



UNIVERSITY of ALASKA SOUTHEAST

Certificate in Indigenous Language Teaching Assessment Report: AY 2021-2022 & AY 2022-2023

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Overview

The certificate in Indigenous Language Teaching prepares students to work in the growing language revitalization field, including within tribal organizations, tribal corporations, school districts, and non-profit organizations. This certificate is meant to lead to a type M certification within the state of Alaska. It also supplements students' learning goals within the Indigenous Language Speaking Certificate, and supports tandem enrollment in the Bachelors of Liberal Arts in Alaska Native Languages & Studies, the Bachelors in Indigenous Studies, and/or a Masters in Teaching degree. 11 credits fulfill the GER requirement for the certificate, with the rest of the courses focused on teaching language communication, understanding & human relations, for a total of 38 credits.

This report provides assessment for the certificates initial year (AY 2021-22) and its second year (AY 22-23). It also discusses program strengths, challenges, opportunities for growth, and continued goals.

Program Level Learning Outcomes

Current PLOs as they exists within the UAS Course Catalog:

1. Students will gain competencies in teaching Indigenous languages in second language acquisition programs, immersion programs, dual-language schools, and language medium schools.
2. Students will build networks with Indigenous language revitalization programs and will participate in research on effective language revitalization practices.
3. Students will increase their own fluency and will contribute to the health and vibrancy of Alaska Native languages.
4. Students will become teachers of Alaska Native languages, and will assume leadership roles in language documentation, language gathering and use, curriculum development and program planning, and the teaching of Indigenous languages to others.

As a new certificate program we've found our current PLOs need to be revisited to better account for current faculty workload capacity, and to better align with program-specific outcomes. A series of work sessions have been scheduled in spring 2024 to address those revisions, with the goal of submitting revised PLOs to Courseleaf in early Fall 2024 for implementation in the next assessment cycle.

We believe however that the core values of the current PLOs, and thus the program, remain the same.

We recommend changing the PLOs to the following:

Upon successful completion of the Certificate in Indigenous Language Teaching, a graduate will:

1. Demonstrate increased Indigenous language fluency.
2. Enter the workforce as language teachers, researchers, documentors, curriculum developers and program leaders in partner organizations.

Assessment Criteria

Current assessment criteria as it exists within the UAS Course Catalog:

1. We will report the number of students who are placed into teaching positions as 1) community educators, 2) teaching assistants in public education, and 3) teachers in public education.
2. We will report the number of language conferences and strategy sessions that students attend and will continue to link our program to language revitalization efforts around the world. Interactions with other programs will be documented with reports, photos, and video showing the construction and maintenance of language revitalization networks.
3. We will assess participants and produce reports of fluency levels and the rates and speeds that students are moving up the adopted ACTFL scales of fluency.
4. We will conduct exit interviews in the program and will conduct annual surveys of program graduates to document their activities in language documentation, language gathering and use, curriculum development and program planning, and the teaching of Indigenous languages to others.

We recommend changing the assessment criteria to the following:

1. We will assess participants and produce reports of fluency levels and the rates and speeds that students are increasing linguistic proficiency, by utilizing adapted ACTFL scales of fluency, self assessments, and instructor assessments.
2. Program graduates employment placements will be tracked and updated yearly, utilizing exit interviews, surveys, and/or self-reports.

How is data collected on the PLOs (rubrics, portfolios, etc.)?

The program needs to fortify data collection processes. We will develop a shared spreadsheet of students and work with Indigenous student advisors and retention specialists to determine ways to track student progress more effectively, and to create a cohort identity.

A survey has been developed that will be given to graduates of the program to begin developing a baseline of exit [survey](#) data.

Data & Evaluation

The program is in the process of collecting initial data from program graduates, and will be using this information to assess the program and determine what changes need to be made to improve effectiveness and eliminate barriers and redundancies.

This data will be analyzed in program completion meetings that will take place after the semester ends and before faculty go off contract.

Goals & Recommendations

The Certificate in Indigenous Language Teaching needs a stronger process to allow for specific student inputs to the direction and identity of the program while also allowing for an internal analysis of the effectiveness of the program. The most difficult part of this process is the fact that all Alaska Native languages are in various states of decline, and ongoing language loss creates a continuous state of crisis with too few people trying to do too much with too few resources.

Nevertheless, we believe a process of ongoing analysis can be implemented that allows for increased cohort activities and program flexibility. As we continue to accept and graduate certificate holders, we need to work with the State of Alaska Department of Education and Early Development to ensure that this certificate has a place within the accepted documents for teaching in Alaska Schools.

Ideally, this program will be a step above the current Type M Certification, and could serve as a stepping stone to the upcoming Master of Arts in Teaching Indigenous Languages. The Indigenous Studies Program at UAS is in a state of growth after being hamstrung for decades with a lack of classes, faculty, and degree programs. Now that those things are in place, we will increase the opportunities for students to participate in interviews and collectively review the courses and overall certificate program in a way that is decolonized and free of hierarchies.

In addition, the upcoming efforts to achieve WINHEC accreditation will allow for site visits by faculty members who have constructed similar programs, and will also allow for collaborations and increased internal review.