# *In*Field 2008: Evaluations, Recommendations, Impacts

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## Goals

- **Evaluate** the first Institute on Field Linguistics and Language Documentation (InField), held at UC Santa Barbara in the summer 2008
- Make **recommendations** for improvements in future InFields
- Begin to gauge the **impact** of InField on individuals, communities, and the field at large

## InField Basics

- Six-week summer institute
- Three target groups of participants: community language activists, professional linguists, graduate students in linguistics
- Working to establish as a permanent biennial institute, in alternating years with LSA Summer Linguistic Institute

## Macro-level Goals

- Bring community language activists and linguists together in an environment which allows for shared training and a deepening of mutual understanding between these groups
- Provide a forum for language activists to present and discuss the perspectives, successes, and challenges of their communities
- Promote an explicitly *collaborative* model of interaction between scholars and community members
- Bring all participants to a broader view of the diversity of linguistic communities, situations, activities, and perspectives of indigenous peoples

## How to get there

- Construct a set of workshops that address the needs of each group separately and all groups together
- Have workshops co-taught by language activists and linguists where possible, as well as attended by both groups
- Provide varied opportunities for interaction of all members in an atmosphere where all have something to teach and all have much to learn

## More concrete goals

- Provide training via the workshops on a variety of topics:

*We gratefully acknowledge the financial support provided by the National Science Foundation Documenting Endangered Languages Program and the University of California, Santa Barbara. In addition, support for particular participants was provided by numerous colleges, universities, school districts, and governmental and non-governmental programs worldwide.*

- Technologies
- Language activism
- Orthography
- Life in the Field
- Follow up by intensive courses in field-methods, which utilize skills from workshops

## Demographics

- Instructors
- Submission of workshop proposals
- 41 with 40 potential instructors
- Ended up with 18 workshops
- 27 instructors from 6 countries
- Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Sierra Leone, Taiwan, USA
- 3 were language activists

## Demographics of Participants by Category (Excluding instructors)

| | Applicants | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| Language Activists | 32 | 24 |
| Graduate Students | 70 | 38 |
| Linguists/other | 22 | 13 |
| Total | 124 | 75 |

## Demographics of Participants by Region (Excluding instructors)

| | Applicants | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| Canada | 13 | 11 |
| USA | 71 | 45 |
| Mexico | 2 | 1 |
| South America | 3 | 2 |
| Pacific | 3 | 1 |
| Australia | 3 | 1 |
| Asia | 11 | 5 |
| Europe | 9 | 5 |
| Africa | 9 | 4 |

## Finances and Non-Attendance

- Registration:
- 2 weeks $300, 6 weeks $1000
- Housing (double room)

- 2 weeks $943, 6 weeks $3247
- Travel

## InField Scholarships

- Almost everyone wanted to be considered for scholarship support
- Prioritized support for:
- Language activists
- Foreign participants
- Graduate students
- Total scholarships given: $15,500
- Additional $4500 offered to people who could not come

## Many people had their own funding from a variety of agencies

- Universities
- School boards
- Grant funds from larger grant projects (DEL, ELF, etc.)
- Cultural centers and other organizations supportive of this work
- Fulbright

## Typical lament

*"Please forgive me for not being able to raise this alarming fee for the workshop. When I filled the form, I mentioned that I am a self-sponsored student and will need assistance to enable me to attend the school. Am afraid I can't raise the money involved and again pay for my air ticket.*

*If it were possible, I would have done anything to raise the amount as this training holds so much for the endangered languages of my community. Once again, accept my sincere apology."*

## Evaluation: Participants

- Imbalances
- 3 lg activist instructors / 27 total
- 24 lg activist participants / 75 total
- More participants *(especially language activists)* from international communities, especially from Latin America, the Pacific, etc.

## Recommendations: Participants

- Develop outreach activities
- To activists in speech communities worldwide
- Increase financial support by raising funds for InField scholarships
- Foundations
- Other organizations
- We need an InField endowment!

## Workshops

### Evaluations were very positive overall

- People rated the overall experience highly the overall experience highly
- Specific aspects mentioned repeatedly:
- Technical experience
- Encouragement
- Ethics
- Collaboration and networking
- Team teaching
- Steps of lg documentation, Models of lg documentation

*"I am a graduate student living within my community, and this conference has been the BEST experience ever!! I've learned fieldwork techniques that will help me promote language revitalization back home, and I'm more determined to create a central Pomo Dictionary for my dissertation."*

*"I did not consider myself a linguist when I arrived. But now I feel that I am in a position to contribute to the documentation aspect of language revitalization in a concerted and effective way."*

### What people didn't like (significant trends)

- Overlapping workshops
- In contrast, people wanted smaller class sizes; how to find the balance?
- People wanted more time (on the other hand, many people couldn't have stayed longer)
- Mixed skill levels in tech courses

### Recommendations: Workshops

- Have more instructors who are language activists

*"From here as community speakers, we are equipped to be instructors in the forthcoming InFields. Use your products. God bless us all as we set an example to many."*

- Institute beginning and advanced tech courses
- Continue Steps and Models
- Increase opportunities for less structured interaction
- Increase opportunities for one-on-one guidance and feedback from instructors

## Field Training

## Goals of Field Training

- Traditional view: Give students in linguistics the experience of working with a speaker of a language they don't know in order to learn as much as possible about the linguistic structure of the language
- Frequently part of doctoral-level training in linguistics, although many programs rarely offer this (Newman 2005)

## Why we offered field training at InField

- Opportunity for linguistics students who do not have access to a field-methods class
- Emphasize in the class the skills learned during the workshops
- Provide assistance to the speech community to help further their goals for language documentation and preservation

## How it worked

- Each class met three hours/day, 5 days per week, for four weeks
- Each pair of students met with the speaker(s) individually for 2 hours every other day
- ***Intensive*** (exhilarating, exhausting)

## Issues specific to having three simultaneous courses

- Class placement
- Three different approaches to field methods
- Classes differed methodologically
- Classes differed technologically
- Mende class had a different overall approach

## Issues of having students with varied skill levels

- Students varied widely in their backgrounds, training, and proficiencies: emphasize collaboration, unique contributions of each
- Not all students had taken the same set of workshops
- Excellent training for working in a collaborative team on language documentation

## Different communities and views led to deep exploration of ethical issues

- Issues inherent in interaction of diverse constituencies
- Talk by Smith, Cranmer, and Shaw Friday 9:40

## Tangible Results

- Training in field methods
- Training in technologies: data management, archiving, various software packages, wikis

- Knowledge of structures of the languages
- Produced metadata, assembled databases, orthographic systems, recorded and transcribed narratives, archives, wiki entries, etc.
- Final presentations (many co-authored)

## Intangible Results

- For the community members and the communities:
- Support for the furtherance of their work
- Increased knowledge of linguistic structures
- Many new ideas on lots of topics
- Establishment of beneficial long-term relationships with class participants
- Sense of empowerment

*"We returned home energized and inspired to continue working on our project armed with concrete, supportive and fresh knowledge. Without any iota of doubt, this was* ***"our training"*** *and we are confident that further future training will form an enabling platform from where we will accomplish our aspirations."*
*-- Kennedy Bosire*

*"Amazing experience!! I gained an enormous amount of skills through workshops and through networking with the participants. I had very little linguistic training prior to coming here, but I came here because language revitalization is my life. Thank you for this tremendous opportunity. InField has confirmed my ambition to pursue an education in linguistics. I will be recommending InField to my community members and others. Thank you."*
*--Kwakwaka'wakw community member*

*"The most prominent lesson I learned here was not 'academic' per se, but more experimental. Amidst our group of mixed strengths, talents, skills, and aptitudes, I discovered how it is possible and why it is essential that such 'different interests' come together on this. The experience has been unforgettable. I would undoubtedly recommend it to others."*

## Critiques in the Evaluations

- Three very different classes led to some feelings of disparity

*"The class should have been more collaborative. Perhaps a consultant who didn't have so much previous linguistic training [would have been better]."*

- Success of articulation with the workshops varied with the classes and individual student

*"I elicited a ton of Kwak'wala data. My only concern was* ***not having enough time*** *to edit, upload, transcribe and then analyze"*

### Recommendations

- Have all language consultants be language activists who are currently working on documentation projects
- InField Field Training as an enabling agent for the communities involved
- Always have multiple speakers and community members in each class
- Establish the field-training instructors and consultants early on
- Establish a unified technological environment ahead of time
- Insist (??) on students taking the appropriate workshops ahead of time
- Work out placement ahead of time (although many 6-week people changed to 2-weeks at the last minute)

## Macro-Goals Revisited

- Bring language activists and linguists together in an environment which:
- Allows for shared training
- Provides a forum for the work of language activists
- Promote a collaborative model of interaction between linguists and community members
- Bring everyone to a broader view of the diversity of communities and their situations and needs

*"Monumental! Tremendous! Most important, for me, was the formation of a community that includes linguists, community members, and those of us who are both, and our first step together towards a standard of practice which is collaborative and benefits us all. Personally, of course, I just loved meeting everyone, hearing about their work and learning so much in and outside the classroom."*

*"I had a really amazing experience – learned so much about being a linguist and interacting with community members to work together. The experience has given me a lot to think about."*

## Impacts

### Impacts can be measured at a variety of levels

- Individuals
- Direction, practice
- Collaborations
- Endangered language speech communities
- Broader and long-term impacts on fields of language documentation and linguistics

*More on this coming…*

## Think Globally!

- Other new training programs worldwide:
- "3L" International Summer Schools on Language Documentation and Description (2nd one summer 2000)
- Ghana Summer School on Documentary Linguistics in West Africa
- Many established programs for community members in North America, e.g.
- American Indian Language Development Institute
- Northwest Indian Language Institute
- Canadian Indigenous Language and Literacy Development Institute
- Endangered Maluku Languages Project (Indonesia)

## Needs for the future

- Need for global consortium/ clearinghouse to support efforts worldwide
- More regional training programs for linguists and community members
- Outreach to more communities, especially internationally
- Increased visibility: press
- Sustained funding
- LSA recognition/integration

# See you in Oregon in 2010!

## List of Workshops

(for more detail and handouts, go to
http://www.linguistics.ucsb.edu/faculty/infield)
Orthography
Toolbox
Life in the field
Lexicography
Audio recording and editing
Video recording and editing
ELAN
Grants
Web/wiki
Field phonetics
Problematizing the field experience
Language resources and the community
Steps in language documentation
Models of language documentation
Language activism
Data management and archiving
Database design
Introduction to linguistics for language activists