

# Creating Spaces to Tell our Stories-Language Acquisition

## April 2009

### ***Identity is revealed...***

We are a diverse group of educators from more than eight schools who are examining how individual, school, and community cultures create places for learners to tell their stories. We are especially interested in the role of stories in language acquisition.

*“this space is created so that we cannot interrupt. We tell stories rather than trade them. We actually listen to stories instead of just waiting for them to end. Stories take space and a place.”*

### ***Do I teach who I am?***

Every meeting provides time and space for individuals to tell their stories. Technology helps create the conditions- when one member holds the microphone no one can interrupt. Probing each others' stories helps clarify personal reflection and fosters examination of practice. Classroom observations deepen our insights.

*“Coming away from every meeting with something to think about and use.... staying aware, balanced... expanding our world view can only help students expand their worlds.”*

### ***Our purpose is emerging...***

The logic model process forces us to define our outcomes. This has been difficult, but now we know there has been a link between clarifying our identity as teachers and strengthening our practice.

*“I now think about language acquisition differently. All of my students are language learners.”*



*“Driftwood has a spirit. They talk to each other in the water. ‘I am going to be a harpoon...a bowl...a mask...’”*

### ***Roles shift...***

Members see each other as colleagues and the boundaries between university and practitioners fade. We are all teachers and we are all learners. Wisdom is honored. Trust has grown as educators share both successes and challenges.

*“Oral cultures depend on respect, on allowing space for people’s words.” (Brophy 2001)*

### ***Leadership grows...***

Members are taking on leadership roles at their schools and in state and regional associations. The conversations are guided by the participants rather than the facilitators.

### ***Questions guide next steps...***

What will it look, sound and feel like in individuals, schools and communities when we make space for our stories? How will engaging in these conversations lead us to change our practice?

