

Best Practices in Indigenous Language Immersion Programs

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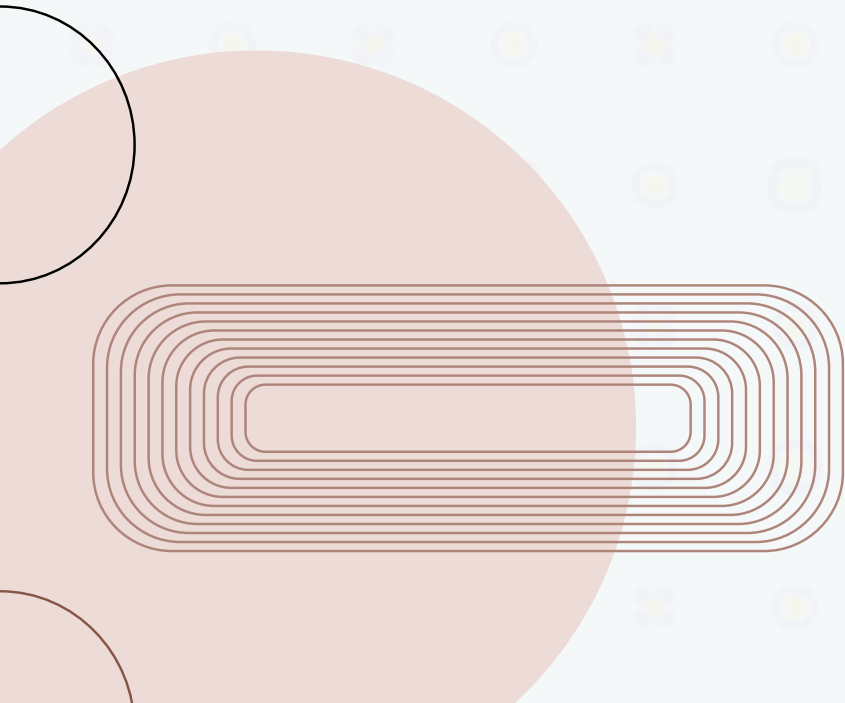
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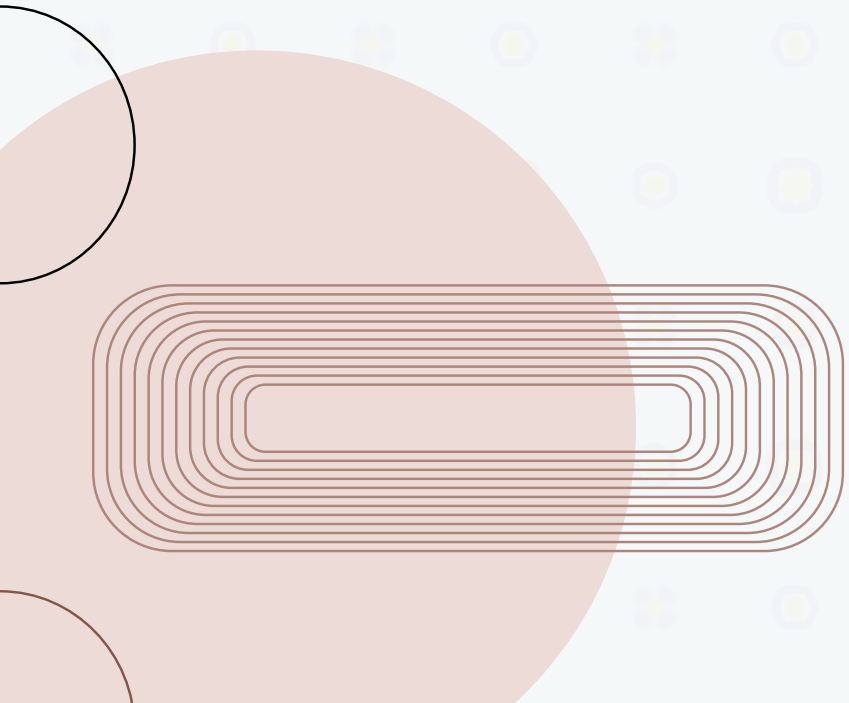
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**Areas of Interest: Language Documentation and Revitalization,
Community Linguists Training, Second language Acquisition,
Language Teaching Pedagogies**

Indigenous Language I'm working on: Yupik/Akuzipik

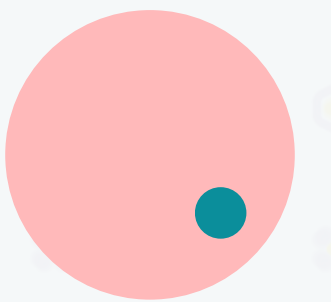
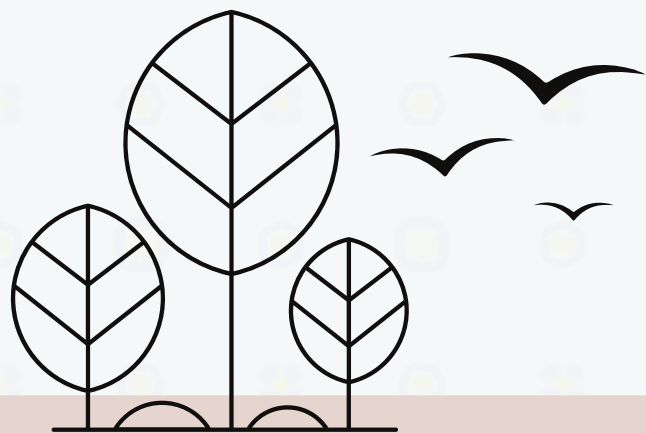


Let me share a story with you.



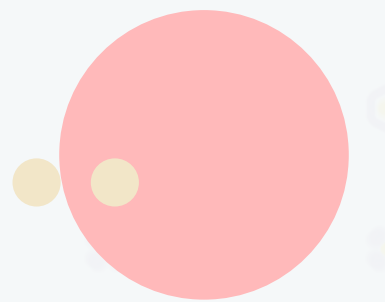
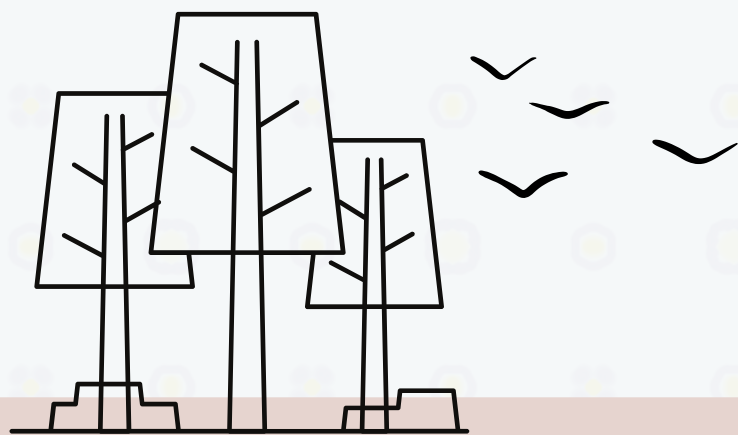
Language

- The essence of human connection
- Allows us to share emotions, thoughts and desires
- Embodies our culture, history, and identity
- Shapes who we are
- Empowers us economically, intellectually, and socially



Indigenous Language

- The essence of ancient cultures, holding centuries of wisdom and tradition.
- More than a means of communication.
- crucial for preserving unique cultural identities, heritage, and traditional knowledge.





Language Endangerment

A significant portion of world languages including Indigenous ones are endangered today.

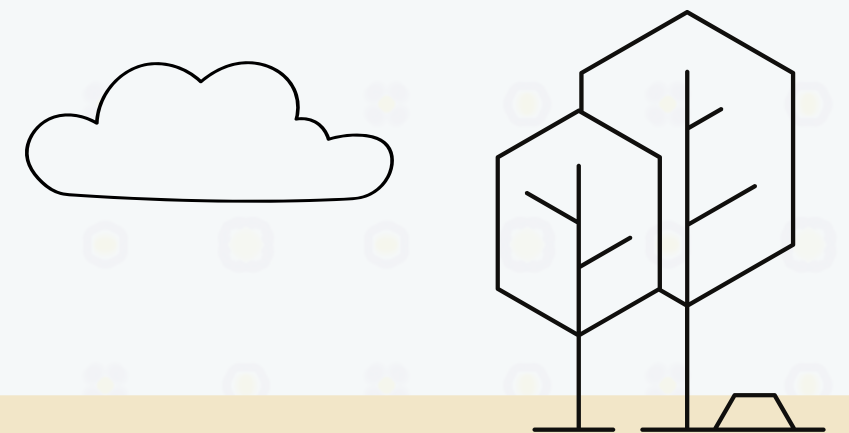
Factors contributing to the decline in speakers and use of these languages:

Globalization;

Cultural Assimilation;

Urbanization;

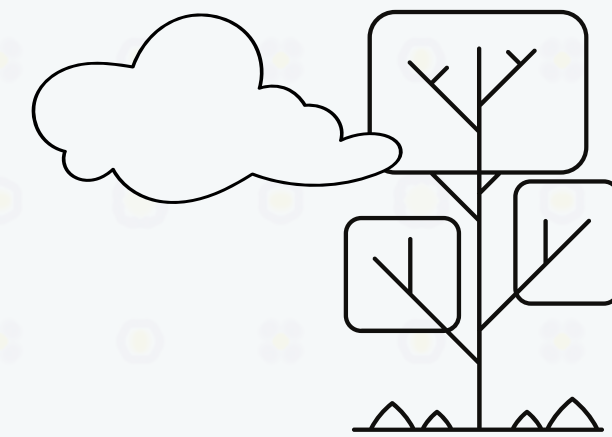
Economic Pressures



There's still hope

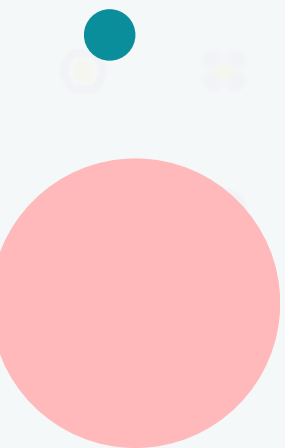
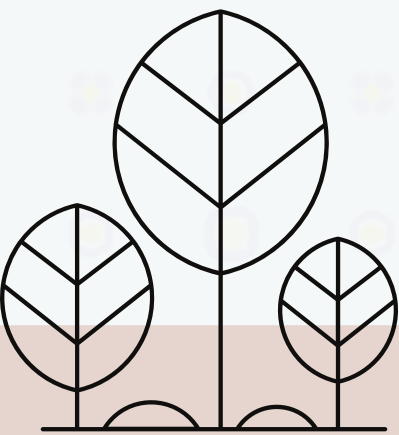
We can revive these endangered Indigenous languages through:

- Educational programs
- Community-driven initiatives
- Reconnecting younger generations with their linguistic roots
- Fostering intergenerational transmission
- Celebrating culture
- Advocating for supportive policies
- Using digital tools



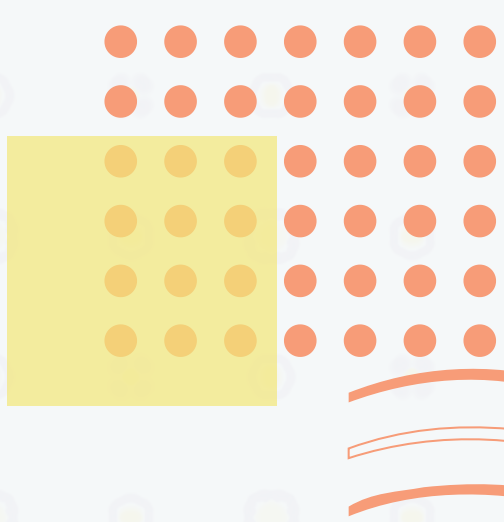
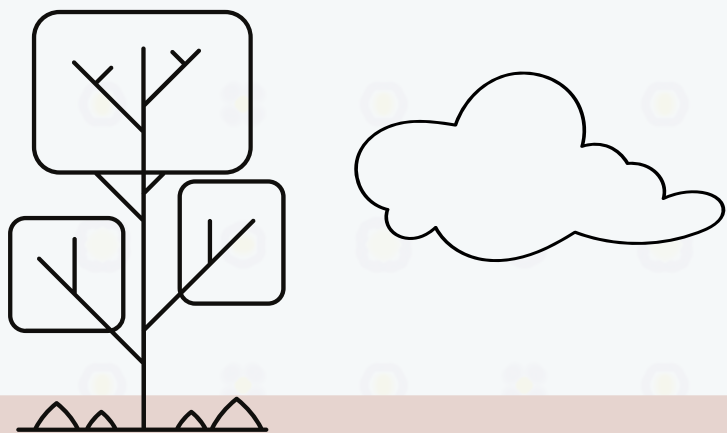
Indigenous Language Immersion Programs

- An educational initiative designed to teach and revitalize endangered or threatened Indigenous languages
- Immerse learners in their native language and culture
- Create an environment akin to how we naturally acquire language as children
- Research indicates immersion's effectiveness in actively engaging language students
- Effectiveness in producing fluency and natural speakers, a primary goal of immersion
- Emphasizes early initiation for optimal language acquisition and fluency



Types of Immersion programs

- Full Language Immersion
- Partial Language Immersion
- Language Nest Programs
- Community Language Learning
- Intergenerational Immersion Programs
- Language Revitalization Camps
- Online Language Immersion



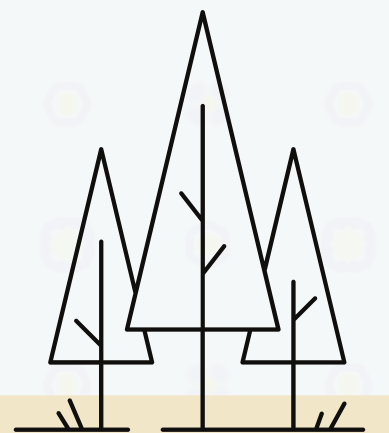
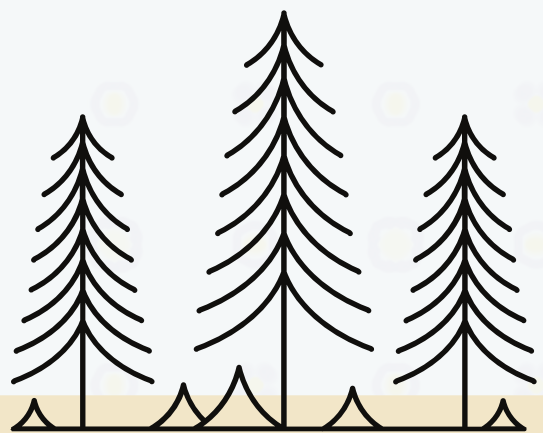
A Very Common Concern Community Members Have About These Programs:

Children will not learn academic skills or that they will not learn English.

However, many studies confirmed the academic success of the (total) immersion approach by stating that “students in such programs do well as others and sometimes even surpass mainstream students on comparable measures of verbal skills”.

A more effective approach to achieving proficiency in a Native language.

(Aguilera & LeCompte, 2007)

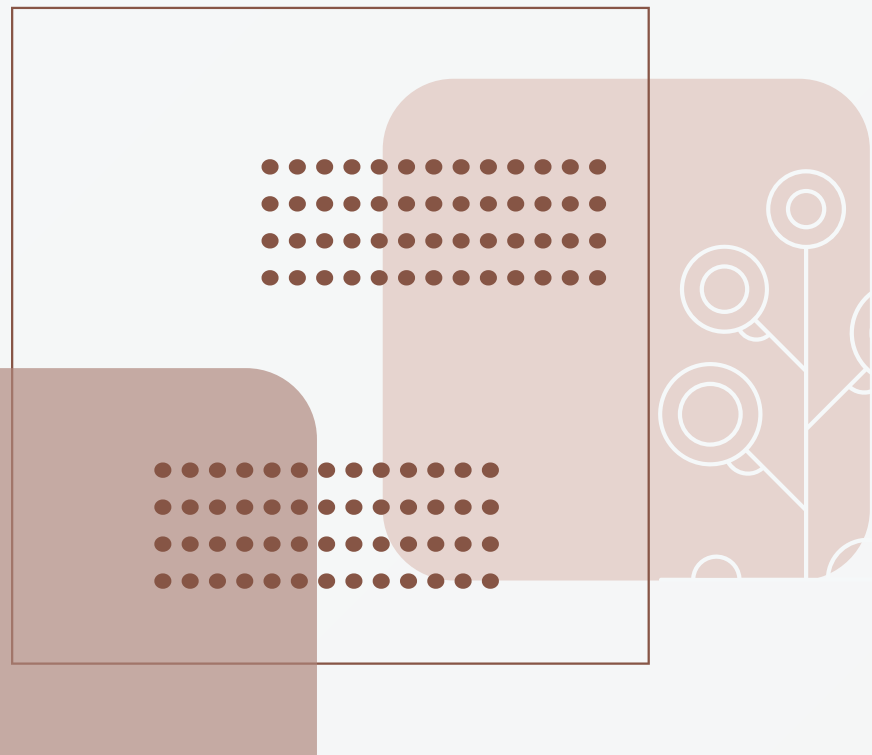


Impact of Immersion Programs

- Contribute to “healthy cultural identity information”
- Contribute to “healthy early childhood development”
- Immersion Programs promote community development
- The most viable and quicker method for gaining true fluency in the target language.

(McIvor, 2005; Aguilera & LeCompte, 2007)

Some of the Best Practices



Te Kōhanga Reo

- The Māori Language Renewal Program in New Zealand
- One of the most successful Indigenous language immersion programs.
- Started with full immersion Māori language preschool program in the 1980s
- Serves children between one and six years of age
- Housed in “Māori-owned premises such as a marae, or at community centers of private homes.
- Number of children per nest may range from 6 to 60
- Follows culture-based approach




‘Aha Pūnana Leo (Hawaii)

- Founded in 1983 with an aim to revitalize the Hawaiian language
- Modeled after the successful Māori language program
- One of the most successful revitalization-immersion programs in the USA.
- Integrates Indigenous, family-based knowledge with Montessori methods in early childhood education.
- 'Hui Hi'I Pepe' (Baby Embracing Clubs) was established for mothers with children aged 3 or lower.
- Basic Hawai'ian and simple teaching strategies are taught to mothers so they can prepare their children for 'Aha Pūnana Leo.
- Parents are required to attend weekly language classes and support language use at home for their children.

(Wilson & Kamana, 2001; Stiles, 1997)



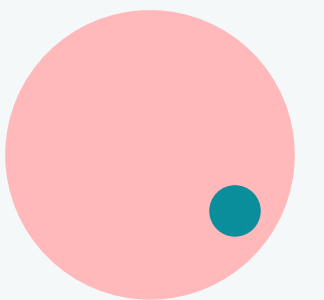
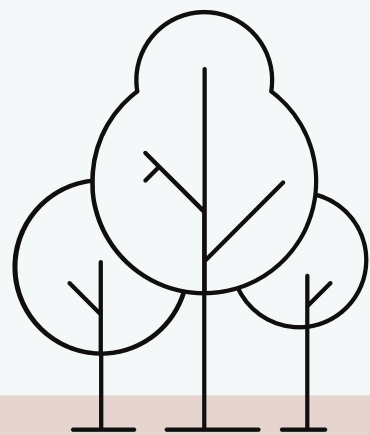
Enweyang Ojibwe Language Nest

- Established as a unique institution at the University of Minnesota Duluth
 - To teach and revitalize the Ojibwe language in formal settings
 - Target Audience: Preschool Children, Families, University Students
 - Inspired by Māori and Native Hawai'ian Models
 - The first full language immersion model in the region
 - Cultural integration and preservation
 - Operates as an additive bilingual program
 - A very successful example of immersion education and cultural preservation in the Ojibwe community.
- 

Four Famous Canadian Programs

1. Mohawk,
2. Mi'kmaq,
3. Cree communities in Saskatchewan and Alberta, and
4. British Columbia's interior Secwepemc Nation.

These are the longest-running best-known flagship immersion schools in Canada.





Mohawk and Mi'kmaq of the east

1. Mohawk of Kahnawà:ke

- The first reported Indigenous language immersion school in Canada, established in 1970.
- Initially started as a pilot project using only Mohawk with English-speaking nursery school children.
- Expanded from nursery to full-day language immersion, demonstrating evidence that Mohawk language immersion did not compromise English language performance
- Also well-known for adult Indigenous immersion programs
- The Mohawk Language Nest program is a leader in the Canadian Language Nest movement

2. Mi'kmaq Language Immersion

- Mi'kmaq of the eastern Canadian coast noted for successful K-12 Mi'kmaq language immersion programs.



Cree & Secwepemc Language Immersion

3. Cree Language Immersion

- Cree, the largest language group in Canada, features successful immersion programs:
- Atikameg Sovereign School at Whitefish Lake First Nation in northern Alberta (pre-K to grade 2 program).
- Onion Lake Cree Nation Kihew Waciston School in Saskatchewan (full immersion classes).

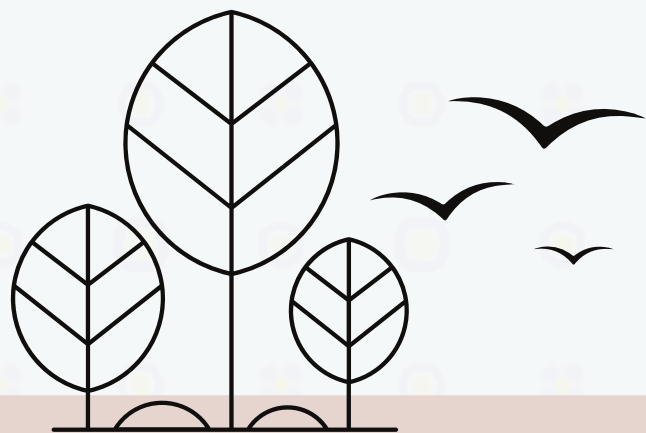
4. Secwepemc Language Immersion

- Secwepemc in British Columbia initiated a language nest preschool around 20 years ago, led by community mothers and elders.
- Notable for being the only known full-immersion school in British Columbia

(Hoover, 1992; Chambers, 2015; Maracle et al., 2011)

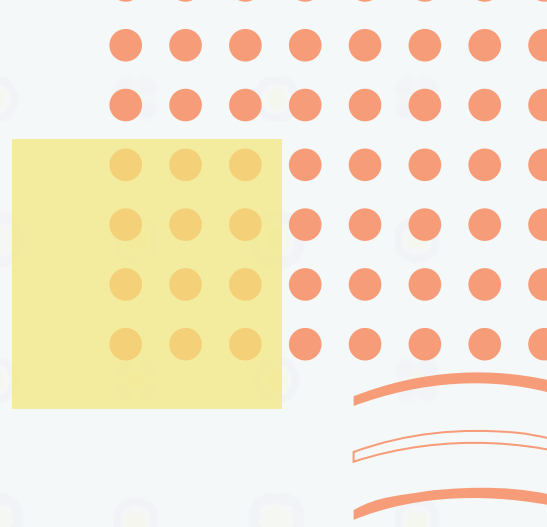
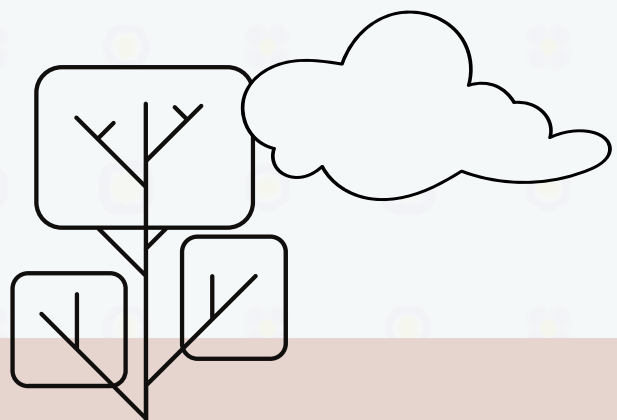
Key elements that contribute to the success of these programs

- A strong focus on creating an immersive language environment,
- Utilization of culturally relevant teaching materials and methodologies,
- Fostering intergenerational language transmission,
- Involving community members as language mentors,
- Offering ample amount of language exposure, and
- Incorporating indigenous cultural practices into the curriculum.



Challenges and Limitations

- Limited resources and funding,
- Scarcity of qualified language teachers,
- Scarcity of Indigenous staff
- Derogation of Indigenous practices
- Disparities of esteem and
- The need for ongoing community support and commitment.

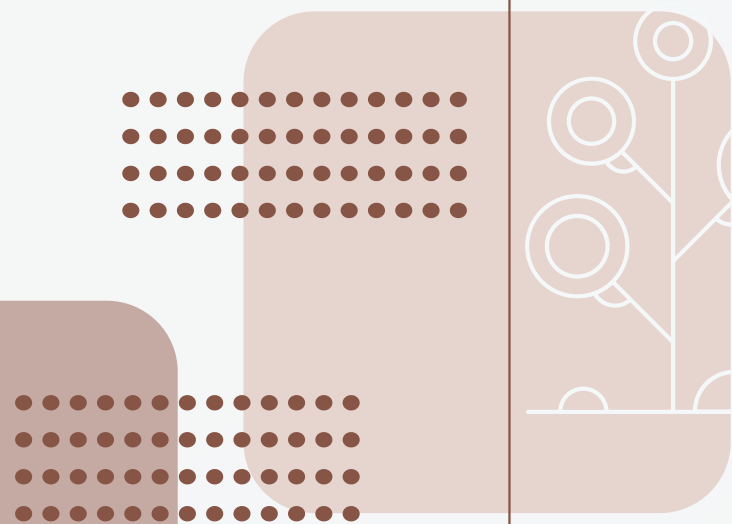


Ideal Immersion Programs

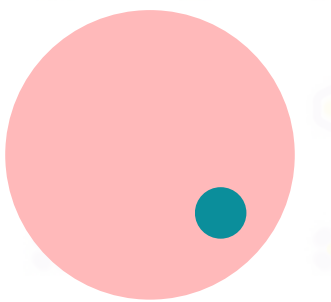
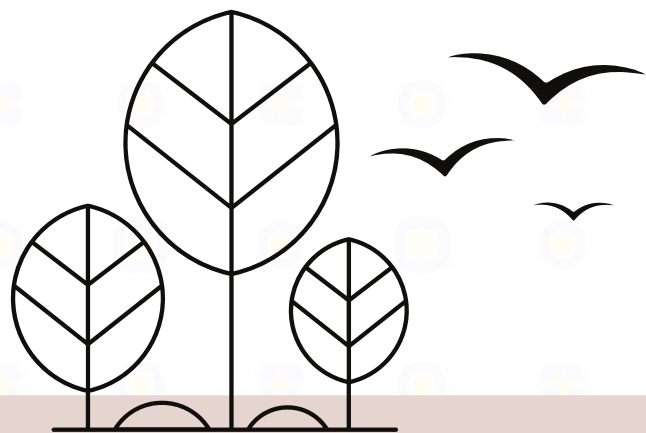
- Create Immersive Language Environments
- Integrate Culturally Relevant Teaching Materials and Methods
- Intergenerational Language Transmission
- Community Members as Language Mentors
- Ample Language Exposure
- Incorporate Indigenous Cultural Practices
- Encourage families' participation

Ideal Immersion Programs

- Structured Curriculum
- Effective Teaching Methods
- Technology Integration
- Assessment and Progress Tracking
- Encouragement of Language Use Outside classroom



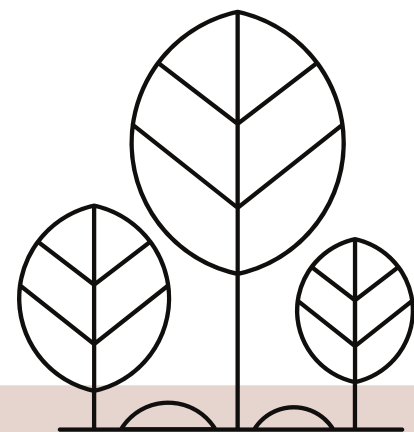
Create an experience deeply connected to your roots, your community, and your identity.



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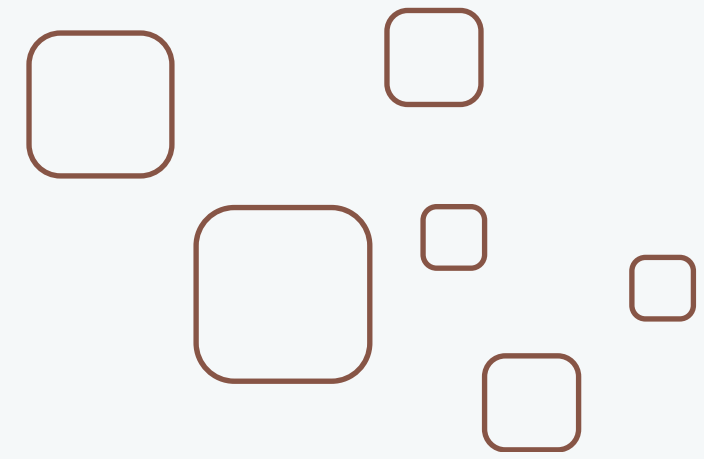
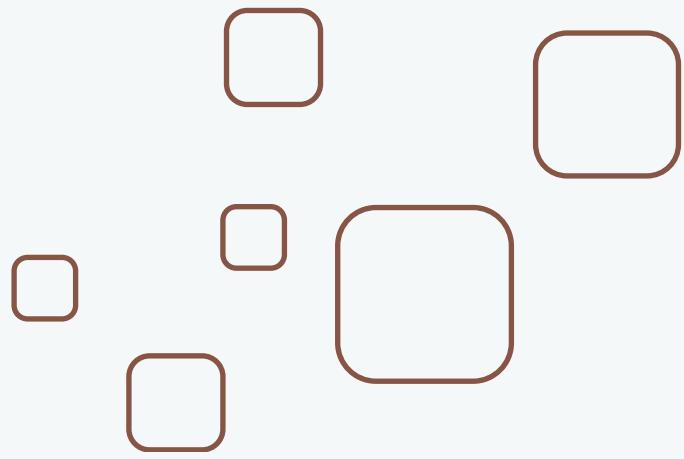
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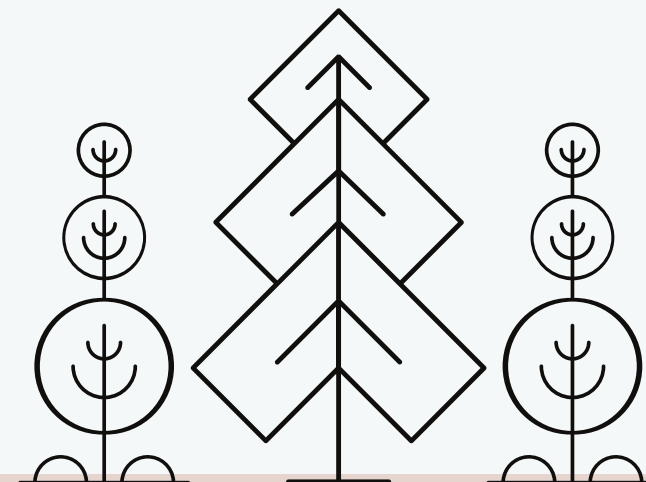


QUESTIONS?

I'll answer.



**THANK
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