OERs and Indigenization in a Japanese Language Class: Introducing Ainu Culture to Japanese Language Students

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Purpose
The UBC Strategic Plan of 2018 identifies Indigenous Engagement as a significant area of transformational potential. How can this potential be harnessed in a Japanese language class? Our purpose is to bring the commitment to reconciliation into the Japanese language curriculum by introducing students to the Ainu Indigenous Peoples of Japan.

Indigenous Voices
“Never [teach] about us without us” (Bear, in Abe)
- Importance of using authentic voices → making relationships and getting permission
- Authentic texts
  - Collection of newspaper articles by Ainu author
  - Public domain collection of traditional stories translated by Ainu translator
  - YouTube videos produced by Ainu students

Respectful Engagement
- Engagement with the Foundation for Ainu Culture
- Relationship with contemporary Ainu activists, artists, teachers
- Acknowledgment of the Syilx Okanagan Peoples, as caretakers of the land on which the learning takes place
- Reciprocity – what can we as instructors and students contribute back to the community?

Learning Objects and H5P
- Reading passages on Ainu history, traditional and contemporary culture and lifestyle, supplemented with vocabulary, kanji, grammar and comprehension exercises built with H5P software
- H5P = HTML5 Package - plugin for 51 templates to create online interactive games, exercises, graphics, videos, presentations
- Audio recordings supplemented with listening comprehension exercises
- Videos supplemented with interactive questions
- Learning objects can be downloaded, revised, shared by other users
- H5P available through BC Campus and (soon) UBC Canvas

Challenges
- Non-Indigenous team – no claim to Indigenous Knowledge
- Using authentic voices in a lower-level language class (authentic text/speech is high level) → extensive need for scaffolding without simplifying or ‘speaking for’ the subject
- Finding appropriate open access graphics, videos and texts

Opportunities
- Student participation - contribution to textbook (class assignments, paid work)
- Bring local Indigenous teachers into conversation
- Inclusion of Indigenous pedagogy (relational, holistic, kinesthetic, place-based)
- More inter-institutional instructor collaboration, peer review and sharing

Reference / Bibliography

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