

Speaker 1: Welcome to the SAC Shining Lights, S-LP Schools podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Lisa Archibald from Western University. As you know, many speech-language pathologists in Canada are employed in schools. Their job is to support children with communication disabilities in accessing the curriculum and achieving their academic and personal potential. It's a challenging job. So many schools, so many students, and not many S-LPs across the country, S-LPs are finding unique solutions to providing the best possible services to the students and school teams with whom they work. In this podcast, our guests describe their innovations in school-based speech language pathology. Thanks for listening as we shine a light on some brilliant projects.

Welcome to the SAC Shining Lights, S-LP Schools Podcast. For our episode today, I've got Janine here with me. Janine, would you please introduce yourself?

Speaker 2: Hi, Lisa. Yeah, thank you. Thanks so much for inviting me to be part of this project. I hope that I have something valuable to share. I know we have discussed briefly some things that might be of interest to people. Some background though: I've been working as an S-LP out of Amiskwacîwâskahikan, which is Edmonton, Alberta for 20 years now. I spent four years working for Edmonton Public in sort of a quasi-consultation model. So, I consulted two different classrooms, but consultation meant also going in and leading and running activities. And this would be at the early education level.

So that would be preschool and also kindergarten that I worked there. And then I did six years of early intervention – early education, sorry – with the chief program, which is the Corporate Hall Early Education Program at the University of Alberta, which is a bit of a teaching site for S-LPs.

So, students would come and do placements there. They'd also come and do observations. We also had some OT and PT observation there as well. And in that setting, it was unique because it's rare for an S-LP to be actually full-time in a classroom. So I was a full-time co-teacher in that classroom setting, which is a bit unique. It gave me a really good background and understanding of what it's like to actually be teaching in the classroom full-time versus popping in and popping out.

That was really valuable. And after that – so that was 10 years – and then my second 10 years have been immersed in Indigenous contexts. So, I first started working at – it was called the Mother Earth and Me program, and then it became known after that as the Aboriginal Head Start program in Edmonton.

And then I was there about six years and then moved – after that I moved to a rural site. So, I've been working on a reserve and then now back involved again with kindergarten as well as Head Start and daycare at a community about three hours north of Edmonton. And then in addition, in the last four years, I've also started a PhD program which is out of educational psychology, actually, in special education. and I've been doing that for four years now. I'm getting close – I'm just starting the data collection process now – and if we had a little time later, maybe I can tell you a bit more about that.

But that has really informed a lot of my practice and has been really influential because

I've had amazing mentorship from pre-scholars who have really guided me. So, that's really been influential in my practice. A lot of what has come to be that we will discuss is a result of these amazing teachings that I've been gifted. I just thought it was important to mention that and give gratitude for it too.

Speaker 1: Yes, thank you, Janine. Thanks for that. You've got lots of interesting things going on. Sound very busy, <laugh>. We're going to – I think – have a discussion about the work that you were doing with your kindergarten classrooms. I know that you had – it wasn't just kindergarten – it spanned from the younger age as well. But can you talk a little bit more about the resources that were available to you at that time? Were you working with other speech pathologists or teachers? Just describe that.

Speaker 2: Sure, when I was working – I guess I'll stick to like the kindergarten area – when I went to work on the reserve that I work at, there was myself and then there was another S-LP working with more the school age – the older school age years. So, I was doing daycare, Head Start, and the K-4/-5. So, I kind of put them together in early learning. And then there was another S-LP who was doing Grade One and up in the schools.

I do know that S-LP, but the nature of the work, because you're driving there, you're not always there on the same day. I mean, when you are there, it's so full and busy. If I were there for one day a week, I would be going to those four different places. So: the daycare, the Head Start, the K-4 and the K-5. So, four different kind of places.

And they are physically located in different places. The K-4 or -5 were located in a school and initially, the Head Start was located in a separate building, but they've now moved to the school. And then, the daycare is in a whole different building, so there wasn't a lot of opportunity to really work together.

Speaker 1: Right, exactly and so was that – was it about once a week that you might have gone?

Speaker 2: It was roughly once a week I would be going to the sites and then again, in terms of resource, there was one woman who was designated as like an S-LP assistant. She didn't have SLPA training, but she was like formally – but she'd been working really closely and trained by an S-LP for a good eight years. I think eight years ago she had begun to be trained, but she was working with the school aged children. There was not anybody at that point for the younger years.

Speaker 1: Right, so you and your educators were the ones there. So, tell me about some of the major challenges that you saw as you started that work.

Speaker 2: Well, I can tell you right from the get go 10 years ago, the minute I walked into that first classroom (the Head Start classroom), and I looked around me and I saw a teepee in the corner instead of a house. And I saw the posters on the walls that said, "courage, respect, humility." And I watched as the kids were sitting on the floor cross-legged and they were having a circle and they were passing a smudge pan around. At that point, I didn't know what that even was. I realized that I really had a lot of learning to do that things were a lot different. And there's so much underneath the surface of those things. They aren't just a superficial layer. There's a whole way of being and thinking and viewing the world that those things are founded upon.

Speaker 2: And so, it's not simply a matter of taking speech practices and overlaying them on top or taking some of the words even like Cree words and superimposing them on top of English. It actually really can be hazardous. There's some risk in that because if you do start to try to adapt your processes on your own, you risk taking things, making it look like they've become indigenized when in fact, the underlying structures are not.

I know my Cree scholars who have mentored me a lot have really cautioned me on that because it can look like it gives a sense of comfort and makes it look like you're doing something and you're indigenizing it. But really the heart of it is still not, and in fact, you're still teaching English on top of – which of course, as we know as S-LP practitioners – we have a lot of impact on developing brains.

Speaker 1: Janine, that's all super interesting. Could we add an example here just to help our listeners understand that a little bit?

Speaker 2: Sure, yeah that's a great idea. So, for example in terms of vocabulary, if you just start infusing, “well, okay, I see.” Now, in this setting, for example, I could work on using TP, moccasins and vocabulary like that at a superficial level. If I'm just using vocabulary in a way that is breaking up words into nouns and verbs and focusing on nouns, and then verbs, I'm teaching English – and that's how we teach English, because English is based on those structures. But Cree is actually based on vastly different structures and how you learn the language. Or how I've been told that you best learn the language is by learning how to build words, not build sentences like we do. And so, by treating words as if they're just nouns that we can interplay in a structure of an English sentence, you're still teaching English.

Speaker 1: So, you're using your English strategies?

Speaker 2: Yeah. Not just the strategies, but the actual structural linguistic structures of English. You're still just superimposing some pre-words on top. And another good example might be – I really like to use this example – I had a really amazing professor, Dr. Hodge, who I was mentored with motor speech disorders through her. She's amazing and one thing that she taught me is that we are agents of neuroplasticity. So, this is amazing.

We're very powerful as speech-language pathologists. We know how to carve pathways in the brain and we know how to teach language, which can be really, really helpful. But that also means we have to know what power we're wielding and how we're doing it. So for example, it's very common, I think in early learning, preschool years and kindergarten to be targeting things like pronouns.

And so, if I take pronouns like “he” and “she”, how do we traditionally teach those? We usually have pictures or objects. We might have teddy bears and things – I don't know – dolls. But basically, we take these images and they always have a connotation of male versus female. So, what we're teaching is how to judge gender, which we know now in this day and age of LGBTQ+; if we want to honor identities, really trying to focus on what is female versus what is male, which is just a byproduct, really what we're intending. We're paving pathways in the brain to really alert people to the differences between male and female, or really highlight that that's a male and that's a female, a

“he” and a “she” and a lot of other languages – Cree is a good example – where they don't actually have a gender identification like that. They don't teach that.

And in fact – decolonization – my understanding is that there was no issue with anybody who may have been gender-diverse. So, anybody who was gender diverse might have been known as Two-Spirit, and they were welcomed and they were seen as a gift. And so, something so simple as just teaching pronouns can actually really interfere with traditional ideals on the culture that you're dealing with, the culture that I'm interested in. I know that it does actually – it is counter to a lot of their beliefs and values.

Speaker 1: <affirmative>

Speaker 2: Teaching “he” and “she” in these ways and focusing on those is also changing how you see the world. So, I think that's a really good example of how it actually impacts when we are teaching language, because I think it's easy sometimes. I know why I wasn't thinking a lot about it. Previously, I wasn't thinking about how I taught language or what language I was teaching; what impacts that had on the brain shaping the brain and the world outlook.

Speaker 1: Janine, can – just before you go on from there – can we just go back to talking about the different way that Cree is learned, not by nouns and verbs. Could you talk a little bit more about what is the other thing?

Speaker 2: I can a little, I can't a lot though, because I'm not a Cree speaker. I'm not an expert in this, I just know enough to know that I need to be really, really careful. It doesn't mean that I don't try, it just means that whatever that I do, I'm always doing it in collaboration with community and I think that there [are] times when the people that I'm collaborating with aren't as able to understand linguistically the risks as well as I can.

I do have a linguistics background, but I don't think you need that to sort of understand this. But in Cree, the words are – they're built. So Amiskwaciwâskahikan for example, is “fever, house, lodge” put together.

Speaker 2: There [are] other examples – I don't have them handy – but there's better examples where there [are] pieces of the word that represent relationship. There [are] differences between these endings such as “Owen” and “Alwen” – I'm not getting them right. But there's significant differences and “they” might mean us together, or me separately. And there's a lot of relationship inherently built into the words. And words are built really – and they end up being quite long – because they have so much meaning built into them.

And that's another thing, there was some work done by Edward T. Hall, who was an anthropologist many years ago now in the '70s. And he talks about low context versus high context in languages and how English is a very high-context language, I believe – maybe it's reversed, I'd have to look it up – meaning that there's a lot of context built into the language or we build it in the language. We use a lot of words to lay the context, whereas there [are] other languages – and he highlights that a lot of indigenous languages are low context – so they don't build in all of that context.

So, I've really noticed that actually – and a lot of my original speakers that I talked to – I'll really notice that they'll not maybe use as many “locative” or like – they'll say “that” or “this” instead of the specific words for something that they're speaking about. They do it a lot and I think that's because inherent in your language, they didn't speak that way. There [are] a lot of different kind of meanings [that] are built right into the word itself and it's not so much building sentences as it is building words first.

And so understanding that and that within the word that you're building, there's an inherent relationship to yourself and the word, and that indigenous ethic a lot of things are not – I want to be careful here – a lot of principles are not necessarily universally indigenous, but there is this sort of relational ethic that does seem to come up rather universally where there's an emphasis on relationship to the cosmos to animate and inanimate beings all around. And the relationship is inherent in the word. So that is influencing your relationship with the world. And when you look at English and how we look at it much differently, we separate everything out as objective. We have nouns, and then we have verbs that link the nouns and everything is a little bit distanced from us ourselves rather than this inherently relational aspect of language which influences our outlook and it has influenced how we have perceived our relationship as human beings on the land and in existence in this world, for sure

Speaker 1 Janine, that's fascinating and really helps to gain some clarity or some understanding of these differences. You know, you really – thank you very much for painting that picture. So, you are noticing these things; you're learning about these things. Where do you find a role for yourself? How does it begin? What does it become?

Speaker 2: Yeah, I know. So, I started to see all these things and I really started to see these little
landlines left and right. And like at first it was, well – what kind of vocabulary or how do
I move forward? Like, how do I know what to do? And it's not just vocabulary, it's how
we teach too. I've learned that there's this – at least in Cree – there is a very powerful
ethic of noninterference. You're not meant to interfere with anyone else. And in fact,
[00:18:30] something like special education didn't exist, um, in their culture because they didn't
perceive, they didn't judge other people. You just were who you were, and they would
support you in whatever way they needed to support mm-hmm. <affirmative>. But
there was a role for everyone. This is how it's been explained to me. And that, and, um,
special education just wouldn't have been something, it wouldn't have evaluated you
that way.

[00:19:00]

Speaker 2: So then, yes, that brought me back to, “well, how do I fit?” And I honestly, I still – I'm
always cycling back to that, “how do I fit? How do I fit? How do I fit?” And because
of that, I think the most important thing that I started to do was realize I really didn't

know. I really didn't know anything and I couldn't presume to know. Like from how I teach to what I teach, anything – I really had to kind of take a step back and watch and look and learn and listen.

Part of that is what led me to go back to school, but I started having conversations with just anybody and everybody, and really trying to abandon the notion of [expertise], which is very difficult to do because I think my profession as with almost all medical linked professions, even though we're in schools, we're linked to medicine and we had a long history of having to validate ourselves and show our credibility and what we have to offer. And I think it's frustrating, but I think it still exists that we're always still trying to legitimize ourselves as a profession, depending [on] – I know that we're often not given enough time to do the job that we could do very well because [of] its funding attached to our positions. And so, I am mindful of that. I think that we've had to really fight to be legitimized as a profession; as a rule, historically.

I actually did write a paper about that a while ago; did some research on that and it's interesting to look at. So, we are founded on this sort of – this profession of having to try to gain a foothold by validating ourselves and showing that we are experts. And so, it becomes very against our grain to step into a community now and not just show them many ways that we think that we could likely be helpful.

And of course, we are helpers by nature. We want to be helpful and offer the best that we can. Unfortunately, what all the research shows that – and there's not much – there's not much research in this area at all, but all the research does show that our traditional practices, the very bread and butter of what we are is not appropriate in these contexts and it is really tricky to figure out what is and what isn't. So, moving forward, what I realized was that I had to really adopt a sense of like, humility in: if I could like really try to put that aside and really question – you know – “am I sure that this is right and have I – who have I talked to? And so, I started to really position myself as an ally and put the power back into the hands of the people I was working with.

Speaker 2: So, I would offer up support but I was really careful because I know that it can seem really enticing. I could offer a parent training program, for example, and they might – yeah. We've never had a parent training program. This is great. But there's all these potholes with that too. You know – things that you could step into. For example, there's a lot of history of indigenous parents being judged negatively. And so as I'm personally a white woman of privilege, when I walk into that space, I have a lot of power and I have to be really careful how I wield it. And there's a lot of sensitivity, so that needs to be considered. So, you want to be really careful with that and any of these steps that you take.

So, I might be intending to help and offer to do all of these things, but by doing them, I'm positioning myself as [an] expert, which then can interfere with the relational connections that I can make. So, if I really, really, really want to engage and have people feel comfortable actually telling me what they think or what they know. I have to really go slow and build a relationally ethical space that my colleagues feel comfortable entering into with me, and that they aren't afraid to say what they think. And I think that it's really easy to think that we're being friendly and open, but there's a lot of trust

that needs to be built, and it takes time a lot of time. So, some of the things that I started to realize I needed to do to gain the trust and also to gain the knowledge about how things might work there in this place that was very different from my world; was that I needed to give back.

And so, I started to try to find ways to give back and to be available to attend ceremonies if the situation arose. I had situations where I drove across the province – not just once [but] many times – drove across the province while I was supposed to be on holiday with my family to go attend a particular event with a community, just to build that relationship. Another example maybe is that I think it's really common in the speech world to going to a school and have a teacher say, “can you check out this child?” and then we check them out, determine whether or not they might need support, and then start providing intervention or maybe talk to the parents. But it's not always a given that we are the ones talking to the parents or that we reach out to them first before we even start.

And that was a practice that I definitely started to do absolutely in this setting – was meet the parents first, talk to them – at least have a conversation and find out if they even had concerns at all regardless of who was who was requesting service. So, building relationships like that and then by doing that, and also then consulting with my classroom colleagues and really listening to what they had to say too allowed me to start to build more relationships. But one thing that I did right off the hop was: I really wanted to understand where they stood in terms of their bicultural interests in their education. Like, how bicultural do they want to be? Because being bicultural isn't: yes, we are and [they] were not; it's not black and white. There can be a continuum.

We want to increase what we had – or no – we just are following the curriculum that is mandated by the province or whatever that it is. Like, I always have seen my role as an S-LP to map myself onto the classroom and build myself into it, rather than bring myself from outside with external things necessarily that don't fit. And so, it was really important for me to understand how bicultural I wanted to be and also how bilingual. So, I really wanted to understand these things but I needed to ask the question to them that also can be a delicate question to ask because of the harms that have been done with language being taken away. It can be a very tricky thing. So, I had to wait and really build some relationship before I felt comfortable asking that question.

So, when I first entered this community, I didn't start right off the haw with assessments. I waited, I talked to people and when I did start getting referrals, I talk to families. And then I resisted doing formal assessment because, of course, we know that the formal assessment tools aren't adequate; that we need to have a much different approach and a hybrid approach, perhaps, of using sometimes some sub tests and putting it together with other ways of assessing, like dynamic assessment. And so, observation and consultation and different settings, but I really just sort of took a step back so I could watch and see. And then when they finally wanted goals, they came to me and asked. And that's when I said, well, I need to understand what your vision is for the children's learning so that I can map my goals on top of them.

And for example, in the program I'd worked in previously, we smudged, for example,

and they would teach the kids about smudging, and they would teach the kids about all what it meant; that when you smudged your eyes, you smudge your eyes to see the beauty in the world, and you smudge your ears to be a good listener, and you smudge your mouth to speak kind words, and you smudge your back for protection and your legs to walk a good path and your arms to do good work. And you – there's particular protocols that you follow, like the – you go rounding the circle following the sun, and you never blow out a match. It's too powerful. So, you always shake it. And who takes the prayers to Creator? So, there's all of these little things that they were teaching the kids. So instead of me having random goals for the children, I could have, for example, goals around were they able to answer these questions or ask these questions or participate.

And I could map some of my language goals onto some of this cultural work so that I wasn't introducing a whole new idea or some work project that they'd have to do separately at a table and make time for, but something that was supporting and built into the programming already. So, when I went to this new space, I wanted to learn about what that would be like there. Because that's what I had learned to adapt my programming toward previously. But when I asked those questions, it led them to say, "well, let me get you our mandate and our sort of our curriculum." And when they started looking at it, they realized that it wasn't what they had wanted. It was built – it had been developed a long, long time ago and it wasn't what they saw that they wanted for their future; for their children. So, this led to meetings with elders and chief and council, which I became part of. And it led to this: a whole initiative around language and vitalization.

Speaker 1: Janine, before we get – because I feel like we're – that's a great topic and I want to move on, but so before we leave the – I know you don't want me to use this word – but the clinical viewpoint, then let's come to that. So, when you were – what I think I'm hearing is that when you had spent that time and got to know people and spoke to families, there were children around whom there was concern, and that you did provide some support along the lines of fitting the goals as you did it. And so, there was a piece there to that kind of work.

Speaker 2: There was. So, I started to try to really figure out how I can help and who and what. So, we know that there is a great deal of misdiagnosis or overdiagnosis because of the poor tools that we have. And I've learned about the precarious nature of diagnosing a child who might have residual ancestral language. So, some of the dialectical differences are actually related to their original languages and by rehabilitating those, we're smoothing those over and actually continuing to assimilate. So, we don't really want to do that. We don't want to pick up these kids that are sort of middle ground maybe, and then fix those little bits to make them more perfect. The English, what we need to do is if they're dialectically different, honor that they're dialectically different. And that is as equally valid as the way that you and I speak in English, that is just as equally valid as a dialect of English.

So, we don't want to mess with that, but we do have kids that we indisputably need to support. And then if I view things through a lens of prevention, enrichment, and treatment, then what I can do is be working with kids in ways that do help those kids

that might be iffy, but I'm not necessarily fixing them to be a particular way. So, what I would find was that certainly with kids that run my caseload that may be presented with something like autism spectrum disorder. You know, there was sort of some standard things that I might be able to try to help with. Although it was tricky because again, you're considering that traditionally, they would have an ethic of non-interference. So where does that – the child with ASD who doesn't want to participate.

So, we did find ways around that though just following the child around and – you know – trying to engage with the child with bubbles and – you know – enticing communication, helping with feeding and just getting comfortable coming to school. Those same things that we might work on outside of this context. I feel like those were a lot more similar kids without speech maybe that were very low communicators, like only a word or two, or maybe none. Those – again – you would use some picture supports and start trying to get or visual support signs and just try to get some language going. I would follow definitely the path of Dr. Hodge and – you know – investigating into – or treating it maybe, if I can – like a motor speech difficulty and building based on a motor speech hierarchy.

Yeah, and then trying to maybe mirror that with some indigenous practices. So, like for example, the slabs charts are really great for getting some simple sounds and building syllables. So, marrying kind of those ideas to – and then on a global level, rather than teaching things like pronouns specifically, or even prepositions and breaking things down in that way, I really took a more holistic approach and worked more in a storying way. So, I did a lot of story work, a lot of reading stories telling stories with visuals and props and telling them repeatedly. And then I would work maybe alongside elders, so I wouldn't appropriate indigenous type stories, but there's different types of stories you can tell. And so, watching and learning from how the elder might tell a story and then differentiating that from how I might tell a story, and then working, just really focusing on oral language.

Speaker 2: So, retelling events, I know when I worked with really significantly language- or expressive communication-impaired children, the number one concern that would always come up from parents was – I just want to know when something's wrong. I want to know – you know – when something happened. So, by working on something like telling me something about a remote event, what happened, or retelling something that we did do together so that I know the context of it and I can help them along with it is also a retelling of an event that can help them, and over time they can grow in their capacity to tell about something that's not in the hearing now. Like, some in the past or the future, you can grow in that ability. So, I would do a lot of oral language work that way. So, we went through stories that were repetitive, went through actual events, retelling actual events that might happen or have happened that we shared.

Speaker 1: <affirmative> really nice. You told me there that you would – in your motor speech work, you might mirror indigenous practices with – what was the chart that you were referring to there?

Speaker 2: Oh, I was talking about syllabics. So, in pre, there are syllabic charts and they're consonant vowel combinations that break down really, really nicely different vowels and

consonants, which is very similar to motor speech work when you're breaking things down to the very basics; you start with very small blocks of constant bowel sequences. But by honoring kind of the slabs chart, I'm teaching things in a way that honors maybe some foundations of their language instead of necessarily English.

So, I guess something that I looked to do was find ways to privilege Cree over English, even though I'm a Western trained and an English-speaking S-LP. And there was – I just found little ways that I could try to do that and honor that

Speaker 1: Those just on my – are those syllabic charts are meaning-based, or those are non-meaningful syllables?

Speaker 2: They're not meaningful. Those syllabic charts, they're not meaningful yet until you start to combine them into – I see a couple of sequences, but they, as they stand, they'd be like, constant vow. They bow, like they go like that. And so, you could break them down. Yeah.

Speaker 1: Very nice. So, then you were also talking to folks about what was happening in the school and looking at the curriculum and that's when I go back to our language revitalization.

Speaker 2: So that's when things kind of exploded. What happened was, because I asked those questions, they realized that they weren't actually on the path that they wanted to be on, and so they decided to start changing that. So, they started changing their curriculum and developing programming that would honor more Cree based in terms of themes; so, thematic language and just everything. And so, more focused on the land and what was happening around them; just changing.

So, a good example might be like in a typical kindergarten that I've been in, they might have a theme every month and depending on what – you know – the month is maybe they would be working on community helpers one month, or – you know – when in March they might be thinking about leprechauns in St. Patrick's Day. And you know, Valentine's in February and there's these topical things that come up that we teach around. And so, they started realizing that – you know – their whole curriculum was founded on Western kind of holidays; Western ideals.

Not that they don't have community helpers, but, um, we started changing it to following the Cree moons. So, there's 13 Cree moons, so it doesn't fit exactly, but what we did was whatever moon that we were in, we would take that and start making things around that. So, for example, in the Fall, there was something had happened that was in the news was there was a moose that crashed into a school in Saskatchewan. Anyway, so I ended up making a story about this moose who – it sounds anthropomorphized and it's – you know – but I did my best. But I just made a story about a moose who was looking for love. And so, was calling out because they do. And then, so we practiced moose calling and was looking and ended up stumbling into this school anyway, wrote this story. The kids really liked it, and they got to practice moose calling, which I didn't really know how to do, but I looked it up on the internet and it was so funny.

And the teachers were joining in because some of them did know how to moose call.

And the kids went home practicing moose calls and going home and asking their parents to show them how to do a call. And we just created everything around that theme of the Frost and the Redding season and just all of those themes so that everything was just a little bit different and centered on the land and what was relevant to the kids and what was relevant in terms of being creed. And then the language has just been slowly been something that we've been trying to build upon because as you know because of residential schools and the impacts of the language being oppressed, there are less and less speakers. So, it's not just so easiest to say, we're going to revitalize the language. You have to have a bit of a plan.

So, we started having these meetings every month with the kindergarten and then head start in the daycare. Just trying to think how we could reimagine, um, the curriculum around themes and language that would honor the community, and as we did this, we'd come together one time and one of my mentors at school actually gave me some information about a grant through Heritage Canada. So, I passed it on to them. I ended up helping them apply for the grant because, as a student – I guess, you know, writing a grant application – I, you know – I have some preparation for that. So, I was able to help them with that, and they ended up getting the grant, so it was more than a quarter million dollars toward a language revitalization program. And the first steps of it being that they would make a long-term strategic plan around how they could start to bring their language back and turn to it in meaningful ways in the community.

So, they helped them apply for that and got that. And then now, this year what has happened is they've actually asked me to help with the coordinating the project as well as doing the research for it. So, we're immersed in that together too. So, it's been this really interesting kind of journey, a very entangled journey of a mixture of – I recognize that not everybody would be able to have the ability to help in all of these ways necessarily. Like I know that I was really – it's been a gift to have the teachings that I've had at the university and have the support of mentors there to guide me. I wouldn't have been able to help the community in the ways that I have been. But I do think a lot of possibility exists for speech pathology practitioners to be in community and to really be taking on roles of ally ship.

But I do think they have to be very, very careful roles because we have a lot of power. And if we don't know ways in which we might be accidentally still imposing Western views of language and Western languages, then we can be contributing to harm rather than helping. But I do think there is a role if we're careful and we go slow. There's a role that can be had and definitely a lot of opportunity to build relationships and to build an ethical space in which we can learn more about how to practice speech pathology in a really relationally ethical way.

Speaker 1: Right.

Speaker 2: I think that I've learned a lot about how indigenous ethics can really help our practice of speech pathology.

Speaker 1: Janine, thank you so much. Thank you for sharing all of that and I really think – you

know – you've really helped to bring some clarity to those things that we've often heard, but maybe – you know, don't – haven't had a – you know – an understanding of – and I think you've really helped that today with this conversation. We just have a couple of more minutes Janine will be wrapping up. But tell us a little bit about your PhD. What are you – what questions are you addressing there?

Speaker 2: My questions actually are around human experience. Like I'm very interested in relational ethics and – as I brought up a few times – and so my PhD work – I'm using the methodology of phenomenology of practice, which is kind of the wonder. Um, it's wondering, um, about human experience specifically. And it sort of looks to lift up the ethics specifically of things that can come up and are taken for granted in our practices. So, it's a very good methodology for medicine, for teaching, for speech pathology – because it takes the everyday kind of practices that we do and it tries to sort of lift them up and see what they're like in practice. And so specifically I'm looking at the S-LP practices of assessment and diagnosis and how they are lived out in an indigenous context. So, I'm looking for the experiences of children and family members who have had assessment or diagnosis and what that experience was like for them.

Speaker 1: <affirmative>. Wow, such important work.

Speaker 2: Yeah. It's really – it's been an amazing journey, I have to say. I feel really, really fortunate to have been on, on this journey. It wasn't one I expected to take, but I'm very glad to be here.

Speaker 1: Thanks, Janine. Thank you so much for your conversation today. I really enjoyed learning about the work that you've been doing.

Speaker 2: Yeah. Thank you so much, Lisa.

Speaker 1: Thank you for listening to the SAC Shining Lights, S-LP Schools podcast. You can find all podcasts, transcripts, and links to the episode resources on the SAC website. That's at sac-oac.ca. If you'd like to be a guest on the podcast or you'd like to suggest a guest, please email the host lisaarchibald@archuw.ca. That's l c uw.ca. You can listen to our podcast on all of the major podcast servers. If you liked this episode, be sure to give it a thumbs up on your platform and share it through your social media and other channels.