

Steps For Eastern Pomo Preservation and Revitalization

General Information (One)

The four main reasons language revitalization is resisted:

- A. Grief from being denied use of the language through family resistance or public intimidation.
- B. A perception that there is no practical necessity for its use.
- C. Intimidation or embarrassment at not knowing it, not remembering it, or fear of making mistakes.
- D. Frustration at not being able to remember or learn it easily.

Simple Preservation:

- 1) Documentation
 - Define a comprehensive alphabet, grammar and sentence structures, with text and visual dictionary and audio-visual aids
 - Collection of oral literature
 - a) Written or taped stories, oral histories, songs, sayings, speeches
 - b) Conversational language tapes, CD rom's of spoken language
- 2) Cultivation of language in restricted settings
- 3) Restoring conversational ability among community members—a multi-generational task

Note—the first two efforts (1 and 2) collectively, if seriously adhered to, may prevent language extinction!

Mobilizing the Community:

- 1) Leadership
 - The community must perceive that the Tribal Leadership and Elders are behind the program.
 - A dedication to keeping the same number of fluent speakers that exist currently into the next couple of generations is the base goal

- The revival of language must be tied to practical and usable situations

Practical goals for languages near extinction

1. Provide non-threatening environments for fluent and dormant speakers to gather and converse. Include young children at these events.
2. Decide which events or circumstances might best lend themselves to public exhibitions and use of the language. Use the language in public and ceremonial events as often as possible.
3. Put status back in the language
4. Use promotional billboards or signs. Use the language in public signs, traffic signs, street signs, etc., wherever possible.
5. Develop tribal posters that encourage use of the language.
6. Use greetings, prayers or introductory remarks in the language to begin public events.
7. Label items and locations for public facilities using appropriate language.
8. Work language into bingo with the goal of conducting them in the language with good cash prizes for those who participate.
9. Have a language section in newsletters or tribal communications.
10. Bring Elders from other dialect communities together to discuss differences and similarities.
11. At community events, give out rewards for youth who can demonstrate any knowledge of the language. Do oral non-competitive events and provide desirable rewards for participation and achievement. Provide match-play or other casino type rewards for adult participation in language events.
12. Make language accessible using contemporary phrases that are practical and useful in everyday situations.