

Supporting Native Languages & Encouraging Early Literacy with Children's Books



Kathryn Ohle, PhD

My Goal

My goal is to share how we are targeting language conservation and early literacy development through a project that provides dozens of children's books to families, children, and teachers in Alaska Native languages through the use of a free digital library with translated texts, as delivered through UniteForLiteracy.com.

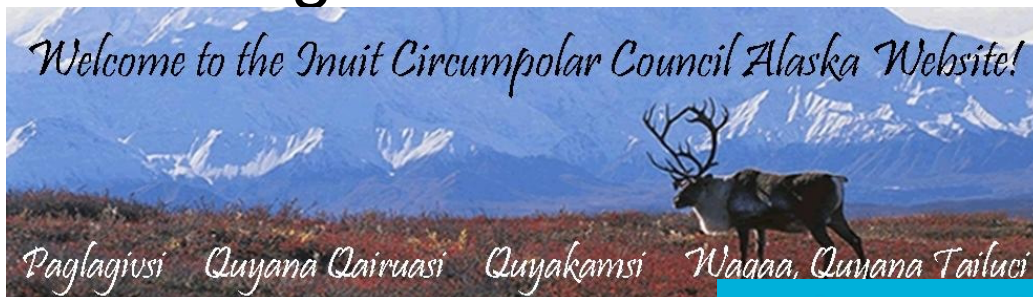
Agenda



- Give a brief history of the project
- Share the process in which the project has developed
- Demonstrate how the product works
- Make explicit connections between this work and the larger field
- Outline next steps
- Solicit ideas and feedback for future research endeavors

In the beginning...

- Identified needs through my own experiences with testimony from the ICC & National Alliance to Save Native Languages
- Identified potential problems resulting from unmet needs
- Identified Unite for Literacy as a collaborator in finding a solution



Unite  Literacy



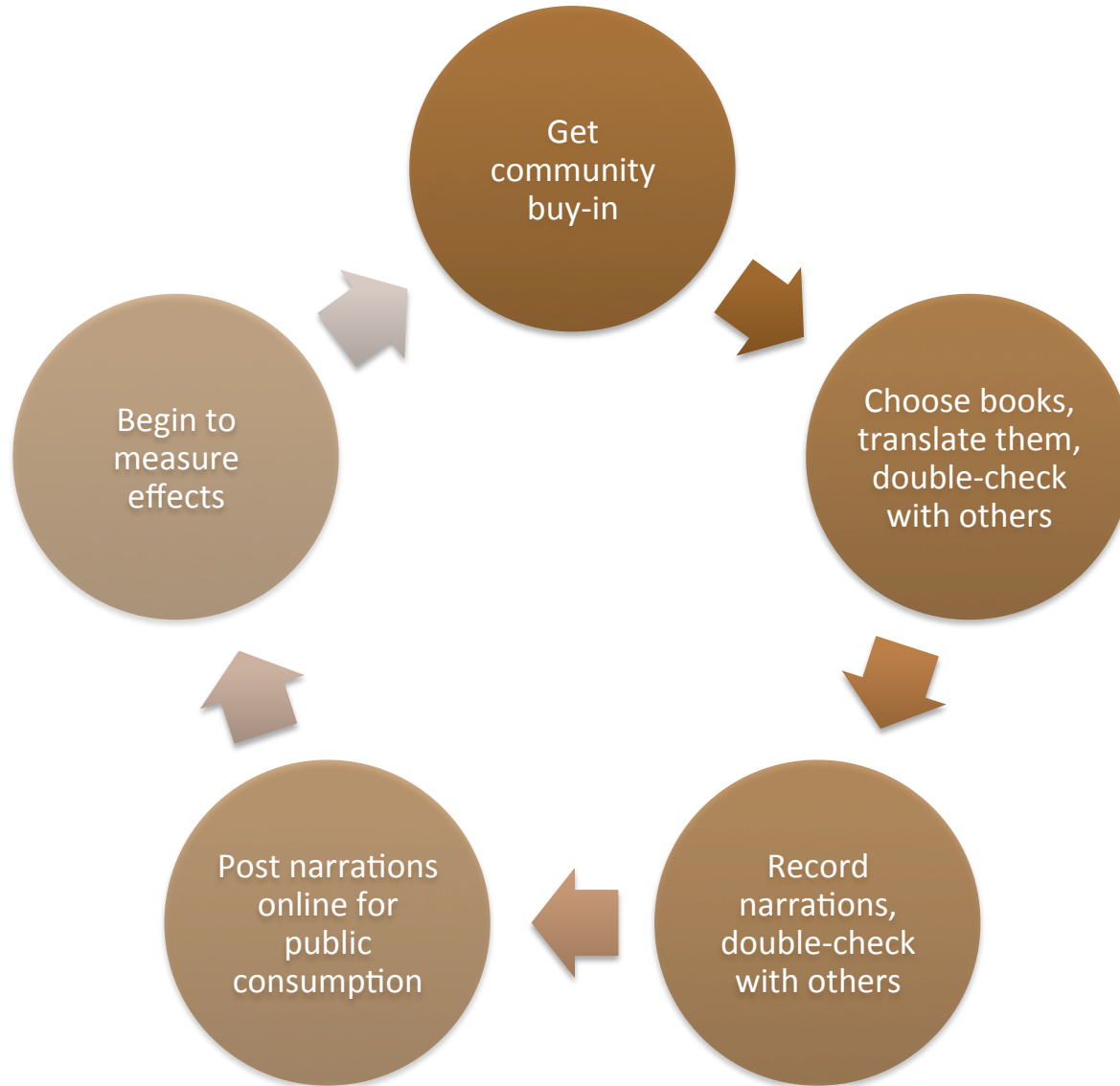
Theoretical Framework

Using Gloria Ladson-Billings' Culturally Relevant Pedagogy* –

- Teaching takes place outside of the classroom too
- Students are “school dependent”
- Curriculum is not ideologically neutral
- Instruction designed to attend to context

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). “Yes, but how do we do it?” Practicing culturally relevant pedagogy. In J. Landsman & C.W. Lewis (Eds.), *White Teachers/Diverse Classrooms, A Guide to Building Inclusive Schools, Promoting High Expectations, and Eliminating Racism* (p.29 – 42). Sterling, VA: Stylus.

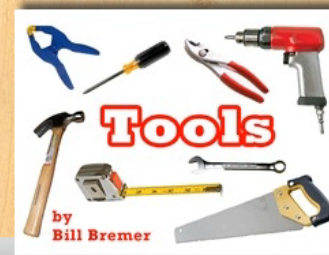
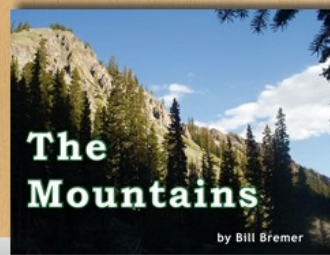
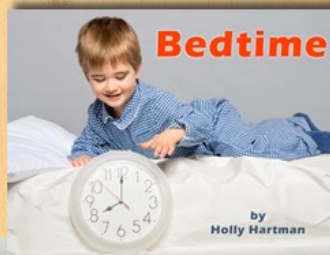
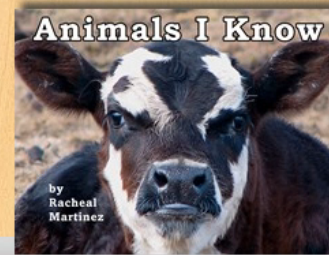
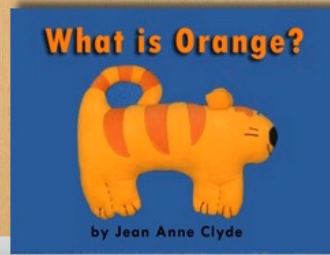
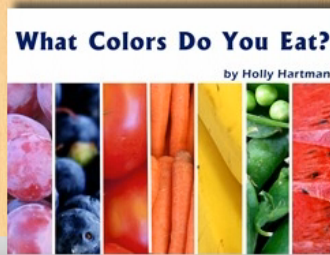
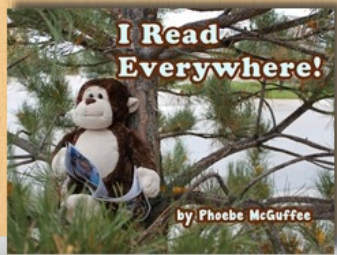
The Process



The Product

uniteforliteracy.com

Unite for Literacy



Addressing the Issues



Encouraging early literacy

- Increase access to books
- Increase exposure to oral language
- Connect words with picture cues

Supporting the preservation of native languages

- Increase resources in native languages
- Provide authentic narrations
- Promote use of resources in homes and schools

Future Plans

- “Localize” books by adding locally-taken pictures
- Increase access by printing the books and making them available in hard copy
- Expand the depth of the library by providing more books translated into Cup’ik and Inupiak
- Expand the breadth of the library by providing more books in more Alaska Native languages
- Start researching how students, teachers, and families are using them and if there are any effects on early literacy, preservation of language, identity, etc.





Your questions? Your
comments? Your ideas?

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