakers through ways that embrace Onkwehón:we ways of knowing. The research shows that it is possible to move away from institutionalized programming towards an autonomous learning model that lives within our homes, with our families and in an intergenerational setting.

Storytelling as Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy

The study shows that Onkwehonwehnéha storytelling is a key component of advanced language learning when studying within a peer group model. Kanien'kéha learners with advanced levels of proficiency have the ability to navigate both the role of the listener and of the storyteller. As shown throughout the research, they can engage in extended interactions using conversational and narrative storytelling. Storytelling as pedagogy challenges advanced learners to progress in their speaking skills and to hone in on their listening skills in order to expand their abilities in the language.

Through storytelling pedagogy, advanced learners develop a high level of understanding where they can follow the stories easily. As learners, their role is to be active listeners while analyzing the vocabulary, lexical semantics, and discourse used by first language speakers. Storytelling, whether narrative or conversational, provides learners with the opportunity to gain new vocabulary and understand grammatical concepts used authentically in context. Acquiring a

language concept or vocabulary item in this way provides frames of reference that are not isolated from natural usage.

As shown in the results, learners with advanced Kanien'kéha proficiency must also examine and replicate the oral storytelling discourse of first language Kanien'kéha speakers. Where they consistently and accurately set the scene and navigate from one tense to the next in all time frames using descriptive vocabulary to paint a story for the listener. Replicating these advanced-high and superior language functions in Kanien'kéha proves to be challenging for Kanien'kéha learners within the advanced levels of proficiency, indicating that explicitly focusing on storytelling discourse is important to address at this level. To achieve this goal, Kanien'kéha resources must be carefully selected to ensure that learners have authentic language samples as input that depict both narrative and natural conversational storytelling. Audio-visual and text-based resources bring the themes of each unit to life, providing learners with language samples and material that is engaging and relevant to the learners. Aligned with storytelling pedagogies, language resources prompt learners to tell their own stories, community histories and teachings. These findings inform future resource development for scaffolding advanced language learning, while Metallic (2017) reminds us that "the use of such culturally relevant materials honours Indigenous community knowledge and lived history" (p. 174).

Storytelling and oral history were paramount within each unit of study. Learning through storytelling led to high levels of engagement and put Rotinonhsión:ni ways of knowing into practice that include learning through respectful listening and discussion. This is important, as our stories convey teachings, life experiences, history, and ceremony (Archibald, 2008; Cajete, 1994; Cornelius, 1999; Iseke, 2013; Porter, 2008). Within the peer group model, learners connect through communal and personal stories. As one story is shared it flows into the next. Cajete

(2017) affirms the importance of honoring Indigenous storytelling and continuing oral tradition by reminding us that "at almost every moment in our lives, from birth to death and even in our sleep, we are engaged with stories of every form and variation" (p. 115). Storytelling pedagogy is vital to advanced Indigenous language learning, not only to support learners to gain a vast corpus of language and knowledge but also to eventually pass down Indigenous oral histories and contribute to the vitality of Indigenous storytelling and oratory.

Elder-Centered Pedagogies and Oral Traditions

Throughout the research, it was apparent that advanced language learners of Kanien'kéha benefit immensely from elder speaker support. All participants in the study repeatedly affirmed that Konwaia'torèn:'en's encouragement and consistent involvement was truly an asset to the success of the project. Learners also emphasized the importance of the visiting sessions with our elder speaker, affirming that they were invaluable to their learning. The study underscores the importance of elder-centered pedagogies, or L1 centered pedagogies, for advanced language learning and provides insights into how they are applied within a peer group model.

In the case of Kanien'kéha language learners, we are fortunate to have dedicated elder speakers who support language revitalization efforts in our communities. Many of them have been involved in this work for decades, maintaining programs and supporting learners at all levels. They give their time to help learners progress and they develop strong relationships with learners as they grow into advanced and superior level speakers. Elders provide encouragement for learners to continue studying and recognize that we still have learning ahead of us. Many become greatly experienced. They become experts in helping language learners understand and speak the language. Chew (2016), Johnson (2013), Metallic (2017) and others also highlight the

significant role of elder speakers and emphasize how their persistent efforts and dedication have resulted in new speakers of the language.

Throughout the project, it was apparent that our elder was very experienced in working with language learners. The study affirmed that learners greatly appreciate having a patient language mentor and hold such mentors in high regard as knowledge holders and language experts. Through a peer learning model, advanced learners can develop and sustain an immersion environment and navigate through linguistic challenges together; however, the first language speaker elevates the quality of the learning sessions by providing their knowledge and expertise. This elder support is nuanced, as learners needs vary across every activity. They may be modeling language or clarifying word use to support and expand peer group understandings of Kanien'kéha idioms, vocabulary, sayings and grammar.

Within a peer group learning model, the role of the elder speaker (or L1 speaker) is to model authentic language through conversation, storytelling and corrective feedback. They also validate the linguistic choices of the learners and support them to decipher meaning and application. The results show that lexical analyses happen very often within peer learning sessions as learners aim to understand word usage and their meanings. Most times an understanding is reached with minimal effort; however, there are times when an understanding can only be reached through a back-and-forth analysis between learners and L1 speakers. Through the process, elders and learners test and re-test word use by applying it to numerous contexts until an understanding is reached. This exercise takes effort and patience on the part of the L1 speakers to bring the learners to an acceptable level of understanding. Kiligarriff (2007) agrees that this is challenging for both learners and speakers because "analysis of most words reveals a web of meanings" (p. 31). Analyzing vocabulary in context is imperative for a full

understanding of its meaning and usage. Oftentimes, as the context changes the meaning can shift as well (Kiligarriff, 2007).
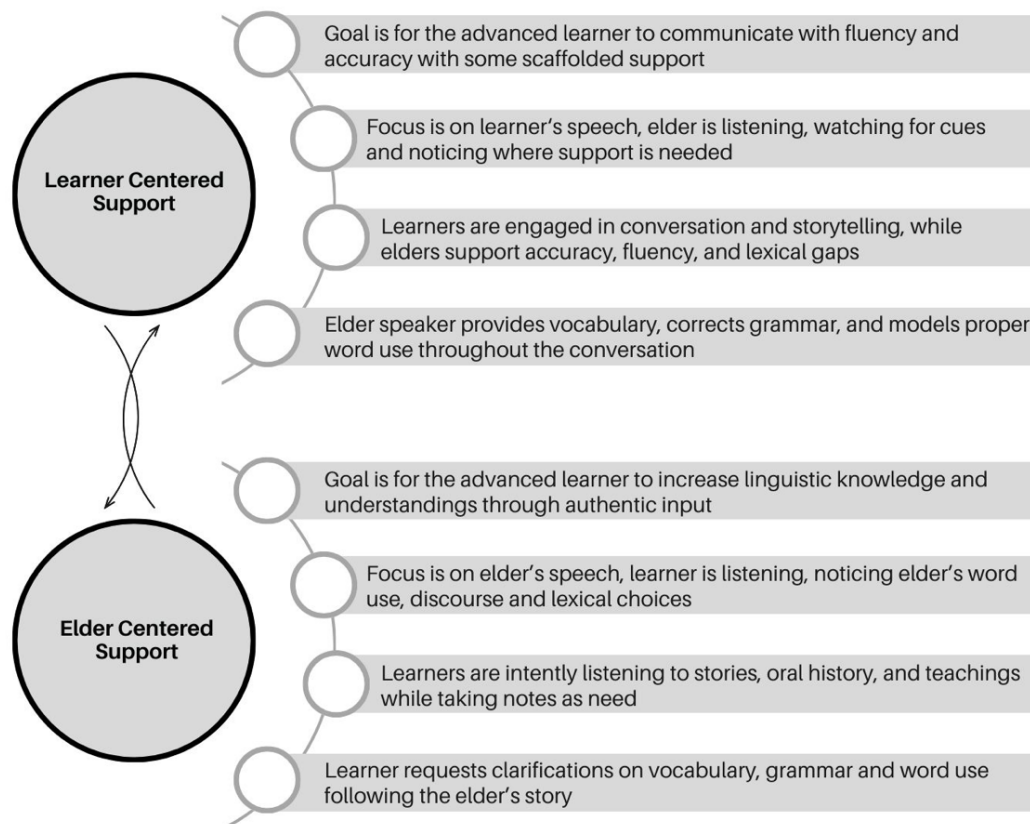
This research shows that advanced learners are experienced language learners who know how to interact with elders to elicit language. They use various elicitation strategies to better understand grammatical concepts, vocabulary and word use. With learners using a range of elicitation strategies, elder speakers can support learners through complex grammatical analyses, given the learner's ability to describe the problem at hand without using complex linguistic terminology. This is an important skill as learners and elders navigate meaning together. In addition to direct elicitation, the role of the elder is multifaceted.

A pattern in the results emerged, suggesting two "modes" of elder supported learning. The focal point of these two modes is on elder-centered noticing and learner-centered noticing practiced through natural conversation and storytelling. The first has learners focused on the elder's speech while the second has elders focused on the learners' speech. Learners must know how to recognize and capitalize on these two modes of elder support as both the elder and the learner work in unison to navigate between the two strategies.

The first mode of elder support is centered on assisting the learner to function in the language with fluency and accuracy. At advanced levels of proficiency, learners can communicate on a variety of topics with ease; however, they often rephrase and use circumlocution strategies when conversing. The elder speaker provides a scaffolded support, assisting learners as they are storytelling or engaged in conversation. In this mode, the elder speaker is listening and watching for cues that indicate the learner is struggling. They assist the learner to fill linguistic gaps, providing vocabulary, correct grammar and modeling proper word usage as needed. Interruptions are minimal within this **learner-centered approach**. In fact, the

elder's support contributes to the flow of the conversation or story. The goal is successful communication. Through this type of support the elder speaker aims to find balance between fluency and accuracy, at times allowing some errors. While evaluating linguistic accuracy is a complex matter (Housen & Kuiken, 2009), elder mentors are listening for accuracy and deciding when to interject based on what they feel is acceptable in relation to the abilities of the learner. The elder speaker's approach is thus important to encourage learners to continue using the language freely.

The second mode of elder support positions the elder as central to the language learning activity. Here the elder provides learners with authentic input through natural language use. This may be in the form of storytelling, conversation, advice, or cultural teachings. Through this **elder-centered support,** all focus is on the information being conveyed. Learners at this level must be attentive to the discourse, as well as the lexical and linguistic choices of speakers. This perceptive listening maximizes time spent learning from first language speakers within the peer group model. Elder speech is always being observed and the role of the learner is to listen intently, not interrupt and take notes as needed. This is followed by a question period where learners reflect on the stories, ask for clarifications as needed, and continue with the conversation naturally. This elder-centered learning is an important aspect of Rotinonhsión:ni pedagogy where teachings, stories, and oral histories are passed down across generations. This points to the importance of maintaining oral traditions where respectful listening is an integral part of advanced language learning. To help understand the similarities and differences between the two modes of elder supported learning at advanced levels, Figure 5 depicts their key components, showing the interplay between advanced learners and elder speakers as they engage in natural conversation and storytelling.

Figure 5

Two Modes of Elder Supported Learning

Learner Centered Support
- Goal is for the advanced learner to communicate with fluency and accuracy with some scaffolded support
- Focus is on learner's speech, elder is listening, watching for cues and noticing where support is needed
- Learners are engaged in conversation and storytelling, while elders support accuracy, fluency, and lexical gaps
- Elder speaker provides vocabulary, corrects grammar, and models proper word use throughout the conversation

Elder Centered Support
- Goal is for the advanced learner to increase linguistic knowledge and understandings through authentic input
- Focus is on elder's speech, learner is listening, noticing elder's word use, discourse and lexical choices
- Learners are intently listening to stories, oral history, and teachings while taking notes as need
- Learner requests clarifications on vocabulary, grammar and word use following the elder's story

Note: This figure depicts the two modes of elder support for advanced language learning that emerged from the study, summarizing the key components of each. The criss-crossing arrows represent the interplay between both modes as the learner and elder speaker engage in natural storytelling and conversation together.

Over the duration of this study, Konwaia'torèn:'en shared many teachings with the group, connecting us to her lived experiences, while we listened intently. As we listened to her, as well as one another, we were also learning history, stories, and teachings in the language.

In summary, Konwaia'torèn:'en was central to the success of the project, due to her dedication to the language, encouragement, and patience in supporting the peer group of learners. "Ensewakwé:ni" she would say as she reassured us that we can do it. The study brings the role of our elder speakers to the forefront and the key role they have in revitalizing Indigenous languages. Learners across many nations worry for the future and how we will continue the language when our elders are no longer present to support us (Chew, 2016; McIvor, 2012; Metallic, 2017). Our elders are committed to leaving the legacy of our languages; they are committed because they "see the future of the language in the learners they have taught" (Chew, 2016, p. 144). It is important to visit together, to gather and continue learning together.

Ionkwakwenionhátie – Peer Support and Interaction

The unique group of women who were part of this research brought forth a wealth of experience as Kanien'kéha language learners, advocates, teachers and speakers. Their experience was gained through years of work in the fields of Indigenous education and language revitalization primarily within our community of Kahnawà:ke. Together with our elder speaker the project provided space for us to better understand our abilities and challenges as second language speakers of Kanien'kéha. It was an important reflective process that helped us to chart a pathway forward and continue our language learning together to become better speakers for ourselves, our community and for our future generations.

The project reminded us of the importance of coming together, to visit in the language and to enjoy one another's company. It also reminded us how beautiful our language is and how our ways of knowing and understanding as Rotinonhsión:ni provide the pathways for advanced language learning. The research showed us that a peer group learning model works for us and we

can create an immersive environment for ourselves. The project also reminded us that we need to put forth a great effort if we want to reach higher levels of proficiency. Throughout the study we pushed one another to keep it aóhskon Onkwehonwehnéha and were accountable to the peer group to show up each week. We shared stories, we ate, we laughed, and sometimes we cried for the future of the language.

A pivotal point in the research came when we transitioned our learning sessions into our homes. It was like a revelation! Within our homes amongst our families is where we hope our language will live and thrive. This was fulfilled as our group gathered to visit, share a meal, tell stories together aóhskon Onkwehonwehnéha. Being at home, visiting and learning with a group of advanced speakers and an elder speaker created this environment for us to be in the language and continue learning Kanien'kéha together. It was comfortable and familiar, a natural setting rather than a re-created learning space or institution. This is important, as Dr. Lorna Williams reminds us that one of the challenges for Indigenous languages revitalization is that they are now learned primarily through 'institutions with systems not of our own making" and they fall short when they do not "include our values of inclusion and bringing generations together… one of our greatest tasks" (Williams, 2019). The group realized that we were carrying on what we set out to do many years ago. While we still have learning ahead of us, we are families speaking Onkwehonwehnéha as we are visiting and sharing a meal together.

Progressing past advanced levels of Kanien'kéha language learning means we have to visit in the language, we have to listen to one another's stories, gather around our kitchen tables to share a meal and connect with one another and the land. For this group, we need to maintain the community of speakers we created for ourselves. Metallic (2017) agrees, saying that "Indigenous resurgence through pedagogy needs to uphold the important role of parents,

grandparent, and elders, in reconnecting youth, not only with language, but also with their families and communities" (p. 194). Learning within a peer group learning model for advanced Indigenous languages ideally takes place primarily in the home. It fosters intergenerational oral traditions through storytelling, conversation, and togetherness.

Acknowledging Women's Experience in This Story of Resilience

The purpose of this project was to define Indigenous language pedagogies for advanced to higher levels of proficiency. As the project unfolded the investigation became more refined as a Rotinonhsión:ni pedagogical framework was applied and units of study were developed for a peer group consisting of all women. The research, in turn, provides an intimate look into the experiences of advanced language learners as they explore Kanien'kéha pathways through the lens of Rotinonhsión:ni women. Positioned in this way, it is important to consider how language learning and revitalization intertwines with our roles as Rotinonhsión:ni women and how this contributes to Rotinonhsión:ni cultural continuity.

In the language world, each of these women are leaders through the work they do for language revitalization in Kahnawà:ke. They are teachers, advocates, resource developers and program facilitators across various programs in the community. They are also leaders in their families as they aim to pass on the language to their next generations and maintain its presence within their extended family. The majority of women are also leaders in Longhouse ceremony, where Kanien'kéha is the primary language spoken during ceremonial functions. Kanien'kéha language is paramount in all facets of their lives including in the home.

For this particular discussion, I am not writing from nor exploring Indigenous languages revitalization from a feminist paradigm; however, working with a peer group of women was

important to acknowledge that as women they have goals, opportunities and challenges that impact them as language learners. As Onkwehón:we women, they also have knowledge gained from lived experiences and those are "integral to decolonizing knowledge production" (Altamirano-Jiménez & Kermoal, 2016, p. 4) It is important to consider the contributions and role of women in Indigenous languages revitalization in order for us to better understand their needs to reach higher levels of proficiency. Women play a central role in revitalizing Indigenous languages, as they are the teachers and leaders, first in the home, and then within the community.

As Rotinonhsión:ni women we carry individual, familial, communal, and ceremonial roles and responsibilities. Language planning supporting women to reach higher levels of proficiency need to consider these roles wholistically. The units of study show to consider how Kanien'kéha is interlaced with the roles, responsibilities, and interests of the peer group of women. Taking this approach showed to be significant, as it helps to understand that "Indigenous women's knowledge expands beyond the activities done by women and involves a system of inquiry that reveal Indigenous processes of observing and understanding the protocols for being and participating in the world" (Altamirano-Jiménez & Kermoal, 2016, p. 10). Learning through themes such as *Women's Roles and Responsibilities for Traditional Kanien'kéha Naming Practices and Protocols* provide an example of this, showing how listening and observations are integral to our naming practices and hold up our connections to the natural world.

Through ceremony our names are raised up as we are introduced to our Mother the Earth, the waters, medicines, birds, animals, trees, winds and all our worldly relations. They know us by name, and for us to know them, we must be good observers, listeners and visitors of the bush, woods and waters. Our names emerge from those places and having the skills of purposeful observation, keen listening and thoughtful visiting opens our minds to see and experience the

world as Rotinonhsión:ni. For Rotinonhsión:ni women we need to have the linguistic knowledge and connections to the natural world to support our clan families to continue our cultural and ceremonial practices.

Throughout the project our elder provided us many teachings, often reminding us about our roles and responsibilities as women to maintain respectful protocols and language discourse. She emphasized that there are things we can talk about amongst one another but not in the presence of men. She also reminded us about being mindful of what is said in front of children, as they are too young to understand adult issues that can cause them to be confused or worried. Respect was the biggest, she urged us to bring back a high regard for carrying oneself with respect and dignity, and respectful language discourse was the means to accomplish this. Our elder models this high level of respect each time we gather, and it is important for those teachings of karihwakwennienhstà:tshera [respect] and Ka'nikonhrí:io [Good Mind] continue to be reflected within Rotinonhsión:ni language discourse. Others echo this as they emphasize that "Indigenous women's knowledge is important, [including linguistic knowledge], ...being an Indigenous woman is intertwined with lived experience and the worldview of her community" (Altamirano-Jiménez & Kermoal, 2016, p. 4).

It indeed takes great sacrifice, time, commitment, and discipline for learners to reach, and then surpass, advanced levels of Kanien'kéha proficiency. Advanced learners have achieved a commendable level of proficiency and they have done this because they figured out what works best for them based on the various learning strategies they have been exposed to. In basic terms, they have learned how to learn. This affirms that having clarity about what they need to know in order to improve as speakers is helpful so they can use that knowledge to chart their own way forward. Cook (2016) agrees that metacognitive strategies are an important key to learner

success, adding that various pedagogical approaches are needed as "diversity reflects the complexity of language and the range of students needs" (p. 302).

The research was extremely rewarding as the participants validated that they were learning Kanien'kéha through meaningful approaches that connected them to Rotinonhsión:ni teachings and worldview. With each learning approach they felt that it connected to their identity as Rotinonhsión:ni and was relevant to their roles doing language work within community. All of the women reported that being part of the research supported their language learning and renewed their fire as learners, showing that the pedagogical framework and units of study were effective.

Implications and Benefits of the Study

This dissertation piloted a peer group learning model for advanced second language learners in Kahnawà:ke. It created a pathway for this growing demographic to continue their language learning journey towards superior levels of proficiency. Through this study, which sought to identify **Rotinonhsión:ni language pedagogies to best support Kahnawà:ke's advanced second language speakers**, several themes emerged.

The Framework

To summarize, a new framework was developed that established the fundamental components of Rotinonhsión:ni pedagogy. The Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy was put into practice as four units were developed and ensured that the language learning themes, activities, analyses and discussion were from within a Rotinonhsión:ni worldview throughout the project. Although the framework was developed specifically for

defining pedagogies for advanced to superior language learning, it can also be applied to all learning levels. Overall, the framework was critical to the project as we investigated Rotinonhsión:ni pedagogies.

The framework brought the importance of Rotinonhsión:ni pedagogy for language revitalization to the forefront, showing that it is integral to ensure the language, as well as Rotinonhsión:ni worldview and culture, continue into the future. The framework and sample units can help to propel our efforts forward by expanding our pedagogical approaches to include advanced to superior language learning. In addition, because the framework establishes language learning within a Rotinonhsión:ni paradigm, it can be utilized to create learning plans for all of the Rotinonhsión:ni languages.

Advanced Proficiency

Having clear learning targets defined for the learners was a fundamental component of the study was. Beginning with the ACTFL (2024) proficiency benchmarks for advanced and superior levels, I was able to develop targeted units of study based on those generalized descriptors. We were able to better understand advanced proficiency characteristics specific to Kanien'kéha as the project unfolded. The project confirmed that advanced Kanien'kéha learners can communicate with ease and visit in the language where they engage in conversation and storytelling. It also affirmed that to scaffold towards a superior level they still need to perfect their use of transitive pronouns and more complex grammatical structures in Kanien'kéha. In addition, they must expand their lexical knowledge using explicit strategies and prompts to interpret meanings from a variety of perspectives. The research showed that a peer group of advanced L2 speakers can surely carry out tasks interacting and learning together; however, an

elder speaker is needed to model, correct, and validate the accuracy of our language use. It was also evident that highly proficient second language speakers also play this supportive role for learners scaffolding through the advanced levels. The project implies that a peer group learning model can provide the means for advanced Kanien'kéha learners to address these needs and significantly progress in their proficiency.

Unit Themes

The learners were presented with pedagogical approaches within four central themes. The results show that learning through carefully selected themes with targeted proficiency goals contributes to a high level of engagement. Similarly, advanced level resources are needed to complement the units and engage the interests of the learners. This was evident through the sustained participation and positive feedback from the peer group as they piloted each of the following units:

- Kahnawà:ke - Stories of Community and Resilience
- Elder Storytelling of Community Life, Change and Resilience
- Women's Roles and Responsibilities for Traditional Kanien'kéha Naming Practices and Protocols
- Traditional Teachings and the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen

These themes were developed based on the needs and interests of the specific peer group. They focused our learning on a central topic and allowed us to explore Rotinonhsión:ni pedagogies based on our teachings, worldview and ways of knowing. Together they provide us with

exemplars of how language, culture and worldview are connected through Rotinonhsión:ni centric language pedagogies. This implies that the Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy is helpful in developing unit themes to support advanced language learning. Through these Rotinonhsión:ni centric themes, learners apply Onkwehón:we ways of knowing while also deepening their knowledge of cultural teachings, histories and community stories. Fundamentally, they also connect to the roles and responsibilities the women carry in their everyday lives.

Unit Planning

For the study, the peer group of learners were provided with unit plans that described sequential learning strategies & activities to follow – the pedagogical approaches. Plans indicated the learning activities and described what we would be learning, how we would be learning, and for what purpose we were learning the material. It also identified long and short-term learning targets. With a learning plan in hand, learners repeatedly expressed that they felt empowered because they had clarity in what they needed to do in order to become better speakers.

It is important to highlight the benefits of having a clear learning plan for advanced level learners. At this level, most learners have few models of what advanced language learning pedagogies look like. For this reason, advanced learners tend to repeat what worked for them in the past. This is not always effective, as it does not capitalize on the advanced linguistic abilities they already possess. In addition, without a plan, advanced language learning can be too random, leaving the learner feeling they are progressing at a snail's pace. Having goals and targeted

learning provides advanced Kanien'kéha learners with the knowledge of what they need to learn and why.

Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogies

The project featured learning approaches that aimed to bring Rotinonhsión:ni ways and values to the forefront while addressing the linguistic needs of the already advanced learners. There was much gleaned about Onkwehón:we language pedagogies for advanced peer learning through piloting each of the thematic units. The study highlighted the importance of utilizing pedagogies that are developed based on our own values and ways as Onkwehón:we people. Overall the project has enhanced our understandings of Rotinonhsión:ni language pedagogies and how they can scaffold a peer group of learners towards a superior level of proficiency. These approaches can also be applied to support learners of additional Rotinonhsión:ni languages because of the Rotinonhsión:ni centric framework from which they were derived.

Several pedagogical approaches were explored over the span of the project, including text-based learning strategies and audio-visual approaches which complemented the culturally grounded units of study. Through those approaches, key Rotinonhsión:ni language pedagogies for advanced learners emerged:

- Language on the Land Pedagogy

- Visiting as Pedagogy

- Storytelling As Rotinonhsión:ni Pedagogy

- Elder Centered Pedagogy and Oral Tradition

Each of these showed how Indigenous language revitalization is closely interconnected to Indigenous knowledge resurgence in multifaceted ways.

Overall, these pedagogical approaches for advanced language learning foster kindred relations to the land, to one another, and to the natural world. This is a core attribute of Rotinonhsión:ni values and worldview and, within a peer group model, contributes to intergenerational cultural continuity. They also take into account the abilities of the advanced learner where they can fully engage in activities because they have the linguistic skills to do so. It is also important to be mindful of where these learning activities take place. They return language into the home and on the land, without the need for additional facilities to replicate these learning approaches. Ideally these pedagogical approaches are applied using a peer group learning model; however, they can also be used within a formal adult immersion program or by individual learners with some modifications.

Peer Group Learning Model

This research shows that there are many advantages of learning within a peer group model. Learning through this model is effective and empowers learners to create an immersive environment for themselves where they can hear and use Kanien'kéha to socialize and learn together, fostering kindred relationships between families, learners, and speakers. The visiting sessions are at the heart of the peer group model, due to the discussions, storytelling and conversations that were shared. The model can be replicated by other advanced Kanien'kéha learners using the four units piloted for the project, as they provide already advanced learners with learning targets, strategies, and tools to initiate their own peer learning group.

The peer group learning model can be put into practice by advanced learners of other Indigenous languages as well. It is strategically a more autonomous learning model, free of institutionalized programming, that lives within our homes and amongst our families within an intergenerational setting.

Women as Leaders in Kanien'kéha language revitalization in Kahnawà:ke

It is significant to highlight that researching in collaboration with a peer group of Rotinonhsión:ni women provided me with new insights into Kanien'kéha language revitalization in Kahnawà:ke. The research affirms that it is important to consider the role of women for revitalizing Indigenous languages. As advanced language learners, they bring forth unique perspectives, knowledge, and experiences. By understanding their needs, we can better support them to reach higher levels of proficiency.

Because women play a key role in intergenerational language continuity, it is important they have the opportunity to continue learning through meaningful approaches that connect them to their interests, cultural teachings, and worldview. This means that the pedagogical approaches should be relevant to their roles within their family and community. Insights can help us to develop pathways needed for these learners to progress towards higher levels of language proficiency.

Strengths and Limitations of this Study

There were clear strengths within this community-based study. The unique group of women who participated in the study were a definite strength within the research. Each of them brought forth years of experience and expertise working, studying, and planning for Kanien'kéha

language revitalization. Camaraderie is important amongst language learners; therefore, it was also a benefit to the study that all the women knew one another already. They were comfortable and trusting of one another in this circle of language learning and research. I was fortunate to have carried out the research in my home community with this skilled group of women. Another strength of the study was having an elder speaker who was open, willing, and dedicated to participating in the study. Her patience and experience working with Kanien'kéha language learners was apparent throughout the study.

In addition to the participants, a strength of the learning units was the high quality Kanien'kéha resources that were selected for the study. The Cooke manuscript (1951), audio visual resources, and written stories complimented each unit of study. We are fortunate that these resources are easily accessible for Kanien'kéha language learners.

The current research project also has limitations that I feel are acceptable given the constraints of conducting doctoral research. The first constraint is the time limitation in conducting doctoral research. In order to complete the project within an acceptable timeframe the actual piloting of the units of study was carried out over four months. This was embedded in the research design with the intention of respecting the participants' time, knowing they are already doing language work in the community and have additional familial and community commitments. Because it takes approximately one year of full-time study to progress across advanced sublevels of proficiency in Kanien'kéha (DeCaire, 2023; Green, 2020), it would have been unfitting to assess their proficiency after only 16 weeks (about three and a half months) of part-time study. Instead, the focus remained on the pedagogical approaches where, at the close of each unit, the learners used an evaluative rubric to assess the effectiveness and impacts of peer group learning using the four piloted units of study. The evaluative rubrics, hours of recorded

sessions and reflective feedback provided ample data to thoroughly answer the research questions.

Another limit of the study is that this project was done with one peer group of advanced learners. Although learners at this level share many similarities in their learning journey, they do not represent the experiences of all people who are advanced-level Kanien'kéha learners. Also, because they are all very involved in traditional Longhouse life they carry knowledge, insights of tsi niionkwarihò:ten and responsibilities that not all learners in this demographic may carry. For this reason, they had a very high interest in the themes of each unit. It can be only be assumed that other advanced peer groups would be similarly engaged in the units.

Recommendations

It is, therefore, recommended that the peer group model be implemented in Kahnawà:ke and other Kanien'kehá:ka communities, using the tools and pedagogical exemplars provided through this study, with several peer groups running simultaneously. This would help to refine the current units as needed and create additional advanced level units of study that are challenging and highly engaging. In this way, future peer group learners of Kanien'kéha would have a bank of advanced level units and resources to draw upon. This should be implemented over one year with proficiency assessments at the start and end of the project, similar to the current evaluation practices within Kanien'kéha adult immersion programs (DeCaire, 2023; Green, 2020). This will help to better define the forms and functions of advanced to superior levels of Kanien'kéha proficiency in order to inform the pedagogical approaches and resources needed for learners.

I also suggest that peer group norms be established to ground the expectations for the learners. This would include maintaining and contributing to an immersion environment, sharing food and drink, respectful dialogue, and other expectations intended to acknowledge learners' feelings of vulnerability. Importantly, it would be beneficial for learners to ensure their elder speaker is central to their learning and norms such as respectful listening and turn taking. The purpose of group norms is to foster a safe and encouraging space for all learners and elder speakers.

I also recommend that peer learning groups record all their learning sessions, especially those when elder speakers are participating. The recordings will become invaluable resources for reviewing and extending our learning. Strategies would include listening to conversations and reviewing elder speakers providing clarifications, examples and stories. The intention is for the recordings to be shared with learners who may not have access to a peer group or to first language speakers in the future.

It is notable that explicit learning of Kanien'kéha grammar was achieved and demonstrated within the visiting sessions. The need for exploring grammar in a more organized way was apparent; therefore, it is recommended that a common template for conjugations and morphology charts be provided for the group. It is important to highlight the role of the open-ended questions once again because there are many Indigenous language communities who do not yet have a defined pedagogical grammar for learners to follow[59]. The questions helped learners to differentiate their learning based on their specific language gaps.

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[59] For examples of pedagogical grammar resources for Kanien'kéha, see the Mohawk Teaching Grammar, 2nd edition (Deering & Harries-Delisle, 2007) and Tekawennahsonterónnion - Kanien'kéha Morphology, 2nd edition (Martin, 2023).

The study also showed that there needs to be continuous vocabulary building at all levels of learning. There are strategies that advanced learners can incorporate into their studies, such as noticing contextualized vocabulary through an elder centered approach, and developing their own bank of synonyms, as described in the results sections. In addition, teaching and learning vocabulary must include analyzing word use and meaning through a variety of perspectives and interpretations.

As we continue to learn more about high levels of Kanien'kéha language learning we must continue to look to our ways as Rotinonhsión:ni. The Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy can be shared with Kanien'kéha communities and programs to support curriculum and program development and learning through Rotinonhsión:ni centric pedagogies. More community driven studies that support learning at advanced to superior levels of Rotinonhsión:ni languages are needed; it is my hope that the Framework of Rotinonhsión:ni Language Pedagogy will be helpful for community-based researchers in the future.

The research created space for us to slow down, to notice, to re-connect, and to remember as we explored advanced Rotinonhsión:ni language pedagogies. Planning for advanced level language learning using a peer group model must be intentional in that it creates a space for intergenerational language transmission, incorporates learning through Onkwehón:we ways of knowing, and fundamental to the model, it takes place within our homes. The closing chapter provides a conclusion and summarizing thoughts of the study.

Chapter 7: Conclusion – Looking Forward

This dissertation research underscores the integral role of culturally grounded pedagogies to support adult learners in revitalizing Kanien'kéha in Kahnawà:ke. By exploring the pedagogical approaches, resources and supports needed for learners with advanced language proficiency, a peer group learning model for Indigenous language learning emerged. Units of study that featured advanced-level second language pedagogies grounded in Rotinonhsión:ni ways were piloted and analyzed by a peer learning group of women from Kahnawà:ke. Positioned as community-based research, this study highlights the importance of revitalizing Kanien'kéha through methods that privilege Rotinonhsión:ni thinking and knowledge, where we are defining and leading the movement for ourselves.

The project design aimed to empower participants to collaboratively transform and construct knowledge of advanced second language pedagogies through an Onkwehón:we perspective. It challenged me to develop a wholistic framework for teaching and learning Kanien'kéha that would clearly depict how language and culture are fully integrated and applied within a Rotinonhsión:ni worldview. This was a crucial step, as it identified essential components of advanced Kanien'kéha language learning. The framework guided the development of each unit and resulted in advanced level units that integrated pedagogical approaches that further our efforts and supports for higher levels of Kanien'kéha learning in Kahnawà:ke as well as across our sister Kanien'kehá:ka communities.

Using a peer group model for the study also shows that it is possible to move away from institutionalized programming towards a more autonomous learning model that lives within our homes, with our families and in an intergenerational setting. This is possible because advanced level Kanien'kéha learners can create a community of speakers, maintain an immersive

environment together, and access advanced level resources to help scaffold their learning towards language mastery. In addition, elder speakers are still actively supporting language revitalization efforts in Kahnawà:ke as an integral component of advanced to superior language learning.

The research also provides a rare look at advanced level language learning through the experiences of Rotinonhsión:ni women. This unique perspective is important to revitalizing Kanien'kéha, as women bring forth unique lived experiences as mothers, learners, and advocates of the language. They are the caretakers of our nations, the mothers and first teachers within our families that support intergenerational language transmission in the home. I was honored to carry out this research alongside this brilliant group of Rotinonhsión:ni women. Iakotetsén:'en, Wathahí:ne, Kanerahtóntha, Tsohahí:io, Kaia'tí:io, Ieronhienhá:wi tánon Konwaia'torèn:'en were all so giving to this project, knowing that it would illuminate pathways and next steps for language revitalization in Kahnawà:ke. This dissertation describes our experiences implementing the project using a Rotinonhsión:ni centric research model, and, as a result, provides concrete examples of how Rotinonhsión:ni ways of knowing are put into practice through the act of language learning. As we piloted and evaluated the units of study together, we were able to think deeply about advanced language learning, our needs and experiences as language learners, and the things we value as Rotinonhsión:ni women. We found the answers in who we are as Onkwehón:we.

Through this project we can also better understand the dynamic ways elder speakers and advanced learners interact within a peer group setting and how language revitalization and reclamation fosters kinship between families, learners, and our elder speakers. Exploring those learning exchanges provided many insights, including how listening is a vital component of

advanced language learning and aligns with Rotinonhsión:ni ways of passing down knowledge across generations. The study brings the immeasurable contributions of our elder speakers and the key role they have in revitalizing Indigenous languages to the forefront.

The pedagogical framework for learning Rotinonhsión:ni languages provides a map for understanding the fundamental components required for high levels of language learning that are derived from and applied within Rotinonhsión:ni worldview, cultural perspectives, and ways of knowing. The outcomes show that visiting as pedagogy, language on the land pedagogy, storytelling pedagogy and elder-centered pedagogy are intrinsic to the continuance of Rotinonhsión:ni languages, knowledge, and intellectualism. Consequently, it is critical to apply these ways of knowing to advanced and superior levels of language learning.

It is my hope that this project will inspire other Kanien'kéha language learners to continue their learning beyond advanced levels of proficiency. Dedicated learners who have already achieved advanced levels of Kanien'kéha have the greatest potential to one day become master speakers given the tools and pathways to do so. For adult language learning, this is where our focus must now be concentrated, and the current research shows that we have the resources and capacity to achieve this. The project provides a replicable model for advanced Kanien'kéha learners in Kahnawà:ke and across our sister Kanien'kehá:ka communities.

I was grateful that the project provided space for me to apply myself as language learner again and to remember how much I love learning and speaking Kanien'kéha. I am grateful that the women trusted me to lead us through this work and supported me to navigate my roles as both primary researcher and full participant simultaneously. The present study exemplifies a Rotinonhsión:ni methodology that valued the collective knowledge and experiences of all participants. Together with our elder speaker, the project provided space for us to better

understand our abilities and challenges as second language speakers of Kanien'kéha. It was an important reflective process that helped us to chart a pathway forward and continue our language learning together to become better speakers for ourselves, our families, our community and for our future generations. The project reminded us of the importance of coming together, to visit in the language and to enjoy one another's company through our continued language learning. It also reminded us how beautiful our language is and how our ways as Rotinonhsión:ni people provide the pathways for advanced language learning. Just as our languages are precious to us and highly regarded in these contemporary times, so are our cultural teachings and knowledge systems that continue to guide us in our everyday lives.

Tá:ne Tho.

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Appendix 1: Preliminary Survey

Piloting Indigenous Languages Pedagogies with Advanced Speakers

Preliminary Survey

Developed by Kahtehrón:ni Iris Stacey

This survey is intended to help us understand ourselves better as advanced language learners by reflecting on our successes, challenges, needs and goals for continuing to learn Kanien'kéha. It will also help us to recognize the commonalities we share as Kanien'kéha learners as we prepare to set language targets and plan the learning approaches our group will explore. This opportunity to reflect on our personal language goals is important to begin the project in a good way, ientsitewate'nikonhraié:rate tsi nonkwá:ti ne onkwawén:na tánon entewatateweiennén:ta'ne aontsitewatéweienhste.

Name:	
Clan:	
Age:	
Occupation:	

1. **Approximately** how much time have you dedicated to studying Kanien'kéha?

	1-3 years
	4-6 years
	7-9 years
	10 years or more

2. Have you ever had a Kanien'kéha language assessment through an ACTFL Oral

   Proficiency Interview (OPI)?

   Yes ☐ Level Evaluated _____   No☐

   If yes, when was the last time you were assessed?

	Less than 1 year ago
	1-2 years ago
	3-5 years ago
	6-10 years ago
	More than 10 years ago

3. What do you feel is your current level of proficiency?

	Superior
	Advanced-high
	Advanced-mid
	Advanced-low
	Intermediate-high
	Intermediate-mid
	Intermediate-low

   Comments:

4. What types of language programs and language learning activities have you engaged in?

    Check all that apply.

☐	Dictionary Study	☐	Language nest
☐	Listening to recordings	☐	Web based language program
☐	Visiting and learning from elders	☐	Community classes
☐	Researching old words	☐	Mentor apprentice program
☐	Reading Kanien'kéha literature	☐	Private study group
☐	Independent grammar studies	☐	Workplace language classes
☐	Studying ceremonial speeches	☐	Adult immersion
☐	Transcribing recordings	☐	Land-based learning
☐	Listening to speakers	☐	**Other(s):**

5. What did you like or dislike most about the above learning approaches?

6. What learning or teaching approaches do you think helped you the most to learn

    Kanien'kéha and why do you think this was?

7. What learning or teaching approaches did you feel were not as helpful as you had hoped?

    Why do you feel this approach was not very helpful?

8. Can you identify any specific forms or parts of the language that you notice are challenging for you as a speaker?

9. What challenges have you faced in maintaining or improving your language proficiency?

10. What hobbies, interests or activities would you enjoy doing with peers in the language?

11. How many hours per week do you estimate using Kanien'kéha?

	2 hours or less
	3-5 hours
	6-9 hours
	10 -19 hours
	20 hours or more

12. In what situations do you use Kanien'kéha most? Please describe.

13. How many hours per week do you presently dedicate to learning Kanien'kéha? Please
check one

	2 hours or less
	3-5 hours
	6-9 hours
	10 hours or more
	I am not studying at this time

14. Have you used any of the following language resources for the purpose of your own
learning? Please check all resources that apply.

	A Mohawk Teaching Grammar		Thanksgiving Address Books
	Kanien'kéha Okara'shón:'a		Thanksgiving Address Audio
	KORLCC Elder Interviews		Ceremonial Literature
	Sóse tánon Leo via Soundcloud		Ceremonial Speech Audio
	Rosetta Stone		Jake Thomas Great Law Audio
	Ratiwennahní:rats Grammar Book		Various Dictionaries
	Finding Our Talk Series		Kanien'kéha Household Labels
	KORLCC's Creation Story		Tóta Tánon Ohkwá:ri Dvd's
	Mohawk For Beginners by J. Horne		Karonhianónhnha workbooks
	Bible Translations		**Other(s):**

15. Please describe any resources that have been most helpful to improve or maintain your language proficiency.

16. What types of additional learning resources or tools do you feel would benefit you most as an advanced learner?

17. Please check all that apply. When learning from first language speakers do you:

	Listen to stories
	Learn traditional skills
	Learn ceremonial teachings
	Ask for translations
	Document old words
	Just visit to talk in the language
	Other:

18. Please list 3 goals you have for continuing your language learning?

19. What days and times could you be available to participate in group language learning and project activities? Please check and note times for all that apply.

	Mondays
	Tuesdays
	Wednesdays
	Thursdays
	Fridays
	Weekends
	Notes:

20. To highlight important points of this self-assessment, can the researcher quote your responses in the final research report? (You will be able to review any of the selected quotes and you can change your mind at any time up to the time of publication.)

Yes ☐   No☐   Not sure☐

21. If yes, can the researcher quote your responses in the final research and attribute your response to you by name? (You will be able to review any of the selected quotes and you can change your mind at any time up to the time of publication.)

Yes ☐   No☐   Not sure☐

Niawenhkó:wa for your valued time and thoughtful consideration in your responses.

Skén:nen kénha'k,

Kahtehrón:ni Iris Stacey

Appendix 2: Evaluative Rubric For Rotinonhsíon:ni Advanced Language Pedagogies

Evaluative Rubric For Rotinonhsíon:ni Advanced Language Pedagogies

Pedagogical Approach : _____

Participant: _____   Hours: _____

Rating Scale: 4- Thoroughly 3- Adequately 2- Moderately 1-Slightly N/A- Not applicable

	Criteria	4	3	2	1	N/A	Suggestions
1.	***Advanced-High Approach*** strengthens advanced-high functions to scaffold towards superior learning targets						
2.	***Clear Learning Targets*** indicates required knowledge and understandings in order to function at desired level						
3.	***Lexical Expansion*** contributes to ongoing lexical development including through Rotinonhsíon:ni cultural understandings						
4.	***Grammar Refinement*** focuses on polysynthetic linguistic refinement and analyses through a Rotinonhsíon:ni perspective						
5.	***Kin-Focused Communication*** strengthens communal and spiritual relationships through natural conversation and ceremonial language use						
6.	***Oral Tradition*** incorporates language, culture and knowledge acquisition through stories, histories, formal oratory, and traditional skills						
7.	***Wholistic Approach*** balances structural and communicative learning targets						

#	Criteria					
8.	***Culturally Aligned*** applies Rotinonhsión:ni cultural perspectives and ways of knowing					
9.	***Learner Engagement*** provides meaningful content and contexts that are adaptable to learner interests					
10.	***Cognitive Complexity*** engages different levels of thinking (Blooms) relative to the intended learning outcomes					
11.	***Promotes Autonomy*** provides the mechanisms for independent learning for groups or individuals					
12.	***Resource Suitability*** includes resources appropriate for advanced-high levels to implement the pedagogical approach					
13.	***Measurable Outcomes*** includes criteria to reflect on progress or abilities regarding the established learning targets					
14.	***Modes of Communication*** provides opportunities to practice advanced-high and superior language within specific modes of communication (ACTFL)					
15.	***Other Criteria***					
	Areas of strength:					
	Areas for growth:					
	Additional Notes:					
	Total Score:					

Appendix 3: Unit One– Analyzing Written Texts to Retell and Discuss Community Stories

Unit One – Analyzing Written Texts to Retell and Discuss Community Stories
Developed by: Kahtehrón:ni Iris Stacey

Unit Overview
For this pedagogical approach learners will be reading written texts and applying various strategies for grammatical and lexical analyses to retell, discuss various stories, themes and new knowledge in detail.
Essential Question
How can analyzing written Kanien'kéha texts help us to become superior-level speakers?
Unit Theme
Kahnawà:ke – Stories of Community and Resilience
Long-term Learning Targets for Superior Level Proficiency (deep sustained inquiry)
Focus on both language forms and functions so that learners can: 1) engage in conversation and storytelling using all major timeframes of past, present and future; 2) communicate information, opinions and interests on a variety of topics with accuracy and fluency; 3) present opinions and special interests with lengthy detail and coherent narrations using expanded lexical diversity.
Learning Objectives
Balanced between a structural and communicative approach that is Rotinonhsión:ni centric so that learners will: - Develop their vocabulary by analyzing written texts and documenting vocabulary through lexical groupings/themes as well as applying Rotinonhsión:ni cultural understandings and meanings.   - Refine their use of past, present and future timeframes by analyzing more complex grammatical structures to explain, share and apply this new knowledge with peers.   - Discuss experiences, community stories and cultural knowledge with peers through natural conversation using new vocabulary and appropriate timeframes.   - Retell and share cultural stories, oral history and knowledge with grammatical accuracy and fluency.
Identified resource
Old Kahnawà:ke (KORLCC, 2017)

Learning Strategies

A - Independent Study

With a focus on **understanding**, read the selected text, highlight and note any new vocabulary in your vocabulary notebook, underline the root words, circle pronouns and suffixes. Note grammatical patterns that are unfamiliar. What do you notice? What was easy to understand? What parts of the word make it difficult to understand.

Underline the particles, what did you notice? How can you use these particles in your own speech? What contexts call for the use of these particles?

Once you have a strong understanding of the text, focus on oral production by practicing reading the text aloud several times. Pay attention to fluency as you enunciate new vocabulary and phrases with fluency.

In preparation to discuss and **retell** the story with our elder speaker, practice by following the text and retelling in 3rd person. Note the changes in the pronouns and pay attention to the tense markers. Are there any challenges you anticipate having with the story?

In preparing to re-tell and **summarize** the story naturally you will want to include some of your own reflections and thoughts. What thoughts or interests did the story raise for you? Did you connect to certain points in the story?

B - Visiting

With our elder speaker we will retell and share the stories we reviewed. Through natural **conversation** we will talk about the themes within the selected readings and how we related to the stories about our community. We will also discuss how the ideas and themes within the stories are similar or different.
To deepen our **understanding** of verb forms and patterns of the language, we will then discuss the grammatical concepts and vocabulary within the selected reading. We will pose any questions and discuss language patterns, meanings, verb forms, particle use, etc. with our elder speaker. Our speaker will provide feedback while also validating, correcting and modelling authentic use of Kanien'kéha.

C – Independent Study

Focus on **reviewing and extending** your knowledge of any new grammatical forms. Note how those patterns are applied in different contexts. How would you explain the grammatical patterns or vocabulary to others. What are examples of how this is applied in everyday speech? Prepare to share and explain 1 or 2 things you learned about the language with our peer learning group.

D – Reflection and Sharing

To conclude this unit we will share what we learned with our peer group. **Explain** at least 1 grammatical pattern that you began to explore, what did you find out, what new understandings have you gained and how do you understand it? Provide examples to **demonstrate** how this knowledge can be applied to your everyday language to make you a better speaker.

Appendix 4: Unit Two - Analyzing Audio Visual Sources to Retell and Discuss Community Stories

Unit Two – Analyzing audio visual sources to retell and discuss community stories
Developed by: Kahtehrón:ni Iris Stacey

Unit Overview
For this learning approach we will be using audio visual resources and applying various strategies for grammatical and lexical analyses to summarize, discuss various stories, themes and new knowledge in extended detail.
Essential Question
How can we use audio visual resources of elder storytelling to become better speakers?
Unit Theme
Elder Storytelling of Community Life, Change and Resilience
Long-term Learning Targets for Superior Level Proficiency (deep sustained inquiry)
Focus on both language forms and functions so that learners can: 1) engage in conversation and storytelling using all major timeframes of past, present and future; 2) communicate information, opinions and interests on a variety of topics with accuracy and fluency; 3) present opinions and special interests with lengthy detail and coherent narrations using expanded and diverse vocabulary.
Learning Objectives
Balanced between a structural and communicative approach that is Rotinonhsión:ni centric so that learners will: • Develop their vocabulary by listening and analyzing audio visual storytelling and documenting lexical groupings/themes including Rotinonhsión:ni cultural understandings and meanings. • Refine their use of past, present and future timeframes by analyzing more complex grammatical structures to explain and apply this new knowledge with peers. • Discuss experiences, community stories and cultural knowledge with peers through natural conversation using new vocabulary and appropriate timeframes. • Summarize and share cultural stories, oral history and knowledge with grammatical accuracy and fluency.
Identified resource
Ionkwahronkha'onhátie Oral Storytelling Resources Alice McDonald & Elizabeth Sunday **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCX18KBmVTU**

Learning Strategies

A - Independent Study

With a focus on **understanding**, watch and listen to the assigned audio video resource. As you are viewing for the first time, note any new vocabulary or interesting phrases in your vocabulary notebook. As you hear something of interest to your learning, pause the video to note both the utterance and the time of the video so you may revisit later. Continuing to listen through the whole video, you may focus on vocabulary, verb forms or incorporations the elder speakers are using. It is also important to note the parts of the elder's speech that you comprehend but feel is above your current level of speaking proficiency.

Some guiding questing to consider are: What do you notice? What was easy to understand? What parts of their speech or word use make it difficult to understand? How can you use these verb forms or particles in your own speech? What contexts call for the use of these particles?

While you are tending to a daily task such as cooking, doing beadwork, folding laundry or washing dishes, watch or listen to the video a second time to solidify your understanding of their stories. Keep your notebook handy to note any questions or topics of interest you would like to raise with the group and our elder.
During this time you may also focus on oral production by repeating new vocabulary and phrases noted, emulate the speech of the storyteller. Practice **summarizing** their stories, being very mindful of the grammar such as changing pronouns and tense markers.

Create an abstract for the video. Summarize the video into 3 sentences and provide 4 key words that best represent the themes within the video. Prepare to discuss why you chose those key words during our time visiting with our elder speaker.

B - Visiting

With our elder speaker we will share and **discuss** the stories we reviewed. Through natural conversation we will talk about the themes within the selected resource, reflecting on how we related to the stories through both a historical and a cultural lens. To share and discuss the story naturally you will want to add in some of your own reflections and thoughts.
To deepen our understanding of verb forms and patterns of the language, we will then discuss the grammatical concepts and vocabulary within the selected stories. We will pose any questions and discuss language patterns, meanings, verb forms, particle use, etc. with our elder speaker. Our speaker will provide feedback while also validating, correcting and modelling authentic use of Kanien'kéha

C – Independent Study

Following our elder session, focus on reviewing and **extending** your knowledge of any new grammatical forms. Note how those patterns are applied in different contexts. How would you explain the grammatical patterns or vocabulary to others. What are examples of how this is applied in everyday speech? Prepare to share and explain 1 or 2 things you learned about the language with our peer learning group.

D – Reflection and Sharing
To conclude this unit we will share what we learned with our peer group. **Explain** at least 1 grammatical pattern that you began to explore, what did you find out, what new understandings have you gained and how do you understand it? Provide examples to **demonstrate** how this knowledge can be applied to your everyday language to make you a better speaker.

Appendix 5: Unit Three - Analyzing Kanien'kéha Names to Expand Vocabulary and Create New Names

Unit Three – Analyzing Written Texts to Retell and Discuss Community Stories
Developed by: Kahtehrón:ni Iris Stacey

Unit Overview
For this learning approach we will be analyzing Kanien'kéha names using various strategies to expand our vocabulary, deepen our cultural understandings and create new Kanien'kéha names
Essential Question
How can analyzing the linguistic and cultural knowledge embedded in Kanien'kéha names help us to become superior level Kanien'kéha speakers?
Unit Theme
Women's Roles and Responsibilities for Traditional Naming
Long-term Learning Targets for Superior Level Proficiency (deep sustained inquiry)
Focus on both language forms and functions so that learners can: 1) engage in conversation and storytelling using all major timeframes of past, present and future; 2) communicate information, opinions and interests on a variety of topics with accuracy and fluency; 3) present opinions and special interests with lengthy detail and coherent narrations using expanded and diverse vocabulary.
Learning Objectives
Balanced between a structural and communicative approach that is Rotinonhsión:ni centric so that learners will: - Develop their vocabulary by analyzing traditional Onkwehonwehnéha names and documenting vocabulary through lexical groupings/themes as well as applying Rotinonhsión:ni cultural understandings and meanings.   - Refine their use of past, present and future timeframes by analyzing more complex grammatical structures to explain, share and apply this new knowledge with peers.   - Discuss experiences, community stories and cultural knowledge with peers through natural conversation using new vocabulary and appropriate timeframes.   - Create new Kanien'kéha names that are in alignment with traditional knowledge and cultural understandings and meanings.
Identified resource
Cooke Manuscript (1951) digital and/or hard copy

Learning Strategies
A - Independent Study
At the launch of this learning approach will begin by reading the introduction to Cooke's work (1952) together and discuss naming and our understandings of the importance of our traditional naming ceremony. With a focus on understanding, read through the names within the manuscript. As you are reading, note any new vocabulary or interesting phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Make connections between the various names and make note of vocabulary that is of interest to your learning so you may revisit later. Make sure to list the page number and entry number of the names. As we are focusing on vocabulary, you may also list some connections you make between verb synonyms (those that have similar meanings) and noun/verb incorporations. How would you use those verb incorporations to form new names? Some guiding questing to consider are: What do you notice? What was easy to understand? What parts of the names make it difficult to understand? How can you use these verb forms to produce new names? What contexts call for the use of these incorporations? Take your learning out on the land, by the water, in the garden, etc. You might go for a walk, pay attention to the weather or spend some time outdoors to observe our environment, nature, and the elements of the natural world. Think about the possible names that can be formed based on what you see or notice. Keep your notebook handy to note any new inspired names, questions or topics of interest you would like to raise with the group and our elder. During this time you may focus on some of the categories and topics highlighted in the Cooke introduction to help make connections to traditional naming practices. Practice making new names, being very mindful of the changing verb/noun incorporations and meanings. Prepare to discuss what you learned or noticed with the group and our elder. Bring your questions to pose during our time visiting with our elder speaker.
B - Visiting
With our elder speaker we will share and discuss the names we reviewed. Through **natural conversation** we will talk about the themes and names within the selected resource, reflecting on how we related to the names through both a historical and a cultural lens. To deepen our **understanding** of verb forms and patterns of the language, we will then discuss the grammatical concepts and vocabulary that make up the names we reviewed. We will pose any questions and discuss language patterns, meanings, verb incorporation, etc. with our elder speaker. Our speaker will provide feedback on the new names we created while also validating, correcting and modelling authentic use of Kanien'kéha.
C – Independent Study
Following our elder session, focus on **reviewing and extending** your knowledge of any new grammatical forms and naming practices. Note how those names and patterns are applied in different contexts. How would you **explain** the grammatical patterns and names to others. What are examples of how this is applied in creating new names? Prepare to share and explain 1 or 2 things you learned about the language with our peer learning group

D – Reflection and Sharing
To conclude this unit we will share what we learned with our peer group. **Explain** at least 1 naming/grammatical pattern or component of the language that you began to explore. What did you find out, what new understandings have you gained and how do you understand it? Provide examples to **demonstrate** how this knowledge can be applied to your everyday language to make you a better speaker.

Appendix 6: Unit Four - Continuing Oral Tradition to Discuss and Interpret Rotinonhsión:ni Teachings and Worldview

Unit Four – Continuing Oral Tradition to Discuss and Interpret Rotinonhsión:ni Teachings and Worldview

Unit Overview
For this learning approach we will be discussing traditional Rotinonhsión:ni teachings, oratory and worldview through an oral tradition approach in order to practice more complex language and formal oratory: extending grammatical, lexical and cultural understandings.
Essential Question
How can studying our foundational teachings through oral tradition help us to deepen our cultural knowledge and refine our use of more complex grammatical forms of Kanien'kéha for ceremonial and interpersonal communication?
Unit Theme
Traditional Teachings and the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen
Long-term Learning Targets for Superior Level Proficiency (deep sustained inquiry)
Focus on both language forms and functions so that learners can: 1) engage in conversation and storytelling using all major timeframes of past, present and future; 2) communicate information, opinions and interests on a variety of topics with accuracy and fluency; 3) present opinions and special interests with lengthy detail and coherent narrations using expanded lexical diversity including oration.
Learning Objectives
Balanced between a structural and communicative approach that is Rotinonhsión:ni centric so that learners will: - Develop their vocabulary by **listening to and discussing traditional teachings** and documenting vocabulary through lexical groupings/themes as well as applying Rotinonhsión:ni cultural understandings and meanings.   - Refine their use of past, present and future timeframes by **analyzing** more complex grammatical structures to explain, share and apply this new knowledge with peers.   **Discuss** cultural understandings and knowledge with peers through natural conversation using new vocabulary and appropriate timeframes.   **Retell** and share cultural stories, oral history and knowledge with grammatical accuracy and fluency.
Identified resource
Ohenton Karihwatéhkwen written text (Tom Porter)

Learning Strategies

A - Independent Study

At the launch of this learning approach will begin by discussing important teachings and traditional knowledge that we would like to focus our discussions on. Based on these initial discussions speakers will be invited to our visiting session for this learning unit.

To **warm up** to the discussion topics, begin by reading through the written text of the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen (Tom Porter). As you are reading, note any new vocabulary or interesting phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Make note of important cultural reflections and grammar concepts that are of interest to your learning so you may revisit later.

Some guiding questing to consider are: What do you notice? What was easy or complex to understand? What parts of the text make it difficult to understand? How can you use some of the vocabulary in your own personal thanks giving and teachings?

Give your own words of thanks giving each day. It can be as lengthy or short as you feel appropriate. Take your learning out on the land, by the water, in the garden, etc. You might go for a walk to **observe and understand** our environment, nature, and the elements of the natural world. Think about out teachings and being thankful based on what you see or notice. Write some reflections in your notebook each day, what may have been challenging to express. What is the grammar or vocabulary that caused these challenges? Note questions or topics of interest you would like to raise with the group and our elder speaker.

Prepare to discuss what you learned or noticed with the group and our elder. Bring your questions to pose during our time visiting with our elder speaker.

B - Visiting

With our elder speaker, we will have a speaker visit with us to share about our traditional teachings. Through **natural conversation** we will talk about our teachings presented and aim to expand our understandings together as a peer group. As we are listening, we will also be documenting beautiful words, profound meanings, and more complex grammatical forms.

To deepen our **understanding** of specific vocabulary, verb forms and patterns of the language, we will then discuss the grammatical concepts and vocabulary relevant to the teachings being discussed. We will pose any questions and discuss language patterns, meanings, verb incorporation, etc. with our elder speaker. Our speaker will provide feedback while also validating, correcting and modelling authentic use of Kanien'kéha.

C – Independent Study

Following our visiting session, focus on **reviewing and extending** your knowledge of any new grammatical forms and vocabulary. Note how the vocabulary and grammatical patterns are applied in various or specific contexts. How would you explain the teachings, grammatical patterns or vocabulary to others? Prepare to share and **explain** 1 or 2 things you learned about our teachings and the language with our peer learning group.

D – Reflection and Sharing
To conclude this unit we will share what we learned with our peer group. **Explain** at least 1 grammatical pattern or component of the language or culture that you began to explore. What did you find out, what new understandings have you gained and how do you understand it? Provide examples to **demonstrate** how this knowledge can be applied to your everyday language to make you a better speaker.