Towards Curriculum of Renewal

Na:tinixwe Approaches From/For the Language, Land, and People

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Ya:ydil whima:lyo Niwho:ng-xw niwho:ng-xw
Ya:ydil whima:lyo niwho:ng-xw dikyung To:-ching whima:lyo niwho:ng-xw dikyung
We are walking my family/friends In a good way, in a good way
We are walking my family/friends in a good way here Towards the water we are walking in a good way here

Hay Na:tinixwe (*The Hupa People*)

IN A VALLEY BETWEEN MOUNTAINS, following the Trinity River, the Na:tinixwe (*Hupa people*) reside in the far reaches of Northern California, Na:tinixw (*Hoopa Valley*), and spoke/speak Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe (*Hupa Language*). Prior to settler colonialism, beginning at time immemorial, education for Na:tinixwe was a life-long process guided by ninisa:n (*land*), kisdiyun (*elders*) and kixuna:y (*spirit ancestors*). We were fortunate to have not had major colonial contact until much later than most other tribes in the state and country. It wasn't until the Gold Rush in the 1850s brought a massive influx of settlers to our geographic area. With them came greed and violence. Despite many attempts at removing us from our traditional territory, we were able to maintain a great deal of our homelands, knowledges, and ceremonies, a credit to the intelligence and strength of our ancestors.

As tactics of violence changed toward assimilation in the latter part of the 1800s, Indian Boarding schools across the nation were springing up to target Indigenous children, their identities, and families. Our Indigenous knowledges and languages were targeted, outlawed, and discredited. In our community, just as in many others, colonial curriculum was forced on us in all aspects of Na:tinixwe life. Schooling was and continues to be detrimental to our peoples and our ways.

In 1893, the Hoopa Valley Indian School was established by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to teach Na:tinixwe children how to be civilized by trying to kill everything about them that made

them Hupa. This school, along with virtually all other Indian boarding schools, forced these children to speak only English and punished any use of Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe (Bushnell, 1968). Linguicide was widely employed by Indian boarding schools as a settler colonial curricular requirement in order to eliminate Indigenous peoples and their sovereignty (relationship) to land (Iyengar, 2014). Although there was a school right on the reservation, many children, including my own grandparents, were sent to schools hundreds of miles away to further sever their ties to their homelands and families. The impacts of these schools on Na:tinixwe children, families, languages, and lifeways cannot be understated. While at the same time the strength and sheer will toward surviving and continuing the ways of our ancestors must be held up as well.

The Hoopa Valley Indian School was converted to a day school in 1934 and then California state public school. The public schools on the reservation today are virtually in the same location. The (setter) state continues to hold the ultimate power over the curriculum and structure of these schools. While there have been some major victories and changes over time around the inclusion of Hupa language and curriculum in small doses all made possible by Hupa and other Indigenous teachers and staff, Hupa language and knowledge continues to be suppressed and marginalized today (Chase, 2020). Consequently, colonial curriculum—i.e., state and common core standards—remains at the center.

As a result of this settler colonial history and ongoing structure (Kauanui, 2016), our language is down to just a handful of first language Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe speakers, and our Na:tinixwe knowledges are not taught and practiced with the same consistency with children as they once were. At the same time, we've had a parallel history of Na:tinixwe resistance and survivance that has allowed us to hold on to a great deal of our territories, ceremonies, and knowledges. We have continued to practice our world renewal ceremonies, given to us straight from our spirit ancestors at the beginning of this world. We have continued to reclaim and renew what we have lost. This article highlights just one snapshot in space and time of this renewal process with a specific focus on Na:tinixwe curricular approaches and Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe with Na:tinixwe youth. I humbly acknowledge all of those elders, activists, and leaders who have come before me/us and the great work they have done.

Xa' Ya:ydił! (*Ok let's go!*)

I open this article with a song that we sing during our walks to the river or creeks in our Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe (*Hupa Language*) Immersion camps. While there have been Hupa Language Immersion camps in the community dating back to the early 1990s, this particular immersion camp for Hupa youth in grades K-4 was started in 2017 in partnership with the Hoopa Tribal Education Association as a part of my Dreamstarter Project from Runningstrong for American Indian Youth. These now annual (and sometimes more frequent) youth camps bring together Emerging Hupa Language Learner-Teachers, Mentor Speakers-Teachers, cultural practitioners, and youth and their families to create a space over 1–2 weeks dedicated to speaking Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe. We work very closely with mentor teacher, Danny Ammon, and expert first language speaker, Wha:dichwing (*My paternal aunt*) Verdena Parker, for these camps. I conducted a community-based inquiry project following three of these camps from 2018–2019 utilizing Na:tinixwe methodologies (Merrick, 2024) to put into praxis our Na:tinixwe visions of education based on conversations and work with over 50 community members ages 5–85.

This article draws from this inquiry project (Chase, 2020) in order to highlight the key approaches to a Na:tinixwe curriculum of renewal that have been identified by the community and most importantly put into praxis with youth and their families. These approaches are counter to settler-capitalist, linear notions of time, progress, and extraction. When we utilize approaches grounded in Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe, Na:tinixwe, and Na:tinixw, we are able to look towards possibilities of renewal along a cyclical timeline that continues the work of ancestors since time immemorial. The approaches to renewal identified in this article include:

- Renewed Relationships with K'iwinya'ya:n (*Humans*) and Other Beings
- Ninisa:n as Pedagogy
- Renewed Ch'ixolchwe (*Story*) Praxis
- Renewed Whing (*Songs*)
- Intergenerational Knowledge Transmission

The article begins by explaining the Na:tinixwe theoretical framework of renewal and its connections to the Indigenous Studies theoretical framework of resurgence. Each following section gives concrete examples of each curricular approach and the ways that it has worked toward renewal of Na:tinixwe language and knowledge. I end with the story of one Na:tinixwe youth, Whiłiyo', and the impact these approaches have had on her in relation to recent experiences of racism at her school and a broader discussion of the findings of this work.

In our opening song, we thank the students for spending this time with us, for walking with us in a good way together to our sacred waters. We are so happy that they are with us in whatever ways that means. Even if they are not having a good day, we are still so happy to see them and that they came to be with us, and we do it all in Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe. I open with this song to invite you as the readers ya:ydił! (*let's go!*). Come along with me on this journey to see the ways that our community has been able to create and recreate curriculum against and away from settler colonialism and towards the healing, renewal, and vitality of our land, language, and peoples. I share these insights so that other communities might undertake this work in their own communities in their own contexts in ethical ways so that we might ban together the broader project of Indigenous resurgence and decolonization through teaching and learning with children. Ya:ydił!

Theoretical Framework: Na:tinixwe Renewal is Resurgence

In this work, I use the terms renewal and resurgence in tandem. Renewal comes directly from Na:tinixwe. We practice world renewal ceremonies and apply these same spatial-temporalities in our everyday lives. Renewal speaks to a Na:tinixwe ontological view of time and the world. We have world renewal ceremonies that we conduct in the community every other summer. The world then renews through our ceremonies in a cycle rather than settler notions of linear progress. These are the same ceremonies given to us by our creator thousands of years ago that have continued despite settler colonial policies and pressures to cease. When we speak of bringing something back, such as our educational practices or language, in the community we use the language of renewal in line with our ceremonies. Although our language is currently endangered, in the broader sense of things, it is on a pathway toward renewal.

Through the renewal of Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe, we reopen windows into Na:tinixwe epistemologies by speaking these words once again and reconnecting these words to our people and land. Na:tinixwe scholar Jack Norton (1979) writes:

> Spiritual leaders prayed for their protection of the land, the welfare of the people, and the harmony of the universe … . The ceremonies, the beliefs, and the land where the people had come into being were the Hupa's greatest treasures, and each new generation learned to honor and care for them. (p. 35)

Our people continue to pray for and create a world in which "each new generation" can learn to honor and care for our people and the world. It is through this knowledge transmission to the new generations that our people and world as a whole continue to be renewed.

Glen Coulthard (2014) defines Indigenous resurgence: "Resurgence, in this view, draws critically on the past with an eye to radically transform the colonial power relations that have come to dominate our present" (p. 157). Coulthard wants us to critically use traditional knowledge to change the colonial present we are now living in. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017) continues: "Resurgence is hope for me because of its simultaneous dismantling of settler colonial meta-manifestations and its reinvigoration of Indigenous systemic alternatives—alternatives that have already produced sustainable, beautiful, principled societies" (p. 49). She too believes that our "Indigenous systemic alternatives" hold the key toward transforming society as it is. Our ways have proven successful for thousands of years prior to colonization and will prove so once again. While these specifics of what resurgence is to each community may vary, for me Na:tinixwe renewal shares many of the same goals as resurgence. Most centrally is the fact that our ancestral ways need to be taken seriously and lived out as alternatives to the everyday violences of colonialism. Our original instructions from our ancestors still hold true, and their power needs to be felt once again, not just during special times of year or events but all day every day to move us back toward a much healthier existence.

By orienting this work within broader projects of Indigenous resurgence, I hope to align the work being done in this specific community with broader global fights against colonial domination. While the importance of this cannot be understated, staying true to the words, thoughts, and intentions of Na:tinixwe renewal make this work what it is. Therefore, I will assert renewal as the theoretical framework guiding the examples of our Na:tinixwe curricular approaches that follow.

Renewed Relationships with K'iwinya'ya:n (*Humans*) and Other Beings

Settler colonialism seeks to destroy the relationality central to many Indigenous nations, including the Na:tinixwe. Boarding schools are just one example of this. As I wrote earlier, Na:tinixwe curriculum prior to settler colonialism centered around teachings from elders in the community, the land, and all other beings with whom we share the land. Therefore, a curriculum of Na:tinxiwe renewal must center the reconnection of these relationships between our peoples and other relations.

Here I reflect on my own moment of recognizing the importance and brilliance of filleting hay ło:q' (*a salmon*). This was my own process of renewal and repositioning our traditional knowledge as a curriculum that needs to be taught to our children in meaningful and consistent

ways. I hope highlighting my own thought process will prompt others to recognize their own ancestral brilliance and reassert it in their youth's learning. Sometimes we don't need to do more reading or research; sometimes we just need to carry out our familial obligations.

One day, I was leaving my house to meet a research collaborator, and as I was leaving, a van pulled into the yard. It was a tribal program delivering fish for my father, a tribal elder. I knew it later would be my responsibility to take care of this fish in the proper way, to both honor my role as the daughter to my father in a Hupa family, as well as to honor the life of the salmon given for our family to eat later.

At first, I was annoyed at another thing to add to my to-do list. However, upon further reflection, this was such an important moment in my own journey of renewal to recognize the significance of being able to hold and pass on this knowledge to future generations. Thankfully, filleting ło:q' is one of the educational practices that has continued despite settler colonialism in familial, community, and ceremonial spaces. At the same time, this practice continues to be threatened by settler capitalism and settler exploitation of the Trinity River water. A Na:tinixwe curriculum approach understands how to teach biology in a way that could be recognizable to current schooling and still remain within a Na:tinixwe epistemology. This could come in place of dissecting a ewa:k chahł (*poor frog*) that was harvested specifically for dissection in a classroom and then thrown away. In many biology classes across the country, frogs are bred solely for their bodies to be dissected by students. In my biology class as a student at Hoopa High, we had baby sharks instead of frogs, but the violence across the species is the same.

Na:tinixwe people conduct a biology lesson of renewal every time that they prepare a fish for the people to eat. There is a very specific way that you must treat the fish, very specific places that you must cut, you must know what the different organs are and what they do, what they should look like. Additionally, central to this lesson—as opposed to settler biology lessons—are the teachings that require you to honor the life of the salmon by cutting it in certain ways to use as much of the meat as possible, to waste anything and dishonor the life that has been taken. There are appropriate ways to dispose of the organs and other remaining parts that give back to the land and other beings that will take part in the feast of the salmon, sa:ts (*bears*) are a great example. However, not everyone is given the opportunity to learn these lessons anymore, and with climate change and corporate greed of farmers, our fisheries continue to be under threat.

Consequently, this process takes place less often. Recently, there was a quota given to families because the river was so depleted, one fish per family. This was devastating to those who depend on fish to feed their families for traditional and economic reasons. The river doesn't care if you have money or not; the river only cares if you know how to fish in a respectful way. But if there are no fish as a result of settler colonial impositions, this throws off the balance of Na:tinixw. Within this example, we can see the continuation and intellectual rigor of Na:tinixwe modes of education, the devastating results of settler colonial imposition, and the need to continue the fight against these impositions through the continuation and sharing of this practice. Currently, in formal education settings, you may see a fish be filleted during the fish fair at the public schools on the reservation that takes place once a year, which is great but not enough. Similar to the small amounts of Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe instruction in the schools, this small lesson sits at the margins of the broader settler curriculum and interests being served through this curriculum.

In our Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe camps, we took a direct approach to make our Na:tinixwe foods, fish and acorns, central to our curriculum, inviting elders and cultural practitioners as experts to share their knowledge with our students. Our experts were aunties, uncles, grandmas, and grandpas, so in positioning them as teachers, we were reestablishing the tradition of family as

teachers and holders of vital knowledge. Families of all of our students and teachers were invited to partake in our traditional foods feast, remapping a regular Friday in the summer as a day of renewal for our community. In addition, we were able to reconnect the language to these processes and connect the kids to both of them at the same time. The land was used in a traditional way once again, signaling an important reconnection that contests settler colonial mappings of space and time.

We were able to bring in Chucky Carpenter- ne'in who has an expertise in cooking ło:q' (*salmon*) in a traditional way with fire on cedar sticks. Additionally, we brought in Suzie Sanchez who has an expertise in cooking sa'xa:wh (*acorn soup*) in a traditional way with fire and a special type of rocks. Then on the final day of the camp, we had our guests show the students and allow them to help in appropriate ways with the process of cooking these foods. In traditional Na:tinxwe fashion, we had to share this meal with our families. As an effort to get families more directly involved with the camp, we hosted a parent lunch during the final day of the camp. It was during the work lunch hour to be considerate of working parents. We were able to serve the traditional foods the students helped to prepare as well as others that we had prepared on our own including elk and nahts'ik' (*Indian tea*). For many families, it is rare to be able to take part in the preparation of these foods and be able to eat them, especially outside of the context of ceremonies. Part of our work within this curriculum of renewal was to bring the family back together. Many of the parents and families are of my generation or a generation older than me; this means that none of them are fluent Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe speakers. They too grew up with the loss caused by boarding schools, and so they too are a part of this renewal process. Boarding schools specifically targeted the Na:tinixwe family; in our approach, we bring our families back together in a good way. The other benefit to bringing in these family members is that they were also positioned as teachers and a vital part of our students' learning experience. The students can then, in turn, teach their parents what they have learned, and they can continue to learn from one another, not only in the context of our family lunch but in their homes as well.

Ninisa:n (*Land/the world*) as Pedagogy

Another central tenet of our renewed curriculum includes land-based education that enables children to explore and strengthen a reciprocal relationship with ninisa:n. In a Na:tinixwe ontological framework, we want the children to know the land and for the land to know them.

Wildcat et al. (2014) write: "Being present on the land provides powerful ways of seeing one's relationships to the land and other than- humans, as well as new ways in contesting settler colonialism and its sense making mechanisms" (p. V). They articulate that land (and other than human beings) has always been a key source of pedagogy for Indigenous nations. Given that settler colonialism attempted to destroy this relationship, going out being in relation and learning from the land re-establishes these relationships *and* contests settler colonialism. It disrupts exploitation and domination over the land as the only way to relate to it and centers relationships and care with it. We employed this pedagogical approach in our camps. Each day we scheduled time to walk to the creek, to transmit Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe, and to re-establish this relationship between Na:tinixwe youth and the land *and* contest the settler colonial relations of domination and exploitation to land they learn in school, the media, and in the broader national discourses. Lessons in this activity would be guided by the land and the students' exploration of it. One example of this was that students would crawl in the creek and plants much further than the adult teachers.

They would find new plants that we did not cover in our language lesson previous to our walk. As a result, we could teach them new vocabulary words we would not have otherwise. Our spring camp was conducted almost entirely outside, meaning that all of our lessons, planned and unplanned, were centered around and with ninisa:n.

It was a transition for myself and the other Na:tinixwe educators. It was a transition from other classroom teaching experiences that we all had and, maybe most poignant, that we received ourselves. For me it required a process of letting go of the formal education structure I had known. This may seem like an obvious theoretical point but proved to be more complex in practice. I felt a certain type of anxiety about, almost lack of control over, the area in which we were learning. However, upon reflecting on this loss of control I felt was part of the point, to have a free and open learning environment. This took some major adjusting on my part as a teacher, trained to "maintain control over my classroom." This adjustment made me really think about how even the physical space of a typical classroom—enclosed, with walls, borders, and boundaries with doors that lock—is another method of controlling students. Outside there are no doors, or walls, no major physical borders of containment, only suggestions by the teachers as to the area in which students should stay for their safety. One teacher and student were worried about students "just taking off into the bushes." They were panicking too. But what if this "taking off into the bushes" is where the self-directed meaningful lesson with the land takes place for students? It is an entirely different type of way of structuring, or even unstructuring, a space for learning than many of us have experienced in school. It definitely requires trust in what we are doing and what our ancestors did for so many years before. What does it mean to trust children to guide their own learning and relationships with themselves and other beings? We were hoping to find out and saw something transformative unfold.

When we speak about an engagement with land, we aren't just talking about the landscape itself but all the living beings that call the land its home, including ourselves. We were able to engage with other beings and be guests in their homelands. We are renewing our relationship with ninisa:n and by doing so contesting settler colonial relations of power (Goodyear- Ka'opua, 2013; Simpson, 2014). One teacher described a meaningful encounter she and her group had and how quickly the children were able to pick up on the lessons, reorient themselves to the beings, and proactively protect them. In broader settler discourses, frogs often get constructed as gross pests. Humans and their needs and desires are always placed above them. On the other hand, to Na:tinixwe, Chahł (*Frog*) is an important figure in many of our stories. She and her people call this place home as well. We are not superior to Frog; we are in relation with her. You can see the shift in the students' relationships with the Chahł in this example. It is important to note that this particular scenario was not planned in the curriculum. The teacher recounted:

> Our group found a family of frogs! And they wanted to go get them, and I said, "da:w chahł xontah"! And they said, "oh it's their house!" And I was like, "diye!" Then one student found a nail and said, "This is dangerous to them. We need to get this away from them." And I said, "niwho:ng, niwho:ng!"

In this scenario, we can see a group of students meeting a family of frogs and getting to know them. The teacher communicates in Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe that this is their home. Knowing that they have a home and not wanting anyone to mess with it, they decided to leave them alone. Shortly after, one student even sees something that might create a dangerous situation for the frogs and moves to protect them. We can quickly see their relationships with the frogs go from one of

objectification and domination, to one of care, protection, and renewal. This is such a valuable lesson central to Na:tinixwe epistemology, and better yet, the students themselves created the conditions for this lesson to take place because we gave them the freedom to do so.

Renewed Ch'ixolchwe (*Story*) Praxis

In our circle time at the beginning of each day of our camps, we talked about our traditional stories and the lessons they taught us. This was a great time to check the comprehension of the students and see where we needed to make adjustments so that they were able to understand the story. On the first day only, we would play the story in both Hupa and English so that they would be able to get some context for the translation of what they would be listening to for the next week. We needed to balance ensuring that the students understood the stories with exposing them to as much Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe as we could, all the while, knowing that they would not be able to understand a lot of the specifics of the language in the timeframe that we had. Na:tinixwe stories each have specific lessons to teach each time that they are told. Teaching Na:tinixwe morality was a key to our approach, and stories are often the best way to do that. The key lesson for both of the Xontehł-taw (*coyote*) stories that we used was do:diwa'unchwe'n (*don't be greedy*).

We would begin each day talking about the story and lesson in English and then be able to use that framework to keep the kids accountable throughout the day in Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe. For example, if during snack time they were taking too much and there wouldn't be enough for other students, we could say do:diwa'unchwe'n, and they would know what it meant and could connect it to the story and learn from Xontehł-taw's mistakes. Seven-year-old Nundil recounted her understanding and application of the lessons for us:

> Well, the coyote wanted to drink too much water. He wanted to be greedy. He wanted to share it with no one else. And that's what I like about that story. And the second one about candy. I'm not gonna be greedy about candy. He wanted a larger one and a larger one. Xoji' nikya:w mmm hmm, and then he got smashed.

Nundil demonstrated both an understanding of each story line, the lessons that it taught, and even applied it to her own practice moving forward. Seven-year-old Mack expressed the importance of learning Na:tinixwe stories. I asked: "Would you want to do stories like this at school?" He responded: "Yes, because this is where I was born." I followed up: "Yeah cuz it's part of who you are?" He replied: "Yeah, cuz our ancestors have been telling these stories for a long, long time so they are really important." Mack is putting forth the long lineage in which these stories have been told; he recognizes that he is now a part of that lineage, and that is hugely important.

Following circle time, we would move to the tables and review key words for students to listen for in our Xontehł-taw stories with visual cues and actions. We would all listen to a recording of Verdena Parker telling the story either with illustrations or with a puppet show to guide the students along the storyline. These were great ways for them to be able to understand the story without us having to directly translate it each time and, more importantly, for us to be able to completely stay in the language. In addition, this gave the students an opportunity to listen to extended fluent streams of Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe, again that none of our core teachers had the capability to do on our own. As this group was familiar with *Coyote and the Sweetball*, we switched between that story and the new one each morning. Each day they listened to the same

stories with different visual cues so that they would be able to understand it progressively more each time. We then incorporated physical cues for key parts in the story that were repeated throughout. For example, for the key phrase which'in' ch'ima:s (*roll out to me*) that Coyote says repeatedly throughout the story, we would gesture our hands towards ourselves to give them another context clue for the meaning of the phrase. By the end of the week the students clearly enjoyed interacting and following along with the stories. On the final day, once they were accustomed to the camp schedule, Verdena was able to come visit the classroom and tell them the stories in person. Students circled around her as she told the story in the language, visibly engaged and excited, presumably just as they would have hundreds of years ago. Verdena was able to see the fruits of her labor in the growing language capabilities of the students and teachers (her students). Even if it were for those brief moments, Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe was being transmitted from an elder to young children through traditional storytelling practices once again.

Following story-time, we would move to stations with activities related to the story. For example, we created a scene out of the story in a corner of the classroom so that the students could use the language from the story in context. It was in this station that students could use the phrase "which'in' ch'ima:s" and see that the use of that phrase would signal the rolling out of a ball from our "cave" just as it did for the kids and Coyote in the story. Other stations included matching, listening, Pictionary, and a nułtsung! (*find it!*) game, all of which reviewed the key vocabulary from the story in fun and interactive ways.

Renewed Whing (*Songs*)

Whing (*songs*) are central to a traditional Na:tinixwe educational approach as well as our renewed curriculum. Songs are incredibly important to Na:tinixwe. There are prayer songs, gathering songs, and songs central to stories. Unfortunately, some of these songs have been dormant for some time due to settler colonial pressures. However, that doesn't mean that many of these songs can't be renewed just as Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe. In fact, songs in Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe were one of the most effective methods of language transmission, most especially getting the students to produce speech. We had songs that we would sing at circle time accompanied either with posters or physical cues. Some of these songs had already existed in previous programs. We had such a fun time singing with the kids, and they could not get enough of the songs, and they were learning the language in the process. Songs were very helpful in aiding our growing language capabilities. We found that one of the hardest times for us, as teachers, to not slip into English was transition times between activities. Beyond our regular circle time songs, we also had transition songs. So instead of having to say, "Okay everyone, it's time to move to the next stations," we sang a clean-up song in the Hupa language that students quickly associated with moving on to the next activity. We had a "clean-up song," a "line-up song," and a "creek walking song" (see in intro). These songs made a world of a difference for us all to stay in the language and provided seamless transitions between activities.

Intergenerational Knowledge Transmission

Families of our students were invited and encouraged to stay and participate as much as they could during the camps. We had one mother and her baby who came consistently each day.

Most parents of our students had little to no knowledge of Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe. We wanted them to learn as much as they could too, so that they could continue to use the language with their children at home, even after our camps ended. On the last day of each camp, we gave each student a packet that included recordings, storybooks, coloring pages, posters, visual aids, games, and many other curriculum items. Many families were incredibly proud to see their children being able to learn to speak the language that they were denied. They were so happy and excited to have their children teach them small phrases and most often the songs from our camp, and the students were excited to do it. Tehla:n, mother of one of our students, was able to attend all three camps and stated:

There was a lot that was learned, and I'm learning a lot for my 6-year-old is teaching me, and then my other daughter comes and then her dad who didn't grow up here. He's on the [tribal] roll, but he didn't grow up here, and he's like well now I feel left out.

This particular student has taken the initiative to teach the rest of her family the language that she has learned in our camps. One parent who is Na:tinixwe but did not grow up on the reservation is now excited to learn from his daughter. A lot of this work is bringing our Na:tinixwe who have been denied the opportunity to learn the language for many different reasons back into it.

Everyone is welcome. It is especially powerful if it is one's own child who is reopening that process for their family. Family and community are central to our curriculum of renewal; in our camps, family and community were the space and source of knowledge. Bringing our language back brings our people back together.

The final day of the camp was dedicated to celebration. We took a field trip over to the K'isdiya:n ya'kya:n-ding, the tribal Senior Nutrition Center. This is where many elders in the community go every weekday for a free lunch but mostly to visit with one another. We arranged a performance of the many Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe songs we learned for the elders. We told the kids about it earlier in the day, and they seemed nervous but excited to show what they had learned. The kids yelled to us in the opening circle the many relatives that they knew were going to attend and told us who they knew that ate there regularly. They then speculated about whether or not they would watch them perform. There were similar conversations that took place when we were walking over to the center. When we arrived, I introduced myself and our group to the room full of elders; many of them knew me but some did not. Then I told them what we had been learning and what they wanted to share with them. We proceeded to perform our songs guided by our visual and physical cues so that the elders would understand what we were singing as well.

Some students were shy in the beginning, but by our ending song, they were beaming with pride. We finished, and the room erupted with applause. We thanked them for letting us share and walked back to our classroom. As we were walking out, I overheard a conversation between some elders. One said to the other: "Did you recognize any of the words they said?" The other one responded excitedly, "Yes I think so!" This was so important and exciting for me. Many of these elders were of my parents' generation or a little older. So many of them were either punished for speaking the language, or it was their parents who did not teach them to speak out of love and protection. That said, I'm sure that many of them have negative connotations associated with the language, such as trauma, fear, regret, and loss. The fact that, from this performance, some of them were able to feel good about what they remembered from the language, even if it was a few words, was incredible.

The other major addition to our programming for this camp was a small graduation ceremony that we conducted on the final day. We invited the families of our students and would

honor each and every one of them for all of the hard work that they put in. Then they would be given take-home packets and their very own Xontehł-taw stuffed animal so that they would have a Xontehł-taw to speak Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe with whenever they wanted. Their Xontehł-taws would be able to read along in their storybooks and remind them of the lessons he teaches. This was a great opportunity for families, students, and teachers to come together and celebrate our survivance as Na:tinixwe learning and teaching Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe, despite all odds. One of my favorite parts of this particular graduation was that each student would be called up to receive their packet and be able to shake Wha:dichwing Verdena's hand to recognize their accomplishment and feel like legitimate Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe speakers because they were getting their approval from a speaker. I believe that Verdena enjoyed this just as much. Some students unprompted would give a hug rather than a handshake to express their love and appreciation for the language. Our graduation was a celebration and honoring of the language just as much as it was for our students.

Whiłiyo's Story

I end this article with the story of Whiłiyo' and the words of renewal of Na:tinixwe youth. Whiłiyo' was 9 at the time of our second camp. She was very nervous to come to our camp because she had not taken Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe classes in a few years. After a few hours of being at camp, she went from being shy and timid to beaming with pride when we would sing our renewed Na:tinixwe Mixine:whe songs. Xowunchwing (*her mother*) later relayed to us how impactful coming to this camp was on her. After camp ended, I would find out from her mother that Whiłiyo' was having a difficult time at school, dealing with racism from students and administration. When we had our one-on-one conversation, I could tell that she wanted to tell me about an incident that happened at school (a local public school). However, she was clearly emotional, and I didn't want to push her. Then later when I was able to have a conversation with her mother, Whiłiyo' got the courage to tell me what happened. An excerpt from our conversation is below:

Whiłiyo'*-But umm I feel good when I speak Hupa and always feel happy I was never scared.*
Whidehch (Me)*- Would you feel scared to be that way at school?*
Whiłiyo'*-[Shakes head yes]*
Whidehch (Me)*-Do you feel like you would get picked on or something or made fun of?*
Whiłiyo'*-[Nods yes]...last year umm*
Xowunchwing*- Go ahead tell her...*
Whiłiyo'*-Last year umm the kids were making fun of the singing part of Indian Day, and so I felt kinda scared of that [on the verge of tears].*
Xowunchwing*- And it hurt you?*
Whiłiyo'*-Yeah [quietly].*
Xowunchwing*- ...cuz you know what it means, and you know it's special?*
Whiłiyo'*-...mmhmmm...*
Xowunchwing*- ...and it's a prayer.*
Whidehch (Me)*- Yeah, that is scary. I'm sorry that happened, but you know the power of that, and you know the truth of that, so you can hold on to that, but that's scary, and that's sad that that happened. I'm sorry and that's why we really wanted to try to do a complete opposite thing in the camp where singing was everything that we do.*

I want us to use this excerpt to bring us through the importance and immediacy of this project, the many approaches that it took, and work it was able to start in the community. Our songs and ceremonies were targeted for elimination under settler colonial policies and practices. Whiłiyo's experience above highlights the legacy of that targeting. Yet, the fact that she knew in her heart the importance of such songs speaks to our survivance as Na:tinixwe. Songs are an incredibly important part of our curriculum of renewal for this very reason and continue to speak to the urgency of this work and the need to continue to expand it so that students never have to have experiences like this at such a young age.

Hayah No:ntik' (*To there it stretches*)

Throughout this article, I have highlighted the importance and possibility of a Na:tinixwe curriculum of renewal while simultaneously marking the ongoing challenges of doing so within a settler colonial context. Each curricular approach—Renewed Relationships with K'iwinya'ya:n (*Humans*) and Other Beings, Ninisa:n as Pedagogy, Renewed Ch'ixolchwe (*Story*) Praxis, Renewed Whing (*Songs*) and Intergenerational Knowledge Transmission—targets a specific type of renewal for everyone and everything involved. The language, the children, the families, the land are all reconnected in a good way. These approaches are seldom seen in the state schools that Na:tinixwe youth are mandated to attend, and so we must continue to build this work so that Na:tinixwe youth can have a Na:tinxwe education all the time, not just on special occasions or in small doses. This work in the community has grown tremendously since my initial inquiry project, and I am so excited to see and be a part of where it goes next. While much of this article is intentionally grounded in this specific people, space, and time, I hope to have brought up important questions and tensions around Indigenous resurgent and decolonial curriculum to speak to broader struggles against settler colonial curriculum in Indigenous spaces and places.

Lastly, I hope our work has inspired others to enact their own specific projects of Indigenous renewal.

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