

TEACHING CULTURE

Language materials developed for classrooms

*Students will learn
In Native tongue*

SABINE SIEKMANN
For Alaska Newspapers

During the week of July 19-23, 10 teachers from Bethel, Kwethluk, Toksook Bay and Hooper Bay met at the Culture Center in Bethel to develop kindergarten through 3rd grade materials for the Yup'ik immersion and Yup'ik Language Development programs in the Y-K Delta.

They are supported in their efforts by the Piciryaramta Elicungcallra (Teaching our Way of Life through our Language) grant held by the University of Alaska Fairbanks in partnership with the Lower Kuskokwim and Lower Yukon school districts. This grant is funded through the U.S. Department of Education's Alaska Native Education program.

The overall grant goals are to: create materials for Yup'ik medium schools; provide training for teachers and aides; implement lesson plans and evaluate their impact on students learning outcomes; and develop capacity for local leadership and control in language programming.

All materials created through this collaboration will be shared as widely as possible in the Yup'ik speaking region in Southwest Alaska. Materials will be available through UAF, the schools districts and the Yupiit Piciryarait Museum run by AVCP.

Working within the existing Upingaurluta framework, participating teachers, most of whom earned their master's degree through the SLATE program this past spring, are developing specific materials for topics such as ceremonies and celebrations, traditional games and toys, and survival.

The emphasis is on teaching the Yup'ik culture through the Yup'ik language while meeting state standards in reading, writing, social studies, and science. Teachers have been gathering traditional knowledge to share with their students. They have been talking to elders, local experts and community members, and would like to continue to do so. The grant runs for two more years and we would welcome participation from



TOP: Theresa Arevgaq John, with University of Alaska Fairbanks, evaluator of the grant. **ABOVE:** At left, Sheila Cingarkaq Wallace and Rachel Nicholai.

people who are willing to share their knowledge about Yup'ik culture and language.

To share your knowledge, contact any of the participating teachers. In Bethel, it's Naniruaq Oulton: carol_oulton@lksd.org; Angqss'aq Sally Samson: sally_samson@lksd.org; Arnaqulluk J. Westlake: janet_westlake@lksd.org; Rachel Cikigaq Nicholai: Rachael_Nicholai@lksd.org; Sheila Cingarkaq Wallace: Sheila_Wallace@lksd.org; Veronica Atan Michael: veronica_michael@lksd.org

In Toksook Bay: Keqgutailnguq Cathy Moses: cathy_moses@lksd.org; Rosalie Angakayagaq Lincoln: Rosalie_lincoln@lksd.org; (h) 427-7812; (w) 427-7815; (c) 427-2084.

In Hooper Bay: Sarah Bass: (Hooper Bay School) 758-1200, Renee Green: rgreen@loweryukon.org.

In Kwethluk: Tan'gauc B. Andrew: bar-



SABINE SIEKMANN / COURTESY PHOTOS

Talking about storytelling are, from left to right, Renee Green, Hooper Bay, Naniruaq Carol Oulton, with Ayarprun, Elitnaurvik school in Bethel, Angqss'aq Sally Samson, with Ayarprun, Tan'gauc Barbara Andrew, of Kwethluk, Veronica Atan Michael, with Lower Kuskokwim School District office, Theresa Arevgaq John, with University of Alaska Fairbanks.



From left to right, Cathy Moses of Toksook Bay, Rosalie Lincoln of Toksook, Naniruaq Carol Oulton and Renee Green, Hooper Bay.

bara_andrew@lksd.org; (w) 757-6014/6015; Qayaruaq K. Nicolai: mary_k_nicolai@lksd.org; (w) 757-6014/6015.

Another major component of this effort is the integration of technology to allow for interaction and collaboration between students as well as teachers. Students in participating classrooms will have access to digital cameras and other technologies to create and exchange projects with other students in the region, their parents and the community.

For general information about the grant

you can contact: Sabine Siekmann, (Principal Investigator), University of Alaska Fairbanks, (907) 474-6580 ssiekmann@alaska.edu; Theresa Arevgaq John (Evaluator), University of Alaska Fairbanks, tjohn@alaska.edu; Steven L. Thorne (investigator for research), Portland State University and University of Groningen, stevenlthorne@gmail.com.

Sabine Siekmann is assistant professor of Linguistics and Foreign Languages at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.