



**First Nations Language Keepers Gathering  
Workshop  
Matilda Lewis & Patricia Alexander**

**Title:** kâ-nêyâsihk mîkiwâhpa Cree Immersion Program

**Presenter:** Matilda Lewis & Patricia Alexander

**Biography:** Matilda Lewis MEd., CLP is the Principal and Lead Teacher for the kâ-nêyâsihk mîkiwâhpa Cree Immersion Program at Ministikwan Lake Cree Nation. Ms. Lewis has been teaching for 32 years and leading this great initiative. She has worked with various language initiatives and will be piloting SICC land-based curricula as well as the second-language methods from the U of S, CILLDI and UnBQ.

**Biography:** Patricia Alexander B.Ed, CLP is from Makwa Sakahikan First Nation and is an ITEP alumni that has a passion for language. She brings her love of the language into the classroom every day and is trained and certified to teach several second-language methodologies. She plays a dual role at the school as Vice-Principal and teacher.

**Abstract:** This workshop will cover a community based approach to developing a land-based Cree Immersion Programming that can fit with other Indigenous languages based on successful national and international strategies. The presenters will cover curricula, administration and the community approach to making sure language and culture are taught. This school has been a dream of many First Nations and the strategies of starting the school will be discussed. Some of the students from the immersion school will be present to share some of their language and song. The non-profit group kâniyâsihk Culture Camps was the start over 14 years ago. The camp has been a highly successful research project. It has helped give teachers a place to learn and gain confidence in taking students out on the land. It started out as a fall camp and evolved into a winter camp. Then it grew into an all season camp based on requests and needs of our communities. With working with SICC, FNUC, UnBQ and other institutions, the camp has grown into a year round bush school. The Cree Immersion Program was the obvious next step. We are simply following the mandate of our Elders.

**Learning Outcomes:** Participants will:

- Learn about current research in First Nations language revitalization;
- Be provided with an overview of the First Nations language programs and courses offered at the First Nations University of Canada;
- Be presented with an overview of First Nations language methodologies; and,
- Have an opportunity to practice teaching Cree with action, song, and story.