Blackfoot Language Immersion Classroom
K.W. Bergan School, Browning, MT

INSTRUCTOR: MRS CAROLYN ZUBACK
Data on native languages survival rates:

- 300 tribal languages of North America exist prior to European settlement. At beginning of 21st century, there are just 150 of those languages left. Most of these are in a steep decline.

- Mission and government boarding school eradicated our tribal languages. President Ulyssess Grant stated: “Schools should be established, which (Indian) children should be required to attend; their barbarous dialect should be blotted out and the English language substituted.”

- In 1990 Census: Crow Tribe in Montana had 4,200 speaker out of the 9,800 enrolled numbers; Navajo or Dine Tribe counts 150,000 speakers out of about 220,000 members.

However, all other tribes: the number of speakers are dropping quickly in the hundreds, the tens and the single digits.
Aapaapa itsita piipokaiksi
Schedule for Immersion kindergarten

BLACKFEET IMMERSION PROGRAM
KW BERGEN KINDERGARTEN
August 28, 2015
BLACKFEET LANGUAGE TEACHER: MRS CAROLYN ZUBACK KINDERGARTEN TEACHER: MRS JESSICA EDWARD

• Project Background and Description
This is the first year the Browning Public Schools have introduced the young students to the Blackfeet Immersion Classroom.

• Project Scope
The goal is to encourage, support and teach the Blackfeet Immersion students to be proficient in the Blackfeet language. It is of great importance to teach the young children today to speak and understand the Blackfeet language. Students are learning:

• The Calendar:
  - Monday – Issikatoyiksistsiko
  - Tuesday- Itaisstatsikinikiop
  - Wednesday- Itaistatsikistsiniop
  - Thursday- Namiksistsiko
  - Friday- Itainikiop

• Months:
  - January- Kaatoyii meaning: helps eat
  - February- Saomitsi ki somm meaning: unreliable moon
  - March- Sai aiksi  Otsistaotohpi
  - April- Matsiyi kaa pisa tosi meaning: Frog month
  - May- Otsi ki ts meaning: When the Buffalo flower grows
  - June: Mi som soo tayi meaning: when the long rains come
  - July Itoh toyi to si waa ma ta pii wa meaning: when the people move together
  - August Pakki pistsi Otsaitaitsih’p
  - September Itowa pi pits sko meaning: When the leaves turn yellow
  - October Saaixki Itomatoyi meaning: When the geese leave
  - November Ii tom’ moh koh poota meaning: when the snow comes
  - December Oots meaning: when the cold comes

• Good Morning: Iitaamiikskanoatooni
• How are you today: Tsa ni tapi anoh ksiskahno toonii
• I am so happy to see you: Kiitsiitsimahttsinohpowa
• I will see you later: Kiitak ki ta mahi tsin
• Listen to the speaker, do not speak. Isstsii yiik miinahtsiipoiyit
• Look at me: Nooh’k samm mo kitt
• Do you hear me: Kii tiy yoh’ tsim’p

• Numbers
  - 1- 20 Nitokska, natooka, niiokska, nisito, naao, Iikitsika, nanisoo, Pihksoo, Niippo, Nicksikopotto, Nahtsikopotto, niikopotto, nisitiikopotto, niisitiikopottak, naikopotto, ihkitsikopotto, naniisikopotto, Pihksikopotto, Naatsippo etc...

• Colors:
  - gray Iikitsinnaattsi
  - Brown Apoyiinnaattsi
  - Green Saisimokoinnaattsi
  - Purple Koomoinnaattsi
  - Yellow Ootahkoinnaattsi
  - Orange Oatshkoinnaattsi
  - Blue Ottshkoinnaattsi
  - Red Moahkssinnaattsi
  - Pink Ikkinnaattsi
  - Black Sikalinnaattsi
  - White Sikxssinnaattti

• Bodyparts:
  - Head Mohtankan Hair Nootahkani face Moostooksis nose Mohksisis ears Kooh’tookiks
  - Mouth Moyii neck moookookinn hand motis legs Mohkatsis foot Mohkat teeth Koohipikists

• Short Phrases:
  - Niitakitapoo Makapoyis May I go to the restroom
  - Niitaksimii Oohki May I have a drink of water
  - Iikstoyi ksis ts ko
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:30</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:35-9:20</td>
<td>Short prep</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:20-11:00</td>
<td>Blackfeet Kindergarten Immersion class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00-11:45</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00-12:50</td>
<td>Mrs Edwards class Immersion Students math.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:50-1:00</td>
<td>Short Prep for Specials students</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00-1:45</td>
<td>Specials with students</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:45-2:30</td>
<td>Blackfoot language/ Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30-3:15</td>
<td>Specials with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15-4:00</td>
<td>Blackfoot language/ Culture</td>
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</tbody>
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Blackfeet Immersion Teacher
KW Bergan School.
Attendance Data

Immersion vs. Rest of School

- Immersion class: 87%
- School: 81%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holy Beaver Woman</td>
<td>One who rows far</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>off Shore Dancing</td>
<td>Maakaipii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Eagle</td>
<td>Holy Hummingbird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Blades</td>
<td>Naatsikaapoiststsii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Buffalo Eagle Girl</td>
<td>Medicine Star Woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Calf Woman</td>
<td>Onistai pokaki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Bird</td>
<td>Inaksi Piiksi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edge of Mountain</td>
<td>Inaksi Piiksi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Bird</td>
<td>I'kinaisko'to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gently Comes Back</td>
<td>Naamoisisttsiakii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Humming Bird</td>
<td>Naamoisisttsiakii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who are enrolled in Immersion Niitanh’ka toap

Niitanh’ka toap

The list includes various names and meanings related to animals and natural elements, indicating a cultural or linguistic description. Each name is paired with a meaning or role, often reflecting traditional or spiritual significance.
The world is our classroom.
Four Components that make us unique

- Language
- Culture
- Spirituality
- Creation Stories
“Never disgrace our language with debate.” Darrell R. Kipp

In spite of efforts of the federal government to eradicate the Indian person and their native language, cultural ways and way of knowing; many tribal languages survived. The Native Languages Act of 1990 vowed to “preserve, protect and promote” tribal languages and tribal people once again gained rights to speak and teach tribal languages.

However, tribes are racing against time, many elders are gone. Challenges are again before us. Native language revitalization is a huge task.
Show, don’t tell. Don’t talk about what you will do. Do it and show it. This is what they are ultimately going to listen to—not your words, but to the abilities of the children.

Language learning and communicating in the language carries with it a significant form of satisfaction to all participants—children, themselves, their families and the elders of the community.

Youth language speakers participate in tribal ceremonies and public events and become contributors to the vitality of the community.
Native language immersion is a practice or methodology of language learning that concentrates on communication, exclusively in the native language.

Total Physical Response TPR is utilized as one of the language learning strategies based on commands, internalizing the language and starting with the home environment.
We are a different organization than most. Our immersion schools look like schools, but in reality, they are a whole different thing with very different dynamics and a need for a very different structure.

Native language immersion has made astounding records of educational achievement among children and youth who participate in language immersion education.

Students learn traditional Native skills, art and knowledge as well as academic subjects areas, taught exclusively in the medium of the Native language.
## Pro and Cons of the Immersion Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data/ Attendance</td>
<td>Limited resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student language increased</td>
<td>lack of funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community tribal Support</td>
<td>Decrease in fluent speakers</td>
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<td>50/50 balance provided</td>
<td>Accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students do well academically</td>
<td>Parent Involvement</td>
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<td>Positive Cultural Awareness</td>
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Jonathan Windy Boy, a Democratic state senator and a Chippewa Cree Indian, sponsored the immersion bill. "We're investing in a population of this state that has been neglected for too long," he says. "Investing in those human resources, I think ... is going to be the best investment that we can provide for all of Montana to be a better place to live in."
Children Pouches
Kiita kita matsino h’powa
Until we meet again.