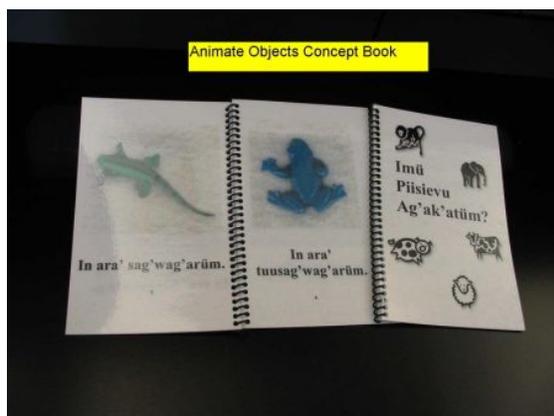


Southern Ute Indian Tribe



Project Title:	Ute Language and Culture Expansion Project
Award Amount:	\$300,010
Type of Grant:	Language
Project Period:	Sept. 2006 – Sept. 2009
Grantee Type:	Tribe

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

- 2 jobs created
- 1 Native American consultant hired
- 15 elders involved
- 115 youth involved
- \$382,576 in resources leveraged
- 2 individuals trained
- 22 partnerships formed
- 2 language teachers trained
- 3,138 native language classes held
- 115 youth increased their ability to speak a native language
- 57 adults increased their ability to speak a native language

BACKGROUND

The Southern Ute Indian Reservation is located in Southwestern Colorado. There are approximately 1,400 people who reside on the reservation, with about 400 tribal employees. Located on the reservation, the Southern Ute Indian Montessori Academy serves children from infancy until age 12.

Of the Tribe's on-reservation population, it was estimated only 50 individuals were

fluent in the Ute language prior to this project.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this project was to develop language materials to increase the number of Ute speakers amongst the Montessori academy students and tribal government employees.

The project's first objective was to develop a series of age and culturally appropriate language materials for members of the Southern Ute Tribe. Staff video-recorded 36 weeks of pre-kindergarten and elementary school Ute language instruction and edited the recordings into a language tutorial program. The recordings are on DVDs, which are interactive and made to be used at the individual's own pace. Staff also developed 5 language storybooks based on concept themes, a Ute creation storybook, an alphabet song, 100 model beading looms for use in classroom language activities, a children's interactive language learning CD, and a collection of 500 Ute words recorded on audio cards. In addition, staff updated the existing Ute dictionary to include a pronunciation guide. All of the materials are now being used in Montessori classes.

The second objective was to develop the language capacity of a new teacher at the Montessori school, as its only fluent teacher planned to retire during the project. After some turnover in the language teacher position, a teacher was hired and immediately began language classes. By the end of the project, the teacher had attained intermediate fluency, which was sufficient for the purposes of elementary Ute language instruction. The language teaching assistant also received Ute language training.

The project's final objective was to develop and implement a Ute language program for the tribal adults and employees. To complete the objective, staff updated a Ute history and culture DVD used by the tribe in staff orientations. The new DVD better represented the Ute Tribe in its modern context and taught new employees Ute greetings and words of respect. Staff also developed two adult language DVDs and an accompanying curriculum, which focused on sentence structure and vocabulary. Fifty-seven adult tribal members received language instruction during the project.

The project experienced some challenges. These were mainly due to hiring delays related to the project manager position. The tribe eventually hired an experienced grants manager who was able to keep the project on track and within budget. Additionally, the audio-visual technician left the project staff before the DVDs and CDs were complete. To overcome this challenge, the tribe identified a local audio-visual technician who had his own equipment and studio to complete the audiovisual activities.

OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

For adult Southern Ute tribal members interested in language learning, the new materials represented an increase in educational resources. Staff created copies of all print and DVD/CD materials developed through the project and worked

with the tribe to determine the most appropriate means for their dissemination. The language DVDs will be uploaded to the tribe's intranet and available to all tribal members. Staff also hoped to share the new resources with three other Ute tribes in the future.

These new materials also greatly benefit the children's language program, which focuses on learning numbers, colors, food, clothing, and animals through cultural activities that promote the oral tradition of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe.

The new employee orientation DVD presents a more nuanced approach to understanding the tribe and has been viewed by almost 400 tribal employees. Staff reported anecdotal evidence of an increase in the use of Southern Ute by tribal headquarters staff as a result of project activities.

The project assisted in the development of critical language skills for the new language teacher, her part-time assistant, and their students. The new instructors use the developed materials in their daily classes and have become more effective teachers as a result.