

## LEGACY OF HOPE FOUNDATION

### PODCAST EPISODE FEATURING MARILYN SHIRT

Gordon: Hello and welcome to the Voices from the Land: Indigenous Peoples Talk Language Revitalization Podcast produced by the Legacy of Hope Foundation. Tansi, I'm your host, Gordon Spence, from the Tataskweyak Cree Nation in northern Manitoba. I also am the community facilitator for the Legacy of Hope Foundation. Today I am joined by my colleague and co-host, Andrew Bomberry, a Mohawk from the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. Andrew is a curriculum developer, writer, researcher, and teacher. Welcome.

As part of the Legacy of Hope Foundation's mandate and mission, we are working to promote Indigenous language revitalization as a critical step in the healing of generations of survivors and their communities from colonial policies and practices which robbed Indigenous peoples of their first language. The goal of this project is to help support Indigenous language reclamation through interviews with Indigenous language teaching experts. The target audience for this work are Indigenous language teachers.

We hope that by sharing accessible podcasts of interviews with people doing interesting and relevant work on language promotion, we can help facilitate the sharing of knowledge, ideas and practices that are relevant to the teaching and learning of Indigenous languages.

While there are many contexts that are particular to specific nations and dialects within their regions, we are hoping to provide additional tools and a platform that can help with Indigenous language revitalization, despite the many differences.

Our guest today is Dr Marilyn Shirt. Marilyn is from the Saddle Lake Cree Nation and is currently the Team Lead for Language program at UnBQ College. Marilyn's commitment to the revitalization of the Cree language stems from her desire to ensure that her daughter Nepeya has a Cree language community to return to. Marilyn has worked in adult education for twenty-seven years, four years in small business and four years in Early Childhood Development Cree immersion before devoting her time to Language revitalization for both Cree and Dene. She received her Bachelor in Fine Arts from the University of Calgary, a Master of Arts in Transpersonal Psychology from John F. Kennedy University and a Doctorate degree in iyiniw pimātsiwin kiskeyihtamowin studies from the Blue Quills First Nations College.

Hello, Dr Marilyn Shirt. How are you today? Thank you for joining us.

Marilyn: [Cree].

Gordon: Maybe you could just start by talking about what you are doing today and we'll just kind of take it from there.

Marilyn:

OK. I started working at Blue Quills here when it was at college; it's now a university. Now it's called the University nuhelot'ine thaiyots'į nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills – the desire to have both Dene and a Cree language in the name. And when I started we were offering diploma and certificate programs in the language. Through its life the university was started off as a high school, and then graduated to a college, and now it's a university, but through that whole period they have always been doing language-related programming.

Two years after I started I saw the need for a degree program. And the degree program was in part because not a lot of value was given to language learning, or it was hard for individuals who wanted to learn how to speak Cree, to find funding to support their language learning. And I had seen in the community that I'm from – Saddle Lake – that the Catholic Church was supporting, I think, two priests and a brother, or three priests and a brother, and giving them a language instructor, and giving them a sabbatical, so basically paying for their livelihood for a year to learn language. But it's not something that was available for our own community members. So the degree was a way of doing that. There was more likelihood that funders would fund a degree program than a certificate or diploma program.

At the time I think when you're talking about effective models, and when you're talking about polysynthetic languages, I think at the time when I started looking at language learning, Cree or Indigenous languages as a polysynthetic language wasn't really looked at. You know? All of the courses, all of the language programs, focused on teaching it as though it was an English language – as though it was an isolated language. An isolating language. So not taking into account, you know, how we create words before we create sentences.

So in English you're teaching words and then teaching people how to combine those words into sentences, whereas for a language like Cree the words are made up of units of meaning that are put together and then a word is formed and then you can put those words into a sentence if that's required. Sometimes all you need is that word for a complete sentence.

And oftentimes what happened, I think, for learners is that they got overwhelmed with feeling like they had a whole new set of words to learn for I am walking and you're walking, he or she is walking, you know, we're walking, let's walk. So all those became, you know, like, I think it felt overwhelming for students to have to – and then not to have to learn that and then not only was there these different words but there was also the choice of two options. You know? So you could say it as [Cree] or you could say it as [Cree]. So it broadened the number of words they had to learn just to say I'm walking, you're walking, those things.

So one of the things that we decided to do, and I think we were we took our cue from Brian Maracle and the work that he was doing with the Mohawks in terms of what he called the root word method. So we worked to do – part of our early instruction with our students and

teaching them how to insert the concept of I and the concept of you and the concept of us into verbs so that they could be introduced to a new verb and then know how to conjugate it into these different forms. So they weren't having to learn them as individual words.

I don't know if that makes – if I'm making sense at this point.

Andrew: I think it might make sense to Indigenous language teachers – our primary audience. The root word method has come up a few times; it's good to hear some more specifics on it. It does seem to be something very relevant for Indigenous languages.

Marilyn: Yep. I think one of the things that we found when we were doing that with our students is the sense of light bulb moments, maybe, or aha or, you know, like, feeling like they could then hear people speaking and not necessarily know what the conversation was about but could follow some of those pronoun endings. You know? They can say, oh, that person's talking about themselves or they're talking about somebody. They could start to recognize those bits of meaning within words and within conversations.

The other method that we use, and we've had varying degrees of success for my own self, for my own learning, I think it was very successful, and that was the method called LAMP – Language Acquisition Made Practical. So this, I think, method was developed for people to work kind of like on their own initially, and different than MAP. So in this sense they find a phrase that they want to learn to say, and then they go and they ask for a translation and then they get the recording. So it's a kind of process and part of the process, they then write it out how it sounds to them.

Eventually they'd have to go back and then do proper – the proper SRO spelling, but initially it's for their own hearing. And then they'd practice it initially on their own and there was a number of ways you could practice so that you could listen and then practice or say it and then listen or say it at the same time as you're listening, break it up into chunks so that you're saying each chunk, and then gradually putting them together.

So there's a number of different listening sorts of exercises to help with the person to remember, to practice verbalizing, to improve their accent, and the flow – to have kind of like a natural flow.

And then after they've done practicing, they – by themselves, they then have to practice with other people. And the recommendation was if you didn't have anybody to practice with, you just set it to things. You know? You just went out and said it to things so that the idea is to be able to exercise your ability to speak.

So, as people know, the person's ability to understand exceeds their ability to speak and the ability to speak sometimes is harder for people to maintain and to develop those pathways. So that, particularly, coupled

with looking at the word and how the word is structured, was useful for me.

So we then at the institution wanted to go towards a deeper look at the morphology. And we have not yet had the time to develop a way of doing it that we're satisfied with; we're still kind of like exploring the whole thing. We teach morphology. So we take words that the students might be interested in, or that they've been utilizing, and then look at how that word has been formed. So, what is the root? So you have in a word like [Cree], you have, you know, [Cree], which is about movement, and [Cree], which is about walking, and then showing them how they're made and showing them how that root, [Cree], is in a lot of other words – like, all of the movement words. Like, [Cree], or in some concept words like [Cree]. You know?

So they get to see those units of meaning in other words, and then I think it helps to build their understanding of words that they hear; it helps build – I think it creates an excitement for them because they can start to see maybe how, like, we're thinking. You know? How the Cree mind is working.

Are there any questions that you have right now?

Andrew: Really enjoying the unpacking of the examples. Please continue if you have more to say on it.

Yeah. So we haven't arrived at a place where we have utilized the method as the Mohawks have. I think people talk about that root word method because Brian with some individuals have done some tremendous amount of language learning, you know, where people have demonstrated such a stride within a year or two-year period of having a handle on the language. And so that's kind of like what we desire for ourselves. And so I feel in part that whole morphology and how we put those morphemes together is part of that puzzle for us.

With fluent speakers, a fluent speaker may arrive at a word that they need that hasn't ever been used before and they will create it because of their own understanding of how those morphemes are put together. And they might not necessarily have a conscious awareness of how they're put together, but they have an unconscious awareness of how they're constructing those words because they're doing it all the time. And that's why I think that you have, you know, a variety ways of saying, you know, things for a same object. Why people, when they're translating a new word, why you have various different kinds of examples depending on the place where people are coming from. You know? So different words for TV, you know, depending on who's doing the translation.

Gordon: Yeah. Yeah. I'm just listening to and trying to understand the root word method. And I was thinking to myself the other night and trying to trying to figure this out. And I think I'm just beginning to understand what it really means, like, when you say – when the root word for, let's say, let's

say store, OK? Store would be a [Cree], right? The [Cree]. You can say I'm going to store. So [Cree]. Or you could say [Cree] – store birds. [Laughter] That's kind of – that's the root word method and I think I'm finding it very, very interesting. I think once a person begins to grasp that, it starts to make things a little bit easier for somebody who's trying to learn the language.

I wanted to ask you, just because this is an audio podcast and some of the words that you're saying may be a little bit – people are wondering, well, what does that mean? There's three words that came to mind that I heard you say that I was wondering about. Like, Andrew probably knows this. Polysynthetic and LAMP and morphology. Can you explain what those mean?

Marilyn: Isolating means that a word has only one morpheme. So you have, like, sit, and it's only got one morpheme. And Vietnamese is like that. You know? There's only one morpheme to each word. English is not as isolating as Vietnamese because it has incorporated other languages, like, let's say, Greek or Roman. So you have a word like dinosaur with two units of meaning: dino and saur. You know? Or you have undo, which has two units of meaning: un and do.

Then you have a polysynthetic language that has a lot of morphemes together. They can't stand alone. Like, [Cree] means nothing until you attach it to another morpheme; and then it has meaning, right? So, you have a word like [Cree]. So, ni bim utay, and then the final – that I always associate ni in the ending together. So it has kind of like three morphemes. And none of those morphemes can exist outside of that word.

So that's kind of like what we're meaning by polysynthetic in that there's a lot of morphemes that make up words that there's very few words that that have only one morpheme.

So that's polysynthetic. Morphology is the study of words. So when you're looking at the words, you know, now you're looking at the how words are structured. So you have that – I was talking about that word undo, and it has two units of meaning, so un and do. And then it talks about those two morphemes, those two units of meaning, which are called morphemes, they all also have characteristics. So, do means – it's unbound. It means that – it can exist by itself; it doesn't need to be attached to something. But the morpheme un has to be with something. You know? We don't go around saying un by itself. It has to be attached to a word, so it means it's bound.

So with the Cree language, a lot of those morphemes are bound; they have to be attached to something to have them have meaning.

So then the other thing that you talked about was...?

Andrew: LAMP.

Marilyn: LAMP. OK. LAMP is an acronym for a book; it's called Language Acquisition Made Practical. By Brewster and Brewster. So LAMP is Language Acquisition Made Practical.

Gordon: Where could a person obtain one of those?

Marilyn: Probably a bookstore. You could probably look for it in on Amazon.

Gordon: OK. Good. Could you maybe talk a bit about what's been working? What methodologies work? Maybe what you're talking about is what's actually working. What do you find is successful in teaching the language?

Marilyn: Yeah. OK. So, let me talk about this back to this LAMP, because I said it was really useful for me. Part of the problem has to do with student and student motivation. You know? So even I think with Brian Maracle, he'll have some students who excelled; the ones that give us, like, wow, we want that. But then he also had students that don't excel, for a variety of reasons. So I think one of the reasons is sometimes people come in and want to learn language for the wrong motivation. You know? With the wrong reason, like, to get a paycheck. And I think that everybody who wants to acquire the language has to put in the effort and the time. They have to be able to be willing to find the ways in which they can hear the language and they can practice the language and they themselves use it.

And the instructors can influence that. You know? They're making it fun, making those moments, where people are, you know, making the classes immersion as they can, and demanding that people, you know, respond back in the language. But at the end of the day it always rests with the student – the student's willingness to put in that time and effort and use the language. So that's part of it.

The other part of it is finding ways to make the language relevant and useful to the student, and I think that that sometimes can be difficult. Like, what is it in that person's life or living that is useful for them to learn it?

So at the moment here at the school one of the things that they're trying this year that they really like is all of the instructors met together from all of the different classes and decided the kind of language focus that they wanted to have so that they had a similar language that they were using in each of their classrooms. So, because we're a university each class is, like, three hours long once a week. So we were wanting to expose them to as much language as we have, but we wanted the language to be consistent throughout, so that the student would have enough exposure to that language and that they're always constantly learning something different and new in each class.

So I think that they felt like they were working more as a collective. So, rather than each class existing on its own, they were working as a collective, and they decided the kinds of terminology that they were

going to be exposing the students throughout the term, and they found that that worked really well for them.

So in the first year that we're working, we're just focusing on the students – doing all of their communication and all of their writing in syllabics, so that the first year is focused on them utilizing syllabics as a means of improving their ability to pronounce Cree words so they're not having to be burdened with having to use English and the English pronunciation of English sounds. So I think that they're happy with that.

There is a lot of talk in this area that syllabics is better and we should go back to using syllabics, but the majority of the material is written in SR also, and we're trying to compromise with that.

Gordon: SR is what?

Marilyn: Standard Roman orthography. The regular English alphabet.

Gordon: Yeah.

Marilyn: Yeah.

Gordon: That's also in some other languages – that they use syllabics and also the Roman orthography. I know the Inuktitut, they use – in the east Arctic they use syllabics, and in the western Arctic they use Roman orthography. And there's always been debate, ongoing debate, about trying to standardize a writing system for that particular language – maybe Cree as well – and a debate on which system works better.

Marilyn: Yeah. Yeah.

Gordon: I don't know the answer to that but maybe you have an opinion on that.

Marilyn: [Laughter] I think that there's been a lot of work over the years done on standardizing the use of the English language in the English alphabet, and that there is, I think, for all intents and purposes a standard way of writing that a lot of people are agreeing on and utilizing at least in this area. You still have individual people who choose to use their own method of how they understand the English sounds. You know? But for the most part with teachers and people who are producing material, they use that standard Roman orthography that's emerged in this area. Yeah.

Gordon: Mm-hmm. That's what I use on Facebook. Roman orthography. I never did learn syllabics but, you know, when I'm talking about a Cree person on Facebook I use the Roman orthography. And they understand it. So.

Marilyn: Yeah. [Laughter]

Gordon: You get to a Cree-speaking person, you can't pick it up.

Marilyn: Yeah. Yeah. The interesting thing with the syllabics is that when the people started using it back, when we were first colonized, I guess, the

pre-people were the most literate people in the world because of the syllabics. And I think that it doesn't actually take that long to learn to understand the syllabics. Yeah.

Gordon: Yeah. Just staying on that subject, maybe you could provide some insight into how syllabics came about. I've heard that it started out as symbols being used by Crees and Inuit. They used these different symbols. And I don't know exactly where it originates from. And then I heard – I found out – I heard that it was actually developed by missionaries using the vowels and sounds.

Marilyn: Yeah. Yeah. So I think for us here at Blue Quills, what we believe is that it was given to a man called [Cree] through a vision and that it would be useful for him in the future. I was reading something earlier on and made me have this thought, which is it would be interesting to see if the people who practice the those Midewiwin lodges at Anishinaabe there, if they have a history of it. Because I know that in our area there would be some of the people who practiced herbal medicine. Not necessarily did they do ceremonies and that but they were really strong herbal medicine people, and they kept a lot of their information written in syllabics.

So I don't know if that was part of that whole Midewiwin tradition or not. But for us here when we talk about syllabics we talk about it coming to us through [Cree] and that Evans took it and then allowed it to be known that he was the creator of that of that syllabics.

Gordon: Mm-hmm. Can you talk a bit about the BA program in Cree and Dene? I find that fascinating that you can get a degree in Cree and Dene. Does that mean that when you go to university, to Blue Quills College University, that all of your courses are in Cree? Is that correct?

Marilyn: Not yet. So, the program arose out of our need in our communities for language learners. So, in our communities we are owned by seven nations and the majority of them have less – 20% of people who are still fluent speakers, and the majority of them are all older. So there's a need for new speakers.

So that was the reason why the program emerged was the need for new speakers and a need to find a way for those new speakers to be able to devote their time to learning a language, to learning Cree, without having to worry about how they're going to feed themselves, how they're going to feed their family, you know, those kinds of things, how they're going to house themselves, those kinds of issues. Because I think that language learning can be hard, and it is generally the thing that you put on the backburner if you have to provide for yourself and your family, if you're looking for a job.

You know? People say, oh yeah, take a language class, you know, like, in the evenings, but how many people want to do that if they're working full-time and they're tired and they have kids and families? It becomes something that they think, oh, well, not right now. You know? So that

was the purpose for that degree. At that time when we started it we had a fellow named Wayne Jackson, which – who you might want to interview as well. He was working for us and he was a teacher. And he said, you know, we really need to be focusing on creating teachers and partly – and training teachers, partly because the people that were coming to the program were fluent speakers.

So we then shifted some of the courses that we were doing towards things like, you know, lesson planning and second language learning methodology so that people would be able to have – would be able to practice that. You know? Would be able to leave here and then go and work in a school if they wanted to.

We have since worked with the U of A to partner with their Aboriginal Teachers Education Program so that people who take our courses can then take it as a block and apply it to enter into an ATEP program with the U of A and get a teaching degree after that. And that was always the original intention was to have it kind of like as a five-year dual degree.

The Dene program we just started recently, and we just ran one year of it, and part of the problem, I think, was we didn't have a driver internally and then we also were having trouble with getting enough students from the Cold Lake area. So this year we're going to, I think, expand it so that it's a broader range of people and not just specifically to one community.

Gordon: How many communities are Dene in Alberta?

Marilyn: Oh shoot. In Alberta I don't really know.

Gordon: That's where your college is—right?—in Edmonton?

Marilyn: No; our coll – our university is in the town of St. Paul so we're situated in kind of like in the middle of the seven communities I talked about. So, Frog Lake, Kehewin, Cold Lake, Beaver Lake, Heart Lake, Goodfish and Saddle Lake. So it's close to the Saskatchewan border; we're about, I don't know, an hour-and-a-half, maybe, from there. We're about an hour-and-a-half from Edmonton.

Gordon: OK.

Marilyn: Yeah. So the Dene communities and our seven communities – Heart Lake, used to be a Dene community, but there's not any Dene speakers there and there's not any Cree speakers there. And Cold Lake is a mixed community of Cree and Dene as well. So, and I don't know what the percentage is, like how much Cree and how much Dene. So.

Gordon: What's the Dene language, I guess, situation? Are more or less people speaking Dene?

Marilyn: In Cold Lake there's probably less people speaking Dene. They're in a similar situation as we are the Crees in this area. But in northern – I think

Northern Saskatchewan and some of the communities, people are still – there’s still quite a large population that are speaking Dene.

I don’t know that they are – like, I don’t know what their funding situation is, like, whether or not there’s a lot of resources that are given to Dene or whether the Dene have asked for a lot of resourcing to create programs or resources. And that might change. I mean, I think that there’s a growing interest, and so that might change.

They have dialectical issues as well. You know? So you have the Dene [Dene]. And one of those might be in the northwestern part of Alberta. And then you have Tsuut’ina, which is another dialect.

Gordon: That’s in Southern Alberta, right?

Marilyn: Yeah. That’s in Calgary. Yep.

Gordon: Yeah. I found that fascinating that a Dene group would end up in that area.

Marilyn: Yeah.

Gordon: Surrounded by, you know, the Blackfoots.

Marilyn: The Blackfoots. Yeah. I don’t know how that happened but I do know also that, you know, like, Dene [Dene], they’re quite related to the – language-wise and understandable to the Navajo and the Apache.

Gordon: Right.

Marilyn: So.

Gordon: That’s amazing. Yeah.

Marilyn: It’s quite a big – you know, like, I always thought, you know, Algonquin was quite big but the Dene language is quite large as well. The Dene language family is quite large.

Gordon: Yeah.

Marilyn: You know? Going from, you know, I don’t know how far into Manitoba, whether it’s in Ontario but into Alberta, then up into the territories and then down in BC, you know?

Gordon: Yeah. It goes as far as – I don’t think there’s any Dene in Ontario. I think it goes as far as Churchill area. There was that Sayisi; they were the ones that were tragically relocated to Churchill and had a devastating experience there.

Marilyn: Wow.

Gordon: And eventually they decided on their own to move back to their traditional area, which is maybe 100 kilometers west of Churchill. So, very, very, very tragic story with that that group. And then also there's – and it goes across the Arctic right? I mean, Subarctic northern, and then it goes down into Navajo territory.

Marilyn: Yeah.

Gordon: And through Alberta. There must have been a trade route at one time.

Marilyn: Yeah.

Gordon: Anyways, I found your BA program in Cree and Dene pretty fascinating, and I can imagine some elders being a big part of this program and in terms of helping people learn the language.

I have here in my notes Cree programs K to 12. Are you involved in that or were you involved in that kind of program at one time as a teacher?

Marilyn: No; I've never – the only place that I taught was – and I didn't really teach; I coordinated – was an immersion head start program.

Gordon: Yeah.

Marilyn: Yeah. We have one class that we do with – for dual credit, and that's our syllabics class.

Gordon: A lot of people want to learn their language and they want their children to learn their language as well. How important do you think it is for – and how can you go about doing this? Sometimes it's challenging. Some schools are implementing the native languages. And how important do you think it is for public schools to have native languages taught in their schools? Is it practical?

Marilyn: I don't think we should ask ourselves the question of whether or not it's practical; I think what we're not doing is we're not giving enough money for the recovery of the language loss that we've all collectively experienced. So it's like, the government, I mean, I don't know how much that is going to go up to – the amount that they set aside for language. But \$63M is not a lot. And so when you look at what they're giving to the French language, so to support French language in Quebec and to support French language in small communities, like, you know, the town of St. Paul here, they're giving \$300M, you know? Whereas for Indigenous languages in Canada, and I can't off the top of my head think of how many there are, and then all of the small communities that require language learning, then \$63M is not enough. It's ridiculous.

And so I think the question is not whether or not it's practical; the question is, you know, we need to give more money towards recovering our language loss.

Gordon: Absolutely. Yeah. Totally agree.

- Andrew: Mm-hmm.
- Gordon: Andrew, do you have any more questions for her?
- Andrew: Yeah. So you had mentioned some root word method engagement and then LAMP, teacher coordination across the courses, and so just wondering, for your students, when they graduate, what do they find themselves able to do in their communities?
- Marilyn: OK. So, before I go to that, I want to say, you know, like, some of the other methods that we use, we use TPR, because I think it's always a good beginning for some beginning words. You know? Some beginning command words to learn.
- Andrew: We've heard TPR defined in a couple of different ways. Which TPR are you using?
- Marilyn: Total physical response.
- Andrew: OK.
- Marilyn: OK. What other TPR have you heard?
- Andrew: Teach, practice and then reteach or something like that.
- Marilyn: Oh OK.
- Gordon: Review.
- Andrew: Review.
- Marilyn: Review. I think that that's probably good as well and important. You know? Like, because it's like you can never expect somebody to learn something from the first time. There's, you know, all that research about how much a person needs to hear and how much a person needs to speak before it is their own. But yeah: total physical response – so, as a way of getting them to learn some words and through a physical medium.
- There's also another method called TPR storytelling, which I think is useful. We haven't used it here mostly because we haven't really had the time to spend on developing it, but I think that that would be really useful.
- I'll answer now your other question about the students, and then I want to go back to say a little bit more of morphology if you will allow me.
- Andrew: Mm-hmm.
- Marilyn: So, students, again, it really is dependent on what the student's motivation is. So, we've have students that are teaching within school systems. We have students who found out they don't like teaching so they're working as resource developers. We have students who've gone

on and are, you know, going for their master's. And then I think at varying degrees, so some people went on to do kind of like the ATEP program and have gotten that provincial licensing, and some people are just, you know, going in and teaching with the degree that we have. The drawback for them is that the schools tend to pay people who have a teaching degree more.

Andrew: Hmm.

Marilyn: But I think that'll change now. We'll have more students who want to go into taking that ATEP. I think in Saskatchewan they'll call it SUNTEP, and I don't know what they'll call it in Manitoba.

Gordon: Oh. OK. Yeah.

Marilyn: It's the Aboriginal Teachers Education Program out of the U of A. Yeah. It's a two-year kind of like thing that they can add on to another degree or -

Marilyn: So that's another thing that we do with our classes. So not all of our classes are related just to language learning but also cultural learning.

Gordon: Right.

Marilyn: Because I think that that's an important tie – about who they are, you know? Culturally, as a Cree person, that's important, and then the history, knowing that history. And I think that helps with people's motivation to wanting to learn – because people always want to know more about who they are and their place in history.

Gordon: Yeah.

Andrew: I was going to say one of the things we're hearing a lot across the interviews is that there's no separating culture from language.

Marilyn: Yeah. Yeah.

Gordon: Yeah. Language is like – once you understand the native language, you're looking inside the culture, kind of thing. You see the world of the Cree, the way people are. You know? There's a lot of humour within our languages, in our culture, and people like to tease each other and make fun of each other. You know? In a fun way; not in a malicious way at all. It's just part of who we are. I guess it's part of we've used it as a tool to be resilient to survive in a lot of difficulties we've been through as native people, so.

Marilyn: Yeah.

Gordon: Do you have anything else to add, Marilyn?

Marilyn: You know, one thing that doesn't work?

- Gordon: What?
- Marilyn: So, journal writing. So we've had, you know, in our classes when we're looking at how to assess and we assess in different ways and then in some classes we think, oh, well, let's do journal writing so people can, you know, share their thoughts. But it is not a method that works. Our students tend to have difficulty wanting to write things in journals.
- Gordon: Right.
- Marilyn: So I have no idea about that. That's very curious to me.
- Gordon: OK. OK. I guess that ends our podcast interview. I want to thank you for taking the time to be with us today and to talk about your expertise in language revitalization and sharing your knowledge with us on this Indigenous language podcast project. Thank you very much, Dr Marilyn Shirt.
- Marilyn: OK. I just want to say, I don't feel like I have a lot of expertise but I have experience and I don't mind sharing my experience and thoughts about those experiences. [Laughter]
- Gordon: You're being modest. You gave us a lot of good information. Yes. For sure.
- Andrew: Mmhmm.
- Marilyn: [Laughter] OK.
- Gordon: OK. OK. Thank you. Thank you very much.
- Andrew: Thanks very much.
- Marilyn: Thank you. OK. Bye bye.
- Gordon: Take care. Bye.