

RURAL AMERICA INITIATIVES
919 MAIN STREET • RAPID CITY, SD 57701

HE SAPA COMMUNITY LAKOTA LANGUAGE PRESERVATION PROJECT



2010
RESEARCH
FINDINGS



John J. Usera, Ph.D.; Bruce Long Fox, M.B.A.; & Dollie Red Elk, A.A.
Institute for Educational Leadership & Evaluation
Chiesman Center For Democracy
1641 Deadwood Avenue
Rapid City, SD 57702

RURAL AMERICA INITIATIVES
919 MAIN STREET • RAPID CITY, SD 57701

HE SAPA COMMUNITY LAKOTA LANGUAGE PRESERVATION PROJECT

2010
RESEARCH
FINDINGS



John J. Usera, Ph.D.; Bruce Long Fox, M.B.A.; & Dollie Red Elk, A.A.
Institute for Educational Leadership & Evaluation
Chiesman Center For Democracy
1641 Deadwood Avenue
Rapid City, SD 57702

Copyright 2011 by the Chiesman Center for Democracy, Inc.

All rights reserved. Published March 2011
Printed in the United States of America

No portion of these materials may be copied except for classroom or research use, reproduction in any media, or distributed for any reason without written permission of the authors or written consent of the:



Chiesman Center for Democracy, Inc.
1641 Deadwood Ave.
Rapid City, SD 57702
(605) 341-4311
www.chiesman.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	iii
Executive Summary	1
Overview	1
Demographics	1
Lakota Language Ability & Use	2
Lakota Language Access	3
Myths & Facts About Lakota Language	5
Introduction	6
Overview	6
Literature Review	7
Methodology	10
Findings	10
Demographics	10
Lakota Language Access	15
Lakota Language Ability & Use	23
Rationale For Learning & Preserving Lakota Language	27
Conclusion	39
Appendix A: A Sample of Qualitative Responses	40
Appendix B: References	47

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The He Sapa Community Lakota Language Preservation Project was funded by the U.S Department of Health & Human Services' Administration for Native Americans (HHS-2009-ACF-ANA-NL-0038) and administered by Rural America Initiatives in Rapid City. The project was a collaborative effort of the Oglala Lakota College, Chiesman Center, Institute for Educational Leadership & Evaluation, Rapid City Area School District, Aberdeen Area Tribal Chairmen's Health Board, and Society for the Advancement of Native Interests - Today (Sani-T).

The project could not have been completed without the support of the community, volunteers and staff. Some of the major contributors included:

Bruce Long Fox	Executive Director of Rural America Initiatives
Dollie Red Elk	Coordinator of the Language Preservation & Assessment Project
Karen Lone Hill	Chair, Lakota Studies Department, Oglala Lakota College
Tom Allen	Independent Grant Writer & Consultant
Michael Scares Hawk	Oglala Lakota College Student
Ted Ten Fingers	Retired Counselor
Violet Ten Finders	Retired Lakota Language Teacher
Marcey Edwards	Oglala Lakota College Student
LeoNora Garcia	Oglala Lakota College Student
Augustus Robertson	Oglala Lakota College Student
Paul Garcia	Oglala Lakota College Student
Teresa Merdinian	Oglala Lakota College Student

Board of Directors

Monica Schmidt	Chair
Carol Marshall-Coon	Vice Chair
Sharon No Heart	Treasurer
Jacque Arpan	Secretary
Denice Murphy	Member
Paulette Cuny	Member
Brett Lee Shelton, J.D.	Member

HE SAPA COMMUNITY LAKOTA LANGUAGE PRESERVATION PROJECT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

The Lakota language is in danger of being lost. Elders are passing on without teaching their children or grandchildren how to speak the Lakota language. Efforts must be made to transfer the language from older fluent speakers to the younger generation, especially the children, as early as possible.

This project focuses on the preservation of the Lakota language in Pennington County where 9,620 members of various tribes reside. The research was designed to document the level of fluency, the rate of language loss, and the level of interest by the Lakota residents to participate in a preservation project in whatever method would be appropriate by age and location.

In order to initiate a Lakota Language Preservation Project for the Lakota residents of Pennington County, this baseline study was completed to document the number of existing speakers and language proficiency gaps. In this study, 1,848 individuals completed a 55 item questionnaire with a representative number of respondents serving on a focus group to review and validate the results from the questionnaire analysis.

Demographics

- **Gender & Age:** The respondents were 38.7% male (n = 694) and 61.3% female (n = 1,100). Fourteen (n = 14) individuals did not report their gender. The average age of male respondents was 34.3 years (s = 15.0) and the average age of female respondents was 35.3 years (s = 14.1) with a range for both genders from 17 years to 85 years.
- **Residence:** Ninety percent (90.1%) of the respondents resided in Pennington County, while 6.2% of the respondents resided on Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Cheyenne, or Standing Rock Reservations.
- **Employment Status:** Thirty-four percent (34.4%) of the respondents were employed full-time, while 13.6% had part-time employment. Twenty percent (19.5%) of the

respondents were full-time students, and 10.0% were part-time students. Four percent (3.5%) of the respondents were unemployed, 4.8% were retired, and 7.9% were full-time home caretakers.

- Household Size:** The average size of the respondent households was four persons per household. Six percent (6.0%) of the respondents were single households, while 65.2% of the respondents came from households with two to four members. Thirty percent (29.8%) of the respondents reported having household sizes of five to ten persons.

Lakota Language Ability & Use

Eighty percent (80.1%) of the respondents reported not being able to understand Lakota when spoken. Eight percent (7.7%) of the respondents reported being fluent in Lakota and able to carry on a conversation in the Lakota language. Six percent (5.5%) reported being able to read Lakota, while 4.9% reported being able to write in Lakota. Overall, 86.2% of the respondents reported not having any speaking, reading, or writing skills in the Lakota language.

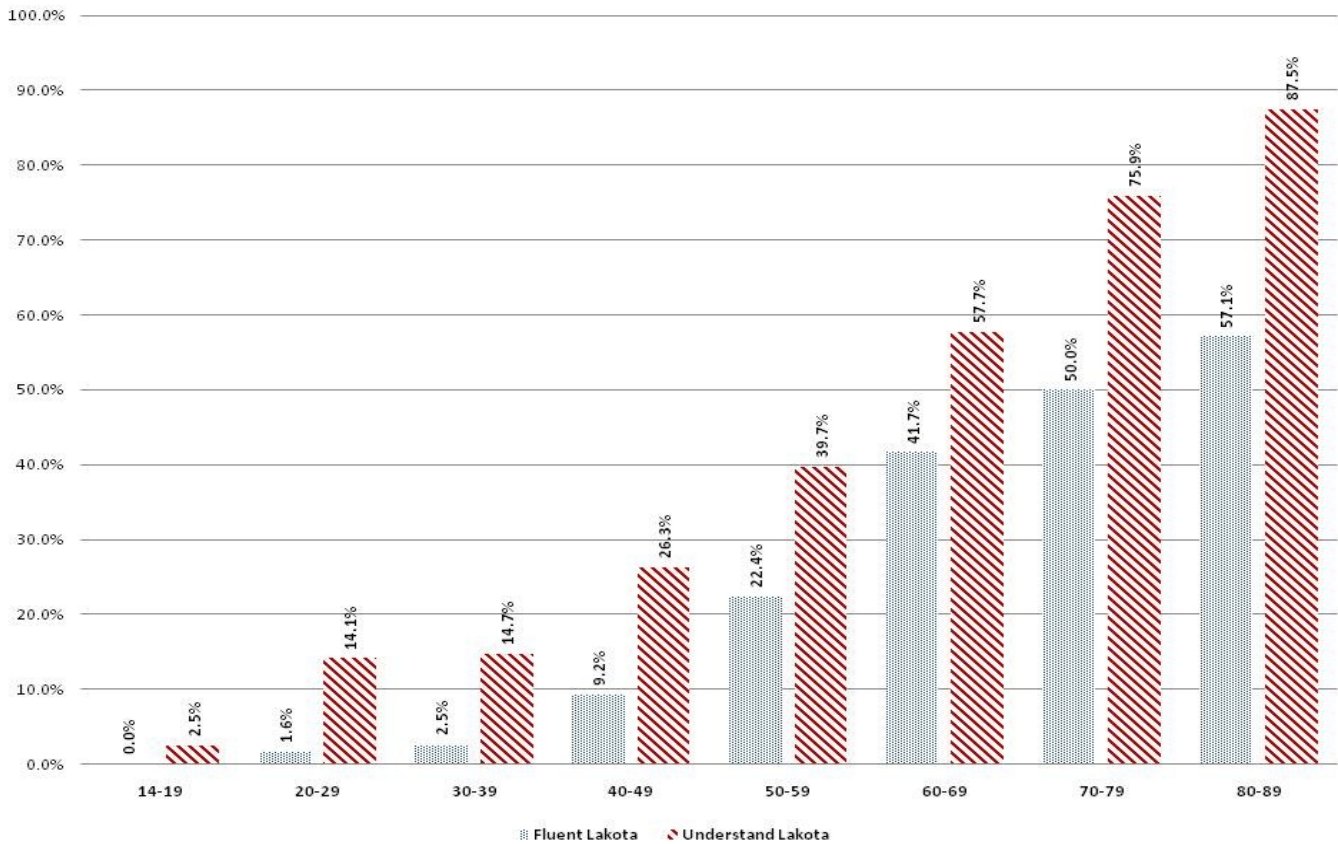
Reported Ability	None	Low to Some	Moderate	Fluent to Expert
Understand Lakota when some else speaks	20.8%	59.3%	9.7%	10.2%
Speak Lakota - Conversational Lakota	41.6%	46.8%	4.0%	7.7%
Read Lakota	46.8%	39.8%	7.8%	5.5%
Write Lakota	52.3%	37.2%	5.5%	4.9%
Average	40.4%	45.8%	6.8%	7.1%

When this was broken down by age, the analysis showed that 1.5% of the respondents under the age of 40 were fluent in conversational Lakota. There were 32.1% of the respondents over the age of 50 who reported being fluent speakers with the highest percentage at the age of 65 or higher.

When the respondents were asked about their level of understanding of Lakota when spoken, 3.0% of the individuals under the age of 39 indicated they could understand what had been said without any difficulty. For those over the age of 50, 36.9% of the respondents indicated that they could understand Lakota when spoken.

Based on the age of the Lakota fluent speakers, the rate of loss of the language is calculated to be about 3.1% per year. If there are no effective Lakota language programs implemented in the next few years, there will not be a significant number of Lakota speakers by 2040.

Lakota Fluency Levels



A majority of the respondents (39.4%) reported hearing Lakota spoken at ceremonies with one-third of the respondents (32.4%) hearing Lakota at funerals. Forty-six percent (45.5%) of the respondents indicated that their grandmothers spoke Lakota, while 34.5% of their mothers spoke Lakota. One fourth of the respondents (24.1%) said that their grandfathers spoke Lakota, while 19.6% of their fathers spoke Lakota.

Lakota Language Access

In order to promote the teaching of Lakota language for both youth and adults, the respondents were asked when would be the best time to study Lakota. Eighty-four percent (83.9%) of the respondents were interesting in taking Lakota classes. Thirty-one percent (31.2%) of the respondents indicated that the best time to take classes was in the evening, while 14.7% of the respondents reported that they would be interested in a self-study program. Another 22.2% would be interested in taking Lakota using the computer.

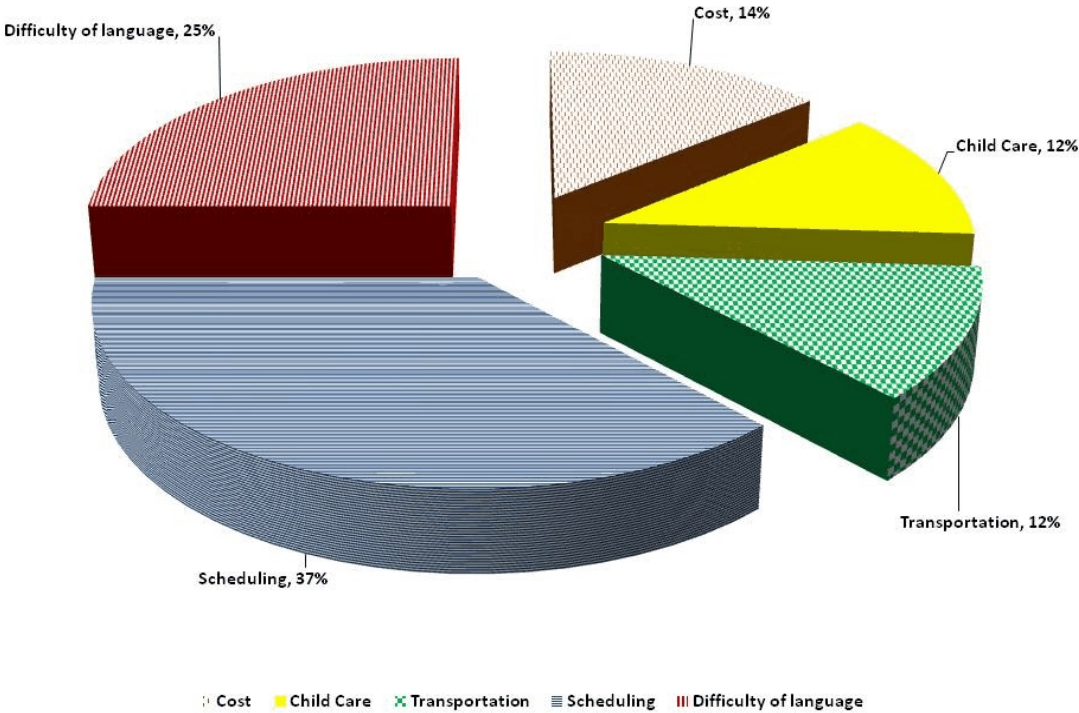
Formal classes (face-to-face) was the preferred method by 31.0% of the respondents.

One in four (24.2%) indicated that talking to other speakers was a good method for learning Lakota. One in ten respondents would be interested in learning Lakota using CD or DVDs (9.3%), computers (10.7%), or books or written materials (9.8%).

In order to make the Lakota classes available, the respondents were asked about their access to a computer or internet. Sixty-six percent (65.7%) reported owning a computer, while 86.3% reported having easy access to a computer. Three-fourths of the respondents (78.6%) had internet access.

The respondents were asked about obstacles to attending language classes. The graphic shows that scheduling time to study (36.8%) and the difficulty of the language (25.9%) were two major obstacles.

Sixty-one percent (61.3%) of the respondents believed that the major reason for learning Lakota was to keep Lakota alive. By learning Lakota, it would help the individual understand their culture better (40.7%) and be able to pass their heritage on to their children (39.6%). Respondents indicated it was important to learn Lakota so as to speak with the elders (34.9%) and follow the traditions of the Lakota culture in a true and meaningful manner (28.5%).

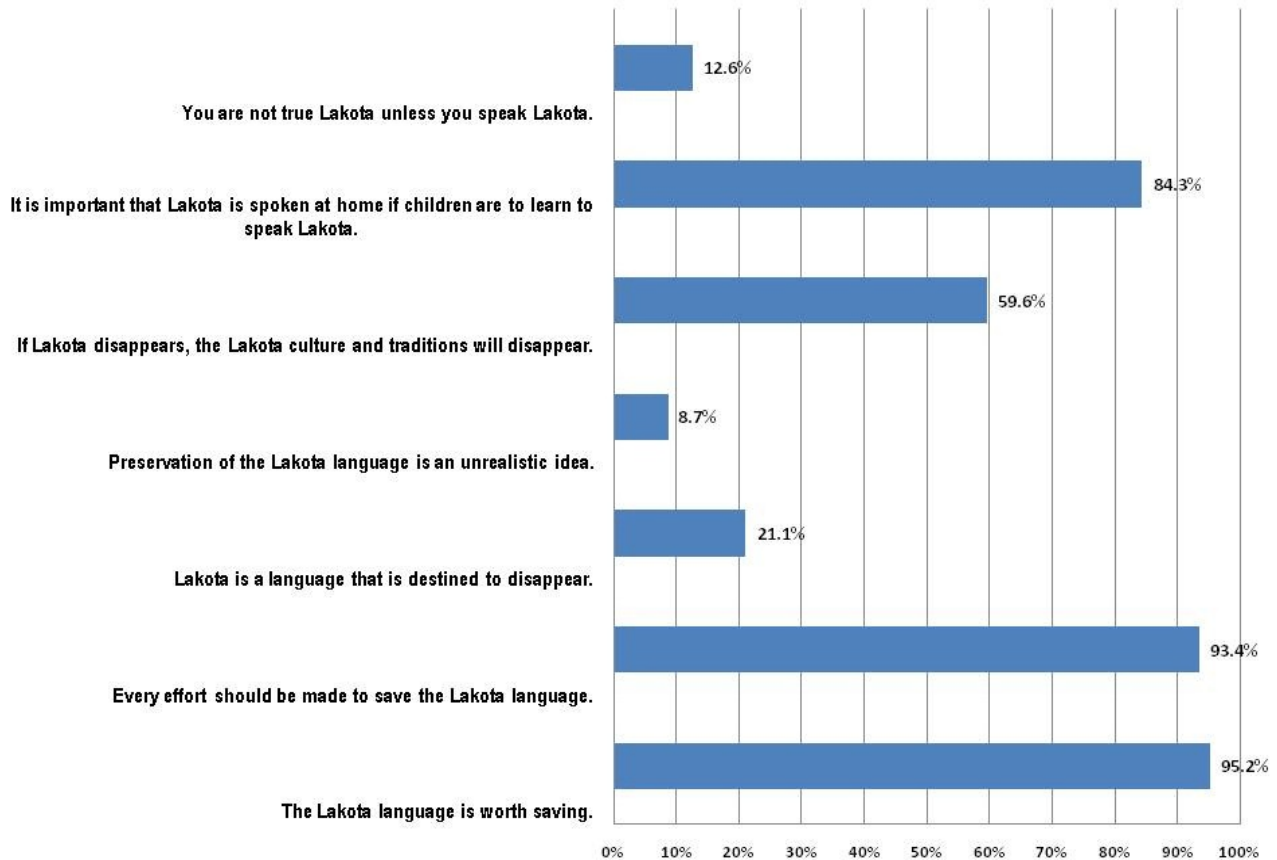


Myths & Facts About Lakota Language

There is a strong interest in preserving the Lakota language. The study reversed any comments about the lack of interest or desire to implement a Lakota language program in Pennington County. The assessment results show that over 90% of the respondents believed that every effort should be made to save the Lakota language and that it was worth the effort and work to save it.

The challenges to meeting this desire were a matter of scheduling and delivery methods. Eighty-five percent (85.0%) of the respondents stated that Lakota can be learned by anyone at any age. One in three respondents (32.6%) believed that the best time to learn Lakota was before the age of 7, but one in four was not sure (28.0%). However, 91.9% believed that children should be taught Lakota – age was not an issue.

Future of Lakota Language



LAKOTA LANGUAGE LOSS

About one-third (36.9%) of the Pennington County Lakota residents over the age of 50 reported speaking Lakota fluently, while only 1.5% of the residents under the age of 39 reported speaking Lakota fluently.

INTRODUCTION

Overview

How do we know when a language is threatened of being lost? One of the obvious signs is the number of its speakers declining as exemplified by how many people speak the language in their home, at social gatherings, and in casual conversation. Fluency in the language increases with age as younger generations prefer to speak another language, English in this case. Additionally, the decline is noticeable when parents and elders fail to teach the language to their children or to each other as a daily conversational practice.

The purpose of the study was to document the number of fluent Lakota speakers in Pennington County. Through the study, there was an attempt to quantify what might be contributing to the decreased use of Lakota. It was a means to determine if the decline was due to a lack of interest, lack of resources, or lack of opportunities. Also, the study tried to identify the level of interest in learning the language and the best methods for teaching Lakota.

There have been many initiatives on the reservations to preserve the Lakota language by teaching young people in schools and through the post secondary institutions. The efforts in the urban areas has been minimal and has resulted in a more rapid loss of the language within the non-reservation communities. Recommendations for reversing this trend have been available for decades, but no major undertaking has been initiated in Pennington County to reverse this trend. The recommendations include that

- children must be exposed to a stimulating language program in both cultural and learning environments;
- proficiency in two or more languages needs to be promoted for all Lakota students;
- students must have early and easy access to teachers who are proficient in Lakota;

- tribes, parents, schools, and non-profit organizations must form partnerships to promote language development and application;
- opportunities for individuals to use the language in commercial and non commercial enterprises must be encouraged, initiated, expanded, and supported;
- procedures for the identification of students with special needs, including the gifted and talented, must reflect Lakota traditions, values, and practices; and
- there must be home and community commitment to use the language as part of an immersion and daily experience. (U.S. Department of Education, 1991).

Literature Review

Linguists have uncovered more than six thousand languages currently spoken around the world (Lewis, 2009). Throughout history, many languages have become endangered or extinct as their speakers die out or transition to another language for one reason or another. When a language is lost due to either extinction or language shift, much more is lost than a system of words and phrases. Globally, each language significantly contributes to the knowledge and enrichment of mankind. Community-wide, a language has cultural and spiritual implications for the speaker. It substantiates a community, reminding members of how they are linked to one another. For a language on the brink of endangerment, preservation and revitalization efforts are necessary. Several methods and programs have demonstrated varying levels of success in restoring fluency of heritage tongues within a community.

Several linguists have researched the process of language loss and shift within a community. A few have presented their conclusions as to why it happens. Others have devised systems of determining what stage of decline a language community is in and the likelihood that it can be restored. Understanding to what degree a language has diminished helps proponents to know how extensive a revitalization program must be to reverse the language shift within a community.

James Crawford (1996) proposed seven hypotheses as to why language shift happens and how it can be reversed. Among these hypotheses, Crawford suggests that a community undergoes internal changes that set language shift in action. These may be changes in social and cultural values, and to prevent language die-off, the changes must be reversed. Reversing the value changes and language shift must be a community effort; it cannot be accomplished by outsiders. Crawford believes that developing community leadership is the most important factor at this point in the United States.

Another linguist, Joshua Fishman (1991), has proposed an eight level Graded Inter-generational Disruption Scale (GIDS). As a language progresses from Stage 1 to Stage 8, its

existence is more and more threatened as the breadth of usage and the likelihood of generational transmission are reduced. At Stage 1, a language is used nationwide in government and media outlets, schools, and workplaces. A Stage 2 language is reduced to local and regional use. By Stage 3, the language is no longer used by the government or media, though it is used in the workplace by native and non-native speakers alike. Stage 4 sees the language still taught in local schools. In Stage 5, a language is confined to native speakers, and written and spoken forms are used by all generations within the community. All community members are fluent in the language by Stage 6, although there may be some loss of literacy. At Stage 7, some community members of child-bearing age still speak the language with the older generations, but they are no longer teaching it to their children. Stage 8 sees only the oldest community members still speaking the language.

A classification system for the stability of languages was devised by Krauss (1996). The language of a culture is assigned to a class of endangerment based on how many generations of speakers exist. A language is termed “safe” and designated to Class A if all generations of a community speak the language. Classes B through D represent some level of decline among generations, with a Class D language only being spoken among the elders of a community. Finally, a Class E language has become extinct and no speakers remain. North America has about 210 languages spoken today. About 40 percent of these belong to Class C, and another third are considered Class D. The majority of the continent’s languages are endangered.

Members of a Potawatomi tribe in Michigan, concerned about the prospect of their language dying off, commented on the loss they were facing. They felt that the Potawatomi culture and their language, Neshnabemwen, were so intertwined that one could not survive without the other (Wetzel, 2006). Often, elders of a community maintain fluency in a language as its use diminishes among the younger generations. As the youth of a community no longer strongly identify with the older generations, there is less transmission of cultural information between generations.

Language also serves as a perceivable link between community members, allowing them to identify with one another. As language fluency is lost within a community, the members have less and less in common, and the unity of the group is eventually destroyed (Blair et al, 2000). Without bonds to one another, the importance of cultural knowledge is diminished as well.

Many Native American tribes believe that their language was gifted to them by a Creator, and that the language embodies the souls and spirits of their people. Out of respect for the Creator, they must pass it on to younger generations. For any tribe or community that prays or meditates, the language is means of expression and communication between the members and a higher power (Linn et al., 2000).

While tribes and communities stand to lose much if their languages die out, a global viewpoint is valuable as well. Words and phrases are created to express beliefs, values, and ideals. They are also coined through various experiences and crises. Circumstances vary widely between tribes around the world, such as weather phenomena, ailments, diet, landscape, etc. With different circumstances come different experiences. The knowledge gained from these experiences are ingrained within a community's language. Among all the languages worldwide, a vast pool of knowledge is available to draw from. The loss of even one language from that pool is a detriment to humankind. Countless proverbs and wisdom, prayers and meditations, remedies and tactics are lost (Reyhner, 1996).

The Indigenous Language Institute (ILI) is focused on revitalization of indigenous languages that in danger of extinction. They have worked with and studied several tribes throughout Arizona, New Mexico, and Oklahoma in order to determine what strategies work most successfully to revive the transmission of a language to the younger generations. The ILI recommends teams of elders that are proficient in the language, language teachers from within the community, and linguists and curriculum developers. The role of the linguists and curriculum developers is purely advisory. Immersion, although difficult for the student and teacher at first, ultimately produced students who were able to think in the language instead of translating back and forth. This may be why immersion is such an effective way to learn a new language. Family support and encouragement were another suggestion from the ILI. If the language a student is learning can be reinforced in the home, children may be more apt to stick with it and persevere (Linn et al., 2000).

For a student to learn a language, the language must be made accessible by the teacher. Jon Reyhner and Edward Tennant (1995) of Northern Arizona University suggests five strategies for a language program. First, communication should be stressed, not grammar. Second, teach words and phrases within a real and relatable context. Next, the subject matter taught should be interesting and relevant to the student. Also, the students' understanding should guide the pace of the program. Finally, the students should be corrected by repeated replication of the teacher's speech and pronunciation. This method encourages students to learn to speak and understand the language before they must face technicalities such as grammar.

The Cold Lake First Nations Dene Suline in Alberta, Canada, also faces losing their language. The Daghida Project is a grant funded effort to revitalize the Dene language. The efforts undertaken include creating an advisory group of Elders, holding language festivals, immersion day-camps, day-care, and Head Start programs. The need for parent involvement is emphasized as well, since the parents of young children are the gateway for transmission of the language (Blair et al., 2000).

Methodology

The study used a mixed methods approach of a face-to-face questionnaire for quantitative data and focus groups for qualitative input. The design involved convenient sampling of the target population within Pennington County. The estimated population of Lakota residents in Pennington County is 7,763 with 5,791 being 18 years or older. This resulted in a response rate of 31.9% (U.S. Census, 2008). When administering the questionnaire, trained interviewers and survey administrators were on hand to answer any questions, provide assistance to elders, and assist respondents with reading deficiencies. The survey was in English, but Lakota-speaking administrators were available wherever they were needed.

The questionnaire was developed using a team composed of a survey design expert, Lakota speakers and linguists, college students, and community residents. The initial instrument was piloted using 200 Lakota adults at the Lakota Nations Invitational event in December 2009. With analysis of data and input from the respondents, the instrument was modified to address issues of terminology, wording of questions, and missing items. The final version was administered from March to August 2010 within the community at various events and locations.

The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in table format with graphics wherever it was useful. A focus group composed of Lakota community members, college students and instructors, and staff reviewed the initial and mid progress analysis of data for accuracy of findings. The focus group was able to discuss if the findings were consistent with their personal experiences regarding the use of Lakota within Pennington County. Also, discussions provided interpretation of the quantitative data and possible application of the findings to the community at large.

FINDINGS

Demographics

There were 1,808 individuals who completed the pilot questionnaire during the month of December. The gender distribution was 38.7% male (n = 694) and 61.3% female (n = 1,100). Fourteen (n = 14) individuals did not report their gender. The average age for the male respondents was 34.3 years (s = 15.0) and for the female respondents was 35.3 years (sd = 14.1) with a range for both genders from 17 years to 85 years (Table 1.0).

Age Group	Number	Percent
14-19	285	15.8%
20-29	514	28.4%
30-39	438	24.2%
40-49	275	15.2%
50-59	177	9.8%
60-69	75	4.1%
70-79	30	1.7%
80-89	8	0.4%
Unknown	6	0.3%
Total	1,808	100.0%

Table 2.0		
Tribal Membership or Association		
Language	Number	Percent
Lakota	1,513	83.7%
Dakota	63	3.5%
Nakota	17	0.9%
Other Tribal Association	86	4.8%
Unknown/No Response	129	7.1%
Total	1,808	100.0%

Table 3.0		
County Residences of Respondents		
County	Number	Percent
Pennington	1,629	90.1%
Shannon (Pine Ridge)	68	3.8%
Dewey (Eagle Butte)	2	0.1%
Todd (Rosebud)	10	0.6%
Meade	3	0.2%
Other Counties	39	2.2%
Out of State	8	0.4%
No Response	49	2.7%
Total	1,808	100.0%

Ninety percent (90.1%) of the respondents indicated that they were residents of Pennington County (Table 3.0). The other respondents were either visiting relatives or temporarily living in Pennington County. Eighty-four percent (83.7%) were enrolled members of a Lakota tribe, and 4.4% were enrolled members of a Dakota or Nakota tribe. Seven percent (7.1%) of the respondents did not report their membership either because they were not enrolled or the respondent was not sure (Table 2.0).

Table 4.0 Employment Status (Duplicated Count)		
Status	Number	Percent
Full time Employed	692	34.4%
Full time Student	393	19.5%
Full time Home Caretaker	159	7.9%
Part time Employed	273	13.6%
Part time Student	202	10.0%
Retired	97	4.8%
Self-employed	78	3.9%
Unemployed	70	3.5%
Disabled	20	1.0%
Other	30	1.5%
Total	2,014	100.0%

One third of the respondents (34.4%) reported being employed full-time, while 19.5% were full-time students. Four percent (3.9%) reported being self-employed and about five percent (4.8%) of the respondents were retired. The percent of respondents that reported not being employed and seeking employment was 3.5% (Table 4.0). Over eighty percent (81.4%) of the respondents had three or more people living in their household. One in five respondents (20.3%) had six or more people living in their household.

Ninety percent (90.3%) of the respondents reported having a high school education or higher. About six percent (5.7%) had a bachelor's degree or higher while 10.0% had less than a high school education (Table 5.1).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
Number	96	200	340	480	341	172	81	34	8	29
Percent	6.0%	12.6%	21.4%	30.2%	21.5%	10.8%	5.1%	2.1%	0.5%	1.8%

Level	Number	Percent
Elementary School	6	0.3%
Middle School	170	9.4%
High School or GED	745	41.2%
Some College	587	32.5%
Associate Degree	150	8.3%
Bachelor's Degree	72	4.0%
Master's Degree	24	1.3%
Doctorate	4	0.2%
Unknown	50	2.8%
Total	1,808	100.0%

Lakota Language Access

Respondents were asked about their interest in and means of learning Lakota language. Over eighty percent (83.9%) of the respondents were interested in taking Lakota classes with another ten percent (10.1%) being not sure. Three out of four respondents (75.6%) wanted their child to learn Lakota before the age of 5 (Table 6.0). While a large percentage of the respondents had access to a computer (86.3%), there were only 10.7% of the respondents who would be willing to take a Lakota class using a computer (Table 9.0).

	Yes		No		Not Sure	
I own a computer	1,123	65.7%	652	38.2%	6	0.4%
I have easy access to a computer	1,474	86.3%	282	16.5%	19	1.1%
I have Internet access.	1,343	78.6%	415	24.3%	18	1.1%
I have studied Lakota.	1,118	65.5%	628	36.8%	36	2.1%
I am interested in taking Lakota classes.	1,433	83.9%	166	9.7%	172	10.1%
I want my child to learn Lakota before the age of 5.	1,291	75.6%	130	7.6%	289	16.9%

Table 6.1 shows that three-fourths of the respondents (76.1%) in the youngest age group were interested in taking Lakota classes, while over eighty percent (82.7%) in the age range from 20 to 49 were interested in Lakota classes. About half of the respondents (58.4%) older than 60 years were interested in Lakota classes. About one-third of the respondents (37.5%) in the youngest age group had studied Lakota, while two-thirds of the respondents in the age groups from 20 to 49 had studied Lakota.

Except for the respondents older than 60 years, four out of five respondents had easy access to a computer and three-fourths had access to the internet. Two-thirds of respondents age 14 to 49 owned a computer, but the interest in taking a computer-based Lakota language class for the respondents ranged from 30.4% for the youngest age group (14 to 19) to 12.4% for the oldest age group (60+) (Table 8.1).

Table 6.1
Language Acquisition & Technology
By Age Groups

		Age 14 - 19 (n = 285)		Age 20 - 29 (n = 514)		Age 30 - 39 (n = 438)		Age 40 - 49 (n = 275)		Age 50 - 59 (n = 177)		Age 60 + (n = 113)	
		n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
I own a computer.	Yes	179	62.8%	337	65.6%	293	66.9%	180	65.5%	92	52.0%	40	35.4%
	No	100	35.1%	173	33.7%	138	31.5%	90	32.7%	83	46.9%	67	59.3%
	Not Sure	6	2.1%	4	0.8%	7	1.6%	5	1.8%	2	1.1%	6	5.3%
I have easy access to a computer.	Yes	246	86.3%	461	89.7%	372	84.9%	219	79.6%	127	71.8%	47	41.6%
	No	32	11.2%	43	8.4%	57	13.0%	50	18.2%	40	22.6%	59	52.2%
	Not Sure	7	2.5%	10	1.9%	9	2.1%	6	2.2%	10	5.7%	7	6.2%
I have Internet access.	Yes	225	78.9%	410	79.8%	347	79.2%	202	73.5%	116	65.5%	41	36.3%
	No	53	18.6%	91	17.7%	82	18.7%	67	24.4%	57	32.2%	64	56.6%
	Not Sure	7	2.5%	13	2.5%	9	2.1%	6	2.2%	4	2.3%	8	7.1%
I have studied Lakota.	Yes	107	37.5%	333	64.8%	307	70.1%	197	71.6%	106	59.9%	66	58.4%
	No	165	57.9%	165	32.1%	120	27.4%	67	24.4%	67	37.9%	43	38.1%
	Not Sure	13	4.6%	16	3.1%	11	2.5%	11	4.0%	4	2.3%	4	3.5%
I am interested in taking Lakota classes.	Yes	217	76.1%	425	82.7%	368	84.0%	228	82.9%	127	71.8%	66	58.4%
	No	21	7.4%	35	6.8%	34	7.8%	22	8.0%	29	16.4%	24	21.2%
	Not Sure	47	16.5%	54	10.5%	36	8.2%	25	9.1%	21	11.9%	23	20.4%
I want my child to learn Lakota before the age of 5.	Yes	140	49.1%	407	79.2%	337	76.9%	203	73.8%	128	72.3%	73	64.6%
	No	15	5.3%	25	4.9%	39	8.9%	30	10.9%	12	6.8%	9	8.0%
	Not Sure	130	45.6%	82	16.0%	62	14.2%	42	15.3%	37	20.9%	31	27.4%

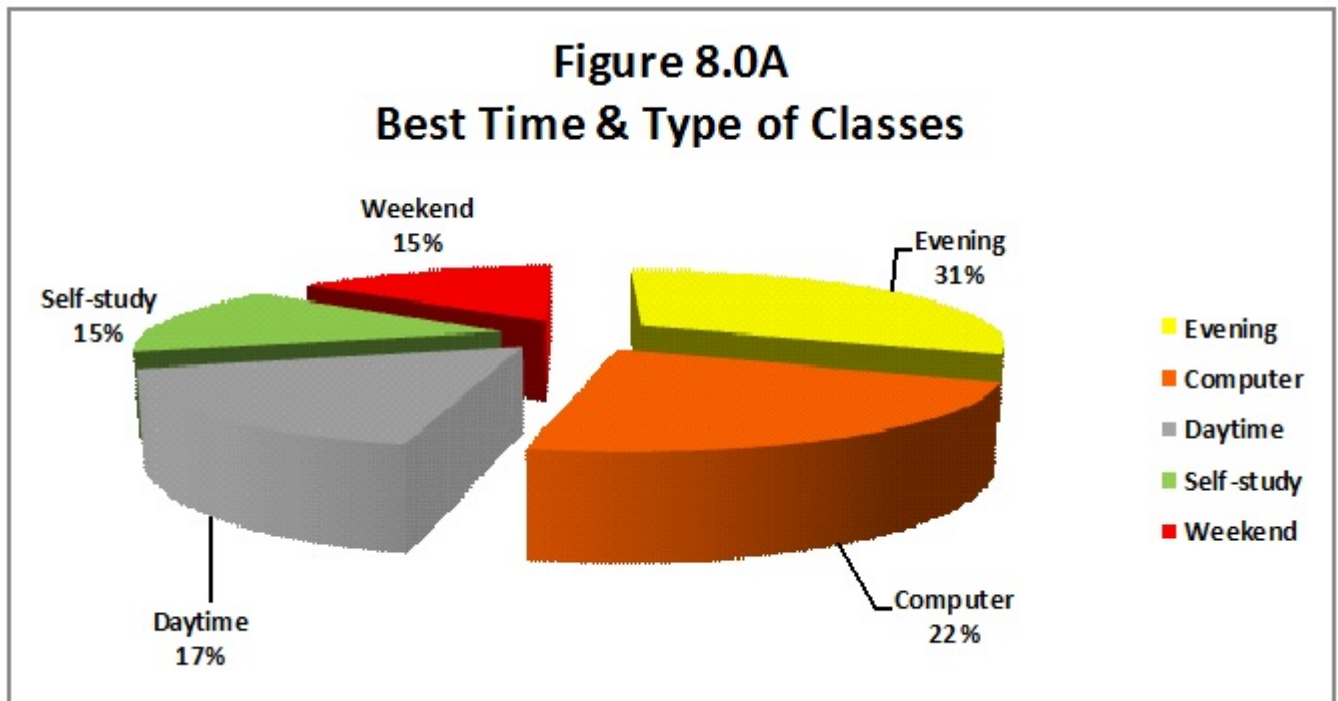
Obstacle	Number	Percent
Cost	292	14.0%
Child Care	258	12.4%
Transportation	245	11.8%
Scheduling time to study	770	36.9%
Difficulty of learning a language	519	24.9%
Total	2,084	100.0%

When the respondents were asked about the barriers or obstacles for taking Lakota classes, one-third of respondents (36.9%) indicated scheduling as a problem. Scheduling was the highest challenge for individuals age 20 or older, while for the youngest respondents it was a secondary issue. The next highest obstacle was the difficulty of learning a language for the age group from 20 to 59, while it was a primary concern for the youngest age group (14 to 19).

Transportation and cost were the third and fourth obstacles for almost all the age groups. Overall, about one out of ten respondents cited transportation as a barrier, from 11.7% for the youngest age group to 19.4% for the oldest age group. Cost was a concern for the 50-59 age group (19.2%), while it was not a concern for the youngest age group (8.4%) (Table 7.1).

Time	Number	Percent
Daytime	368	17.3%
Evening	664	31.2%
Weekend	311	14.6%
Computer	473	22.2%
Self-study	313	14.7%
Total	2,129	100.0%

One-third of all respondents (31.2%) indicated that evening classes were best for them. The response rate was true for the whole age distribution. One-third of the youngest age group (30.4%) responded that computer-based language classes were acceptable compared to one-fifth of the next age groups (20-29 and 40-49). Weekend and self-study classes were least preferred for age groups 14 to 19 years (11.6% and 12.2% respectively), 20 to 29 years (17.0% and 12.8% respectively), and 30 to 39 years (16.3% and 11.1% respectively). Daytime and weekend classes were least preferred by age groups 40 to 49 years (14.0% and 12.0% respectively) and 50 to 59 years (13.3% each). The age group 60+ years least preferred weekend (12.4%) and computer (12.4%) classes. (Table 8.1)



**Table 7.1
Obstacles to Attending Lakota Language Classes
Response By Age**

	Age 14 - 19 n = 285		Age 20 - 29 n = 514		Age 30 - 39 n = 438		Age 40 - 49 n = 275		Age 50 - 59 n = 177		Age 60 + n = 113	
Obstacle	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
Cost	26	8.4%	97	14.8%	69	13.3%	45	14.5%	38	19.2%	17	18.3%
Child Care	13	4.2%	137	20.9%	73	14.1%	22	7.1%	10	5.1%	3	3.2%
Transportation	36	11.7%	73	11.1%	49	9.5%	36	11.6%	32	16.2%	18	19.4%
Scheduling time to study	82	26.6%	221	33.7%	211	40.7%	138	44.5%	77	38.9%	41	44.1%
Difficulty of learning a language	151	49.0%	127	19.4%	116	22.4%	69	22.3%	41	20.7%	14	15.1%
Total	308	100.0%	655	100.0%	518	100.0%	310	100.0%	198	100.0%	93	100.0%

**Table 8.1
Best time to take Lakota Classes (Duplicated Count)
Response By Age**

	Age 14 - 19		Age 20 - 29		Age 30 - 39		Age 40 - 49		Age 50 - 59		Age 60+	
Time	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
Daytime	48	15.8%	138	21.9%	92	17.0%	48	14.0%	26	13.3%	16	14.2%
Evening	91	30.0%	187	29.6%	158	29.3%	120	35.0%	67	34.4%	39	34.5%
Weekend	35	11.6%	107	17.0%	88	16.3%	41	12.0%	26	13.3%	14	12.4%
Computer	92	30.4%	118	18.7%	142	26.3%	78	22.7%	28	14.4%	14	12.4%
Self-study	37	12.2%	81	12.8%	60	11.1%	56	16.3%	48	24.6%	30	26.5%
Total	303	100.0%	631	100.0%	540	100.0%	343	100.0%	195	100.0%	113	100.0%

Method	Number	Percent
Formal Classes	947	31.0%
Workshops	188	6.2%
CD or DVD (Listening)	283	9.3%
Videos	147	4.8%
Computer	327	10.7%
Games	125	4.1%
Books or written materials	300	9.8%
Talking with others	740	24.2%
Total	3,057	100.0%

**Figure 9.0A
Preferred Interpersonal Method of Learning**

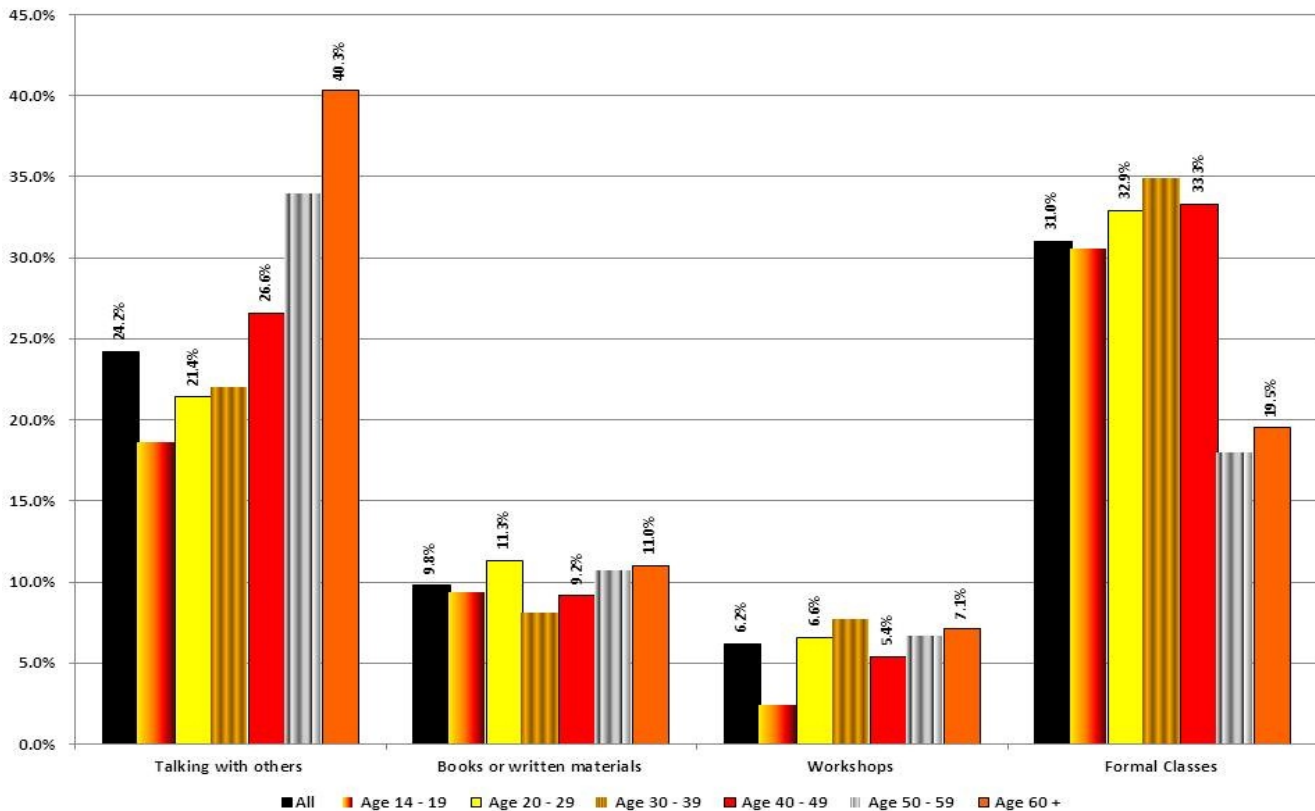
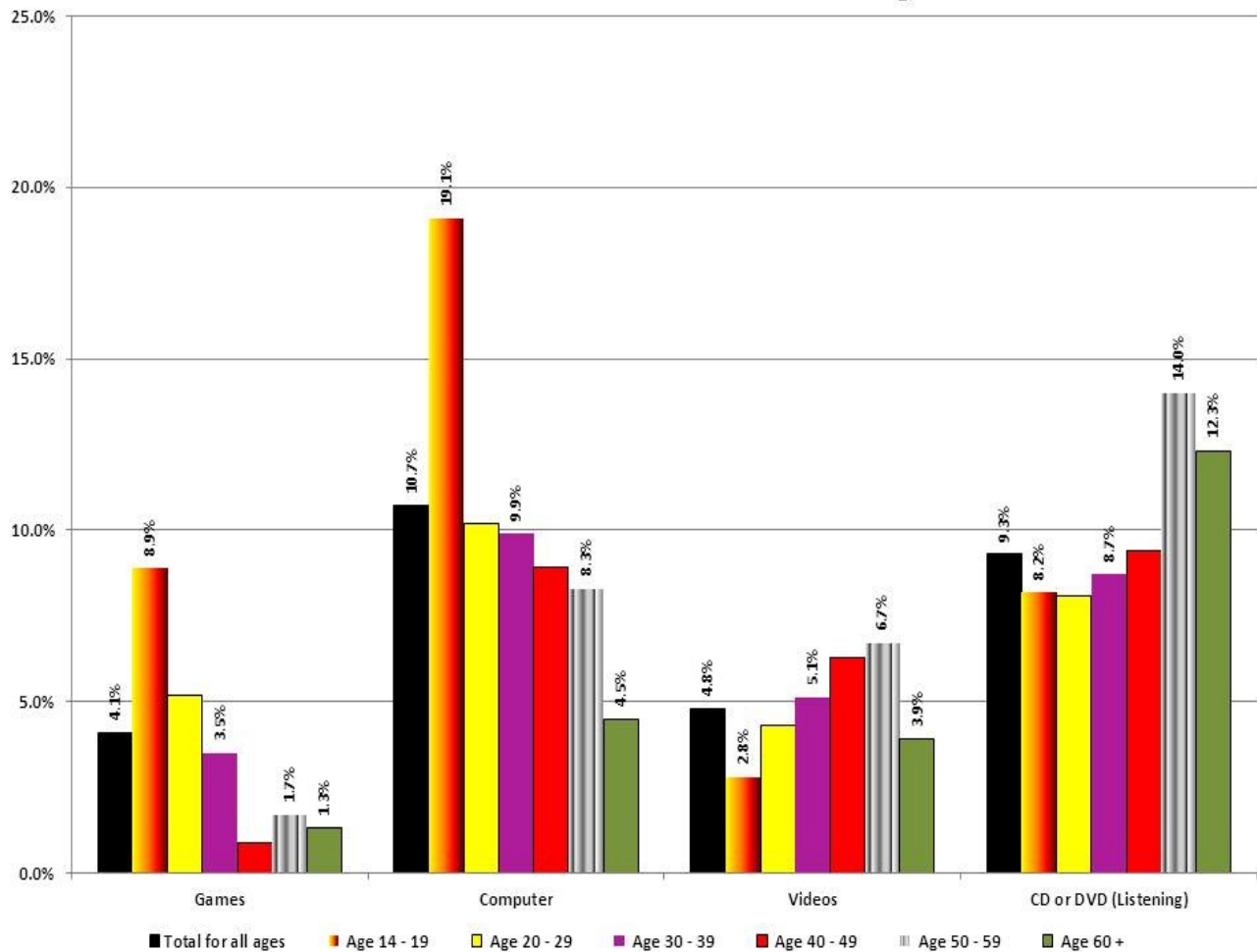


Figure 9.0B
Preferred Electronic Method of Learning



Among all respondents, the preferred interpersonal method for learning Lakota was through formal classes (31.0%). The next preferred method was talking to others, that is through conversation (24.2%). The least preferred methods were games and videos.

Overall, the most preferred electronic method for learning Lakota was through the use of computers. The youngest respondents had a higher preference (19.1%) for this method compared to the oldest age group at 4.5%. The next highest preferred method was the use of CD or DVDs. The age group between 50 and 59 years preferred this method at 12.3% of the respondents. The youngest age groups, 14 to 19 years and 20 to 29 years, had a response rate of 8.1% for this method. Videos and games were the least preferred methods overall. The game approach was most favored by the youngest age group (8.9%), while the 50 to 59 age group had the highest preference for videos (6.7%) among all age groups.

Table 9.1
Preferred Method of Learning (Duplicated Count)
By Age

	Age 14 - 19		Age 20 - 29		Age 30 - 39		Age 40 - 49		Age 50 - 59		Age 60+	
Time	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
Formal Classes	130	30.6%	304	32.9%	276	34.9%	153	33.3%	54	18.0%	30	19.5%
Workshops	10	2.4%	61	6.6%	61	7.7%	25	5.4%	20	6.7%	11	7.1%
CD or DVD (Listening)	35	8.2%	75	8.1%	69	8.7%	43	9.4%	42	14.0%	19	12.3%
Videos	12	2.8%	40	4.3%	40	5.1%	29	6.3%	20	6.7%	6	3.9%
Computer	81	19.1%	94	10.2%	78	9.9%	41	8.9%	25	8.3%	7	4.5%
Games	38	8.9%	48	5.2%	28	3.5%	4	0.9%	5	1.7%	2	1.3%
Books or written materials	40	9.4%	104	11.3%	64	8.1%	42	9.2%	32	10.7%	17	11.0%
Talking with others	79	18.6%	198	21.4%	174	22.0%	122	26.6%	102	34.0%	62	40.3%
Total	425	100.0%	924	100.0%	790	100.0%	459	100.0%	300	100.0%	154	100.0%

Lakota Language Ability & Use

Table 10.0 shows how the respondents rated themselves for Lakota language fluency. Over eighty percent (80.1%) of respondents reported having low or no ability to understand any Lakota and 88.4% reported having low to no ability to speak Lakota. Eight percent (7.7%) of the respondents rated themselves as fluent Lakota speakers with about 5.0% being able to read or write Lakota.

Ability	None	Low to Some	Moderate	Fluent to Expert
Understand Lakota when some else speaks	20.8%	59.3%	9.7%	10.2%
Speak Lakota - Conversational Lakota	41.6%	46.8%	4.0%	7.7%
Read Lakota	46.8%	39.8%	7.8%	5.5%
Write Lakota	52.3%	37.2%	5.5%	4.9%
Average	40.4%	45.8%	6.8%	7.1%

Almost 100% of the 14-19 year olds (99.3%) reported have low to no ability to speak Lakota. In this age group, 2.2% reported being able to understand some Lakota when spoken. In the 20-29 year old age group, 95.8% of the respondents reported low to no ability to speak Lakota with 14.2% being able to understand some Lakota when spoken. In the 50-59 age group, 71.2% of the respondents reported low to no ability to speak Lakota, while 50.0% reported being able to understand some Lakota when spoken. In the oldest age group, 60 to 90 years of age, 43.1% reported low to no ability to speak Lakota, while 64.8% reported being able to understand some Lakota when spoken.

In projecting into the future of the Lakota language, if 22.4% of the 50 to 59 year old respondents are currently fluent Lakota speakers, then in 25 years (2035) there should be at least one in five Lakota speakers in Pennington County in the 70 years and older age group. (This does not include any significant death rates.) At this rate, it would create a replacement of at least 1.6% Lakota speakers in the age group of 50 to 59 years. All the age groups of less than 50 years would have less than 1% Lakota speakers unless there is a resurgence of Lakota language education. By 2040-2050, there would be no significant percentage of Lakota speakers in Pennington County. That is, at best, there would be approximately 1% to 3% fluent Lakota speakers.

Figure 10.0A
Lakota Conversational Speakers

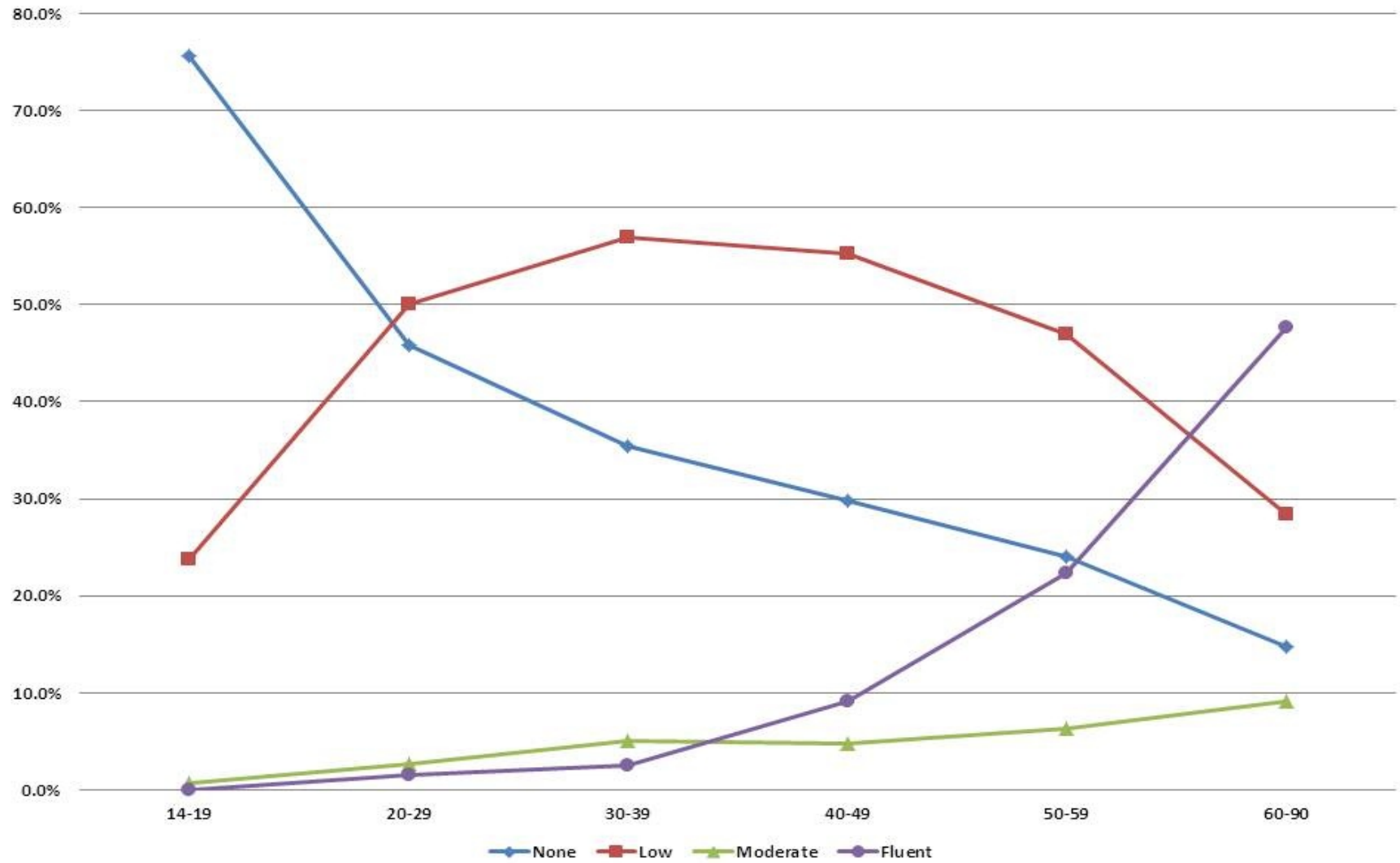


Table 10.1
How Respondents Rated Themselves as Lakota Speakers, Writers, or Readers
Percentage Distribution By Age: 14 to 39 Years of Age

	Age 14 - 19 (n = 285)				Age 20 - 29 (n = 514)				Age 30 - 39 (n = 438)			
Ability	None	Low to Some	Moderate	Fluent to Expert	None	Low to Some	Moderate	Fluent to Expert	None	Low to Some	Moderate	Fluent to Expert
Understand Lakota when some else speaks	48.2%	49.6%	2.5%	0.0%	21.0%	64.8%	11.6%	2.6%	15.8%	69.5%	9.2%	5.6%
Speak Lakota - Conversational Lakota	75.6%	23.7%	0.7%	0.0%	45.8%	50.0%	2.7%	1.6%	35.4%	57.0%	5.1%	2.5%
Read Lakota	75.5%	21.3%	2.8%	0.4%	46.7%	41.7%	8.5%	3.2%	43.2%	48.7%	4.8%	3.2%
Write Lakota	79.4%	17.7%	2.1%	0.7%	51.1%	39.7%	5.9%	3.3%	49.7%	44.8%	3.2%	2.3%
Average	69.7%	28.1%	2.0%	0.3%	41.1%	49.1%	7.2%	2.7%	36.0%	55.0%	5.6%	3.4%

Table 10.2
How Respondents Rated Themselves as Lakota Speakers, Writers, or Readers
Percentage Distribution By Age: 40 to 90

	Age 40 - 49 (n = 275)				Age 50 - 59 (n = 177)				Age 60 - 90 (n = 113)			
Ability	None	Low to Some	Moderate	Fluent to Expert	None	Low to Some	Moderate	Fluent to Expert	None	Low to Some	Moderate	Fluent to Expert
Understand Lakota when some else speaks	11.7%	62.1%	11.7%	14.6%	10.3%	50.0%	10.3%	29.3%	6.5%	28.7%	15.7%	49.1%
Speak Lakota - Conversational Lakota	29.8%	55.3%	4.8%	9.2%	24.1%	47.1%	6.3%	22.4%	14.7%	28.4%	9.2%	47.7%
Read Lakota	38.8%	46.5%	7.0%	7.8%	37.9%	35.0%	14.7%	12.4%	22.5%	36.0%	19.8%	21.6%
Write Lakota	44.1%	43.4%	7.0%	5.5%	45.7%	33.1%	9.7%	11.4%	29.1%	39.1%	10.9%	20.9%
Average	31.1%	51.8%	7.6%	9.3%	29.5%	41.3%	10.3%	18.9%	18.2%	33.1%	13.9%	34.8%

	Mother	Father	Grand Mother	Grand Father	Brother Sister	Uncle	Aunt	Other Relative	No One
Number	622	354	820	434	360	533	569	459	227
Percent	34.5%	19.6%	45.5%	24.1%	20.0%	29.6%	31.6%	25.5%	12.6%

	All the time	Home	Church	Funerals	School	Ceremonies	Other
Number	163	789	249	586	122	712	255
Percent	9.0%	43.7%	13.8%	32.4%	6.8%	39.4%	14.1%

A majority of the respondents (39.4%) reported hearing Lakota spoken at ceremonies with one-third of the respondents (32.4%) hearing Lakota at funerals (Table 12.0). Forty-six percent (45.5%) of the respondents indicated that their grandmothers spoke Lakota while 34.5% of their mothers spoke Lakota. One fourth of the respondents (24.1%) said that their grandfathers spoke Lakota, while 19.6% of their fathers spoke Lakota (Table 11.0)

Rationale For Learning & Preserving Lakota Language

Table 13.0 shows a list of reasons for learning and preserving the Lakota language. The number one reason given was to keep the Lakota language a living language (61.3%). The second reason given was that it served as a link and means to understand Lakota culture and traditions (40.7%). The third reason given was being able to pass on the Lakota heritage to their children (39.6%). For the 14 to 49 years of age group, the top three choices were ranked similarly: (1) to keep Lakota alive; (2) to better understand the Lakota culture; and (3) to feel more a part of their Lakota heritage. The reasons changed for the 50 to 59 year old age group. While keeping Lakota alive and understanding their Lakota culture better were the top two choices, the third choice for this age group was to preserve their Lakota heritage. For the oldest age group, 60 years plus, the first choice was the same as all of the other age groups: keeping Lakota alive. The second choice was being able to speak with their friends, and the third choice was preserve their Lakota heritage (Table 13.1).

It was noted that no one opposed the teaching of English, but the rationale for being bi-lingual or being able to speak Lakota was noted in the responses. Using the same language across the two cultures often poses a challenge to both sense and sensitivity (Platt, 1989). Therefore, giving Lakota youth the opportunity to keep or learn their tribal language offers them a strong antidote to the culture clash many of them are experiencing but cannot verbalize. If,

along with the language, they learn to recognize the hidden network of cultural values that permeates the language, they will add to the knowledge and skills required to “walk in two worlds.” They will learn to recognize and cope with cross-cultural values that are often at odds with each other, and they will begin to adopt more comfortably the cultural value that is appropriate for a particular cultural situation (Tennant, 1999). Understanding and preserving the Lakota culture was a primary reason for learning Lakota rather than replacing the dominant language.

Table 13.0		
Reasons for Learning Lakota (Duplicated Count)		
Reason	Number	Percent
To better understand my culture	734	40.7%
To follow the traditions of my culture	514	28.5%
To speak at community gatherings	195	10.8%
To be able to read Lakota materials	184	10.2%
To keep Lakota alive	1,106	61.3%
To speak with my children	336	18.6%
To preserve my Lakota heritage	503	27.9%
To broaden my Lakota language abilities	376	20.9%
To speak with my elders	630	34.9%
To feel more a part of my Lakota heritage	311	17.2%
To have a unique and different language	160	8.9%
Because the language is beautiful	278	15.4%
To speak with my friends	166	9.2%
To be able to pass on my heritage to my children	714	39.6%
Other	53	2.9%

Table 13.2 shows that reasons for learning Lakota were similar for everyone except those individuals who had completed college. For all respondents regardless of educational level, the number one reason for learning Lakota was to keep the language alive. The second and third reasons were the same for all respondents except those who had bachelor’s degrees or higher. The second reason for this group was to better understand their culture, while the third reason was to feel more a part of their Lakota heritage. For those with a bachelor’s degree or higher, the second and third reasons were to preserve their Lakota heritage and to better follow the traditions of their culture.

Table 13.1
Reasons for Learning Lakota (Duplicated Count)
By Age

	Age 14 - 19 n = 285		Age 20 - 29 n = 514		Age 30 - 39 n = 438		Age 40 - 49 n = 275		Age 50 - 59 n = 177		Age 60 + n = 113	
Reason	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
To better understand my culture	149	52.3%	226	44.0%	169	38.6%	99	36.0%	62	35.0%	28	24.8%
To follow the traditions of my culture	77	27.0%	158	30.7%	116	26.5%	94	34.2%	46	26.0%	22	19.5%
To speak at community gatherings	12	4.2%	66	12.8%	47	10.7%	35	12.7%	17	9.6%	18	15.9%
To be able to read Lakota materials	26	9.1%	53	10.3%	37	8.4%	28	10.2%	25	14.1%	15	13.3%
To keep Lakota alive	180	63.2%	313	60.9%	268	61.2%	175	63.6%	103	58.2%	64	56.6%
To speak with my children	19	6.7%	131	25.5%	92	21.0%	46	16.7%	28	15.8%	20	17.7%
To preserve my Lakota heritage	72	25.3%	133	25.9%	130	29.7%	77	28.0%	58	32.8%	33	29.2%
To broaden my Lakota language abilities	4	1.4%	18	3.5%	11	2.5%	8	2.9%	8	4.5%	3	2.7%
To speak with my elders	28	9.8%	103	20.0%	101	23.1%	65	23.6%	46	26.0%	33	29.2%
To feel more a part of my Lakota heritage	128	44.9%	173	33.7%	180	41.1%	89	32.4%	40	22.6%	19	16.8%
To have a unique and different language	78	27.4%	79	15.4%	74	16.9%	34	12.4%	26	14.7%	20	17.7%
Because the language is beautiful	37	13.0%	54	10.5%	32	7.3%	16	5.8%	15	8.5%	6	5.3%
To speak with my friends	25	8.8%	87	16.9%	58	13.2%	32	11.6%	39	22.0%	37	32.7%
To be able to past on my heritage to my children	25	8.8%	34	6.6%	46	10.5%	18	6.5%	24	13.6%	18	15.9%
Other	75	26.3%	192	37.4%	203	46.3%	122	44.4%	70	39.5%	49	43.4%

Table 13.2
Reasons for Learning Lakota (Duplicated Count)
By Education Level

	Less than High School (n = 176)		High School GED (n = 745)		Some College Associate (n = 737)		Bachelors Masters (n = 100)	
Reason	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
To better understand my culture	92	52.3%	290	38.9%	288	39.1%	43	43.0%
To follow the traditions of my culture	54	30.7%	197	26.4%	207	28.1%	45	45.0%
To speak at community gatherings	11	6.3%	67	9.0%	90	12.2%	22	22.0%
To be able to read Lakota materials	17	9.7%	77	10.3%	73	9.9%	13	13.0%
To keep Lakota alive	108	61.4%	472	63.4%	436	59.2%	63	63.0%
To speak with my children	12	6.8%	115	15.4%	171	23.2%	30	30.0%
To preserve my Lakota heritage	44	25.0%	178	23.9%	220	29.9%	49	49.0%
To broaden my Lakota language abilities	4	2.3%	16	2.1%	27	3.7%	4	4.0%
To speak with my elders	10	5.7%	162	21.7%	175	23.7%	23	23.0%
To feel more a part of my Lakota heritage	76	43.2%	275	36.9%	245	33.2%	23	23.0%
To have a unique and different language	46	26.1%	132	17.7%	107	14.5%	21	21.0%
Because the language is beautiful	26	14.8%	61	8.2%	58	7.9%	12	12.0%
To speak with my friends	15	8.5%	112	15.0%	124	16.8%	20	20.0%
To be able to past on my heritage to my children	19	10.8%	78	10.5%	47	6.4%	16	16.0%
Other	42	23.9%	316	42.4%	292	39.6%	53	53.0%

Reason	Number	Percent
Very few people speak it.	1,131	62.6%
It is hard to pronounce the words.	858	47.5%
It is too difficult to learn a new language.	644	35.6%
It is a dying language.	271	15.0%
People laugh at you when you speak it.	311	17.2%
I am too old to learn a new language.	196	10.8%
It is a language spoken by a few people.	680	37.6%
It serves no purpose.	679	37.6%
Other reasons	49	2.7%

The major reason for not learning Lakota was the fact that very few people speak it (62.9%). This was evident from the distribution of the responses to this item by age group. Two-thirds of the younger respondents from 14 years to 59 years indicated there were not enough people speaking the language (from 64.4% for ages 40-49 years to 68.1% for ages 14-19 years). About half of the older age group, 50+, (51.4% for ages 50-59 years; 42.5% for ages 60+ years) had the same response to this item.

The second major reason for not learning Lakota was the difficulty level of the language - "It is hard to pronounce the words." The rate response of all respondents was 47.5% (Table 14.0). The younger the respondent, the more likely he or she was to indicate that the difficulty of the language was a barrier. It ranged from 55.8% of those 14-19 to 47.3% of those 40-49. The older age groups were less likely to use difficulty of the language as a barrier or reason for not learning Lakota. The percentage for the 50 to 59 year old age group was 37.3%, while the 60+ year old age group was at 25.7% (Table 14.1)

The third major reason given for not learning Lakota was that it serves no purpose (37.6%) (Table 14.0). The response rate for this item was significantly correlated directly to the age group ($r = -0.862, p < 0.027$). The younger the respondent the more likely they found that Lakota language served no purpose. The older the person, the less likely they responded negatively. The range of response was from 47.7% (14-19 years of age) to 29.2% (60+ years of age).

Table 14.1
Reasons for Not Learning Lakota (Duplicated Count)
By Age

	Age 14 - 19 n = 285		Age 20 - 29 n = 514		Age 30 - 39 n = 438		Age 40 - 49 n = 275		Age 50 - 59 n = 177		Age 60 + n = 113	
Reason	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
Very few people speak it.	194	68.1%	338	65.8%	281	64.2%	177	64.4%	91	51.4%	48	42.5%
It is hard to pronounce the words.	159	55.8%	256	49.8%	216	49.3%	130	47.3%	66	37.3%	29	25.7%
It is too difficult to learn a new language.	109	38.2%	194	37.7%	186	42.5%	92	33.5%	47	26.6%	14	12.4%
It is a dying language.	49	17.2%	71	13.8%	63	14.4%	39	14.2%	32	18.1%	17	15.0%
People laugh at you when you speak it.	15	5.3%	92	17.9%	68	15.5%	59	21.5%	44	24.9%	45	39.8%
I am too old to learn a new language.	95	33.3%	78	15.2%	72	16.4%	32	11.6%	23	13.0%	11	9.7%
It is a language spoken by a few people.	14	4.9%	43	8.4%	64	14.6%	31	11.3%	27	15.3%	16	14.2%
It serves no purpose.	136	47.7%	211	41.1%	147	33.6%	89	32.4%	63	35.6%	33	29.2%
Other reasons	11	3.9%	14	2.7%	13	3.0%	4	1.5%	6	3.4%	1	0.9%

Table 14.2
Reasons for Not Learning Lakota (Duplicated Count)
By Education

	Less than High School (n = 176)		High School GED (n = 745)		Some College Associate (n = 737)		Bachelors Masters (n = 100)	
Reason	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
Very few people speak it.	103	58.5%	492	66.0%	455	61.7%	53	53.0%
It is hard to pronounce the words.	96	54.5%	399	53.6%	317	43.0%	27	27.0%
It is too difficult to learn a new language.	57	32.4%	292	39.2%	262	35.6%	18	18.0%
It is a dying language.	34	19.3%	101	13.6%	120	16.3%	9	9.0%
People laugh at you when you speak it.	4	2.3%	100	13.4%	169	22.9%	41	41.0%
I am too old to learn a new language.	69	39.2%	125	16.8%	100	13.6%	12	12.0%
It is a language spoken by a few people.	16	9.1%	67	9.0%	96	13.0%	9	9.0%
It serves no purpose.	87	49.4%	260	34.9%	278	37.7%	36	36.0%
Other reasons	10	5.7%	20	2.7%	16	2.2%	1	1.0%

Table 14.2 shows that education did not impact the first choice for not learning Lakota - “Very few people speak it.” The second reason for not learning Lakota (“It is hard to pronounce the words.”) was the same for all the respondents with less than a bachelor’s level education. Respondents with a bachelor’s degree or higher indicated that “people laugh at you when you speak Lakota” (41.0%). The third reason for all education levels was the same - “It serves no purpose.”

Table 15.0				
Level of Knowledge about Lakota Culture & Traditions				
Knowledge	None	Some (A little)	Moderate	Expert (A lot)
The Kinship System	18.4%	51.3%	13.6%	16.7%
Sweat Lodge	20.2%	48.2%	13.9%	17.7%
Wake & Burial Ceremonies	12.7%	51.8%	16.6%	18.9%
Sun Dance	23.8%	47.7%	13.5%	15.0%
Lakota Songs	24.3%	52.0%	11.0%	12.7%
Lakota History	11.7%	51.7%	20.4%	16.2%
Traditional Pow Wow	11.0%	47.5%	19.1%	22.4%
Average	17.4%	50.0%	15.4%	17.1%

Table 15.0 asked the respondents about their of knowledge of the Lakota culture and traditions. About two-thirds of the respondents (67.4%) had no or little knowledge about the various practices. There were fewer than one in five individuals (17.1%) who rated themselves as experts in the knowledge and understanding of Lakota culture and traditions with a range from 12.7% in knowing Lakota Songs to 22.4% in having knowledge about traditional pow wows.

Two-thirds (62.9%) of the older age group (60 to 90 years) reported that they had a good understanding of the Lakota traditions and culture. The younger the age group, the less knowledge level they reported. Eighty percent (80.5%) of the 14 to 19 years reported no or some knowledge about Lakota culture and traditions. This decreased from 68.9% of the 20 to 29 age group to 54.5% of the 50 to 59 age group (Tables 15.1-15.2).

Table 15.1
Level of Knowledge about Lakota Culture & Traditions
Percentage Distribution By Age

Knowledge	Age 14 - 19 n = 285				Age 20 - 29 n = 514				Age 30 - 39 n = 438			
	None	Some (A Little)	Moderate	Expert (A lot)	None	Some (A Little)	Moderate	Expert (A lot)	None	Some (A Little)	Moderate	Expert (A lot)
The Kinship System	34.8%	54.6%	7.1%	3.5%	18.9%	56.0%	14.2%	10.8%	17.9%	54.1%	13.5%	14.4%
Sweat Lodge	47.2%	34.4%	9.9%	8.5%	16.5%	54.5%	14.0%	15.0%	14.7%	56.2%	14.7%	14.4%
Wake & Burial Ceremonies	30.4%	50.0%	11.4%	8.2%	11.1%	55.4%	18.0%	15.6%	9.2%	59.1%	15.9%	15.9%
Sun Dance	50.9%	32.2%	8.8%	8.1%	22.8%	50.8%	12.0%	14.5%	18.4%	56.6%	14.3%	10.8%
Lakota Songs	47.4%	37.5%	7.1%	8.1%	24.4%	54.8%	10.4%	10.4%	20.9%	59.6%	10.8%	8.7%
Lakota History	29.3%	47.9%	16.1%	6.8%	9.8%	52.4%	23.0%	14.2%	8.6%	61.4%	16.9%	13.2%
Traditional Pow Wow	31.5%	36.1%	15.2%	17.3%	7.8%	47.1%	23.1%	22.0%	8.5%	59.3%	16.5%	15.8%
Average	38.7%	41.8%	10.8%	8.7%	15.9%	53.0%	16.4%	14.6%	14.0%	58.0%	14.6%	13.3%

Table 15.2
Level of Knowledge about Lakota Culture & Traditions
Percentage Distribution By Age 40 to 90

Knowledge	Age 40 - 49 n = 275				Age 50 - 59 n = 177				Age 60 - 90 n = 113			
	None	Some (A Little)	Moderate	Expert (A lot)	None	Some (A Little)	Moderate	Expert (A lot)	None	Some (A Little)	Moderate	Expert (A lot)
The Kinship System	11.6%	52.4%	12.4%	23.6%	10.5%	38.6%	21.1%	29.8%	4.6%	26.6%	19.3%	49.5%
Sweat Lodge	14.8%	48.3%	12.9%	24.0%	14.5%	43.6%	15.7%	26.2%	11.1%	30.6%	21.3%	37.0%
Wake & Burial Ceremonies	8.2%	53.0%	16.4%	22.4%	8.1%	40.5%	19.1%	32.4%	5.8%	25.0%	24.0%	45.2%
Sun Dance	17.0%	50.6%	15.1%	17.4%	15.0%	46.8%	14.5%	23.7%	9.4%	33.7%	24.3%	32.7%
Lakota Songs	17.6%	56.0%	13.6%	12.8%	12.8%	55.2%	12.8%	19.2%	11.9%	33.0%	16.5%	38.5%
Lakota History	7.1%	53.7%	22.8%	16.4%	8.2%	41.2%	24.1%	26.5%	3.7%	31.5%	22.2%	42.6%
Traditional Pow Wow	5.5%	52.9%	17.3%	24.3%	6.4%	39.9%	23.1%	30.6%	2.7%	30.6%	19.8%	46.8%
Average	11.7%	52.4%	15.8%	20.1%	10.8%	43.7%	18.6%	26.9%	7.0%	30.1%	21.1%	41.8%

Table 16.0									
Respondents' Estimated Percentage of Lakota Speakers									
	0%	10%	25%	40%	60%	70%	80%	90%	Average
Fluent Speakers	162 9.0%	1054 58.3%	325 18.0%	267 14.8%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	16.2%
Semi Fluent Speakers	91 5.0%	801 44.3%	378 20.9%	483 26.7%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	20.3%
New Speakers	440 24.3%	834 46.1%	372 20.6%	162 9.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	13.3%
Non Speakers	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	108 6.0%	244 13.5%	1212 67.0%	244 13.5%	78.8%

Table 16.0 provides a level of perception regarding the percentage of Lakota speakers within their community. The highest percentage of fluent speakers was estimated at 10% by 58.3% of the respondents. When the other values are considered, the average percentage of fluent speakers was estimated to be 16.2%. Based on this study, the self-reported percentage of Lakota speakers was calculated to be 10.2% (Table 10.0).

The percentage of semi-fluent Lakota speakers was estimated to be 20.3%. The self-reported percentage of moderate or semi-fluent speakers was 6.8%. The estimated percentage of non speakers was 78.8%. The self-reported rate of no to low level Lakota speakers was 86.2%.

The majority of respondents did a good job of predicting the percentage of fluent Lakota speakers - estimated 10% versus 10.2% reported. The majority of respondents also predicted the percentage of Lakota non speakers at 80% versus the 78.8% reported non Lakota speakers.

Table 17.0
Myths & Facts About the Lakota Language
(n = 1,808)

	Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
The Lakota language is worth saving.	1,721	95.2%	56	3.1%	16	0.9%
I am interested in participating in a Lakota language revitalization program.	1,519	84.0%	206	11.4%	64	3.5%
Every effort should be made to save the Lakota language.	1,688	93.4%	89	4.9%	14	0.8%
It is important that children are taught Lakota as early as possible.	1,661	91.9%	101	5.6%	29	1.6%
If I learn Lakota, I will use it regularly.	1,529	84.6%	189	10.5%	62	3.4%
Lakota is a language that is destined to disappear.	381	21.1%	312	17.3%	1,086	60.1%
You are not true Lakota unless you speak Lakota.	227	12.6%	314	17.4%	1,243	68.8%
It doesn't matter how you write Lakota.	235	13.0%	366	20.2%	1,189	65.8%
Preservation of the Lakota language is an unrealistic idea.	157	8.7%	210	11.6%	1,406	77.8%
Only children can learn Lakota.	110	6.1%	148	8.2%	1,523	84.2%
Lakota is a difficult language to learn.	904	50.0%	408	22.6%	456	25.2%
If Lakota disappears, the Lakota culture and traditions will disappear.	1,078	59.6%	311	17.2%	389	21.5%
It is important that Lakota is spoken at home if children are to learn to speak Lakota.	1,524	84.3%	212	11.7%	66	3.7%
The best age to learn Lakota is before achieving the seventh (7 th) birthday.	589	32.6%	506	28.0%	692	38.3%
Lakota can be learned at any age.	1,537	85.0%	220	12.2%	31	0.1%

CONCLUSION

This study does not completely describe the needs and concerns of Lakota people whose languages are endangered but provides some evidence for the potential loss of the Lakota language in a community. It is a preliminary assessment done in one county and in a short time span. Through this study, quantitative and qualitative data were generated to support what had been perceived and observed by the Lakota communities, especially in the urban settings.

Several courses of action could greatly assist American Indian communities in developing effective means to maintain and their respective languages. Such actions include:

- 1) fostering of new, innovative, community-based approaches to strengthen and stabilize threatened languages;
- 2) directing more research efforts toward analyzing community-based successes in resisting loss of Native American languages and other minority languages as well;
- 3) fostering communication and partnerships between communities and organizations trying new approaches to maintaining languages; and
- 4) promoting heightened consciousness of the catastrophic effects of language loss, both among members of language minority populations and among members of the mainstream population.

Unfortunately, the human and financial resources needed to stabilize the decline of the Lakota language extend beyond the resources of any one community. Because of the macrocultural influences of the American culture and the infusion of the dominant language on all levels of local, national, and global activities, the efforts to promote a second language among youth and adults is a challenge. This study was able to document the importance of language as a link to the Lakota culture and traditions. Therefore, providing the resources for promoting the second language initiatives for all individuals and institutions must be a priority. Secondly, since parents and families are the gateway for the transmission of a language, they require encouragement and resources to sustain these “primary” teachers. It is appropriate and necessary for governmental, tribal, and non governmental agencies to develop policies with appropriate human and financial support to prevent the loss of the Lakota language.

APPENDIX A

A SAMPLE OF QUALITATIVE RESPONSES

What are the reasons for not learning Lakota?

- **Young people do not have the desire or access to learn.**
- No access to Lakota speakers.
- I learned how to talk as I was growing up on the reservation.
- Due to a head injury it's hard for me to remember stuff.
- Never had the opportunity to steadily share the language.
- I understand it, just need a class.
- Too shy.
- Remembering what each word means.
- Minimal resources.
- Not around the language enough.
- I want to learn.
- I have no problems with speaking Lakota.
- Currently learning.
- I'm currently studying at OLC.
- Trouble with sentence structure and gutturals.
- I am in the process of learning.
- No efficiency to learning.
- Busy with work.
- It's not my language.
- It was never taught to me.

- I have no reason for not learning Lakota.
- I speak it already.
- No one to speak with or practice a fluent person or speaker.
- Barely around my grandmother.
- Not enough people are fluent conversation speakers, although there is a difference in ceremonial vs. conversational speaking.
- It is difficult.
- Time to learn.
- I'm not Lakota but would like to learn it.
- Unable to find Lakota language classes.
- Not enough resources.
- Distractions.
- Need to be with people who speak often - don't have them.
- It's not offered enough.
- Older people speak it in secrecy and laugh at you because you don't know it!
- Back then wasn't interested.
- I grew up with the language.
- Without fluent speakers, hard to learn language without constant use.
- Hard to put words in the correct order in a sentence.
- Wasn't raised with it.
- I can't find someone to teach me.
- Never have time, my children come first.
- No teachers.
- No one to teach or take the time to teach correctly.
- I'd like to learn Italian.
- The way in which they teach it need to be improved. Ask Rosetta Shone for hints.
- It's not spoken on a daily basis.
- Needs to be implemented and used more formally.
- It's a language not used in everyday conversational context.
- Need someone to teach us.

- No one to teach me.
- Hard to find speakers.
- My mother who is fluent never taught us.
- I speak Lakota but I am working on reading and writing.
- I was raised with my grandma and grandpa, I am trying to teach my brothers.
- I speak Lakota but can't read or write.
- I can speak but can't write.
- I am taking Lakota and learning daily.
- I am trying to pass on the language at home, I speak Lakota to my family, this is where it has to start or it won't happen (at home).
- I don't think we are passing on our language, we are not realizing that our ways are leaving us, this survey is very useful, thank you.
- I speak Lakota, want to pass it on.
- I speak Lakota at home, it is important not to embarrass new speakers, help them.
- I am a fluent Lakota speaker.
- I am passing on my language to the family.
- I speak Lakota but have trouble reading and writing.
- I was raised by my Unci and learned a lot.
- I am a fluent speaker and tutor.
- My family did not speak Lakota at home.
- I speak Lakota already, I grew up talking the language fluent.
- I speak, read Lakota very fluently.
- Never was taught.
- No time, no availability, no awareness of classes, dates, times, places etc.
- Never had the opportunity until now!
- I don't have anyone to practice with that speaks it.
- Need one on one lessons.
- I am trying to pass on what I know.
- Our language is returning.

- Not enough time - single mother.
- I think that you need to hear it [Lakota], but there are not too many people who speak it.
- I need to learn because not many speak it; but haven't had time.
- Busy with school and children.
- No fluent speakers in the household to speak with.
- Some teachers only give the basics. They don't use it regularly in class.
- It is not currently functional in my life.
- Its hard to find a location where it is taught.
- Because I haven't taken the time to learn.
- No time.
- Did not grow-up in a Lakota environment.
- Not around it a lot.
- I speak and understand but have not done a good job of passing on what I know.
- There isn't one valid reason why we shouldn't learn our language.
- No such thing as a reason not to have knowledge of your culture.
- No time, too busy working and attending school!!
- I learned Lakota at a young age. I speak it on a daily basis.
- I want to learn the correct way.
- I was lazy and kept on finding excuses not to learn.
- Finding someone to teach myself and my two kids.
- These are terrible excuses!
- Time.
- Not a first language.
- Wasn't raised around it.
- No one ever taught me.
- Overseas in military.
- No one teaches it.
- Too much slang.
- Transportation, time, and place.

- Had to learn English in elementary school and forgot the language [Lakota]. Grandmother passed on.
- Only my elders taught me, but they passed away.
- Really busy with all the other things on my plate.
- Did not grow up around it; I wish I had.
- I am already fluent.
- No one is willing to teach the language.
- Haven't had the time to learn.
- Love to learn; but will not speak because of being made fun of.
- New to the Lakota culture.
- Time.
- Never known anyone who spoke it.
- Logistics - Lakota is never offered at this campus.
- My child is learning, and only two months.
- There is no one around to practice with or to correct my mistakes.
- Not enough people speak it regularly to make it normal.
- I know some, but not all. They should have kept teaching it throughout grade school on the reservation.
- Don't know anyone who speaks it.
- People that speak it cannot necessarily teach it.
- My mom, aunt, and uncles never tried to teach us.
- I can speak and read a little.
- I already speak, understand, and write.
- I am hard of hearing; almost deaf with no ear drums.
- To learn the Lakota way.
- My great grandmother only spoke to her daughters, my grandmother, yet seemed that she only understood what was being said.
- We forget we are Lakota and new words are in the dictionary every year it is hard to keep up.

APPENDIX B

REFERENCES

Blair, H., Rice, S., Wood, V., & Janvier, J. (2002). Daghida: Cold Lake First Nation works towards Dene language revitalization. In B. Burnaby & J. Reyhner (Eds.), *Indigenous Languages Across the Community*. Flagstaff: Center for Excellence in Education, Northern Arizona University.

Crawford, J. (1996). Seven hypotheses on language loss: Causes and cures. In G. Cantoni (Ed.), *Stabilizing Indigenous Languages*. Flagstaff: Center for Excellence in Education, Northern Arizona University.

Fishman, J. (1991). *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*. Bristol, PA: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Krauss, M. (2006). Classification and Terminology for Degrees of Language Endangerment. In M. Brenzinger (Ed.), *Language Diversity Endangered* (pp. 1-8). Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Lewis, M. P. (ed.). (2009). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* (Sixteenth ed.). Dallas, TX: SIL International.

Linn, M. S., Naranjo, T., Nicholas, S., Slaughter, I., Yamamoto, A., & Zepeda, O. (2000). Awakening the languages. Challenges of enduring language programs: Field reports from 15 programs from Arizona, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. In B. Burnaby & J. Reyhner (Eds.), *Indigenous Languages Across the Community*. Flagstaff: Center for Excellence in Education, Northern Arizona University.

Platt, J. (1989). *Some types of communicative strategies across cultures: Sense and sensitivity*. In O. Garcia & R. Otheguy (Eds.), *English across cultures — Cultures across English*. New York, NY: Mouton de Gruyter, 13-29.

Reyhner, J. (1996). Rationale and needs for stabilizing indigenous languages. In G. Cantoni (Ed.), *Stabilizing Indigenous Languages*. Flagstaff: Center for Excellence in Education, Northern Arizona University.

Reyhner, J., & Tennant, E. (1995). Maintaining & renewing native languages. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 19. (p. 279-304).

Tennant, E. (1993). *The "Eye of Awareness": Probing the hidden dimension of bilingual education. In Proceedings of the Third National Research Symposium on Limited English Proficient Student Issues, 1.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education: Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, 279-306.

U.S. Department of Education (1991). *Indian nations at risk: An educational strategy of action.* Washington, D.C.: Author.

Wetzel, C. (2006). Neshnabemwen renaissance. *American Indian Quarterly.* 30. (P. 61-86).