



Am Blas Againn fhìn

Community Gaelic Immersion Classes in Nova Scotia

An evaluation of activities in
2006–2007

Report prepared by
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Executive Summary

Inspired by indigenous language renewal in New Zealand and Hawaii, Finlay MacLeod, Director of *Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich* (CNSA), Scotland, has developed Total Immersion Plus (T.I.P.), a language learning methodology based on the principles of Dr. James Asher's Total Physical Response (TPR). It targets adult learners with a goal to bring them to fluency as quickly as possible. MacLeod came to Cape Breton in 2004 to do a two-week training session. Enthusiasm for the T.I.P. methodology was evidenced by how quickly a course was organized after MacLeod's first training session (January 2005 in Christmas Island.)

The introduction of the Gaelic Activities Program of the Nova Scotia government enabled community groups to apply for funding for planning, training sessions, and Gaelic language classes in the province. Since MacLeod's first visit in 2004, Gaelic immersion classes have been held in 14 communities. More than 200 people have participated in the T.I.P.-inspired learning process. A new province-wide organization, FIOS, with a mandate to inform, plan, instruct, and provide services for community-based immersion programming in Nova Scotia, was formed in the spring of 2007.

In co-operation with FIOS, the Office of Gaelic Affairs conducted an evaluation of immersion classes that had received Gaelic Activities Program funding in 2006–2007. This evaluation included focus groups in 12 communities, a survey of 74 participants, and interviews with 12 instructors.

About two thirds of the Gaelic learners who completed the survey were women. As well, the majority of respondents (42 per cent) were between the ages of 51 and 65. The age distribution results reflect the aging population of rural Nova Scotia communities, where most of the classes are held. Of the seven people in the survey between the ages of 21 and 35, six were from the more populated areas of Halifax, Antigonish, and Sydney. Most of the focus group participants and instructors expressed concern that few young people were in the classes.

The top two answers students gave for learning Gaelic were “because it is part of our heritage” and “my parents/grandparents spoke Gaelic and I want to carry on the tradition.”

Focus groups participants said they became particularly engaged when the class tapped into individual or collective memories of Gaelic in their family or community. The localized approach is particularly important to attract and retain native speakers. Both students and instructors said that native speakers greatly enhanced the learning experience and that more had to be done to enable older native speakers to attend the classes.

When asked their Gaelic-speaking goal, 57 per cent said fluency. When asked if they would take additional hours of immersion programming if offered in their community, 82 per cent said yes. Respondents, however, checked off many reasons for not being able to attend more classes, including family, work and volunteer commitments, financial constraints, and lack of additional classes in their community. When asked how they would like to take 100 hours of

Gaelic instruction, more than two thirds checked off answers suggesting evening classes over several weeks, and one third checked off weekend or extended immersion sessions.

In the focus groups, some students expressed frustration at not being able to speak Gaelic more quickly and felt that a few hours once or twice a week will not bring them to fluency.

Although most T.I.P. learners at present are not prepared to go to an immersion class for more than a few hours once or twice a week, they saw the need to support those who can make the commitment to do intensive immersion, particularly youth (their second and fourth priorities, respectively). This is connected to the students' first priority, "more instructors," and third priority "greater awareness leading to more classes in the province."

Instructors also said there was need for more intensive immersion, both for themselves and their students. Instructors who are not comfortably fluent felt it would improve their Gaelic and make them more comfortable and competent instructors.

Instructors also felt that longer intensive immersion sessions are more effective and efficient. Some instructors are driving hours from their homes to teach a night class.

Sixty-four per cent of respondents had taken Gaelic classes before the T.I.P.-inspired methodology. Some began learning Gaelic as early as the 1950s. Learning situations ranged from night classes to university and immersion courses.

Student survey results show that all but one respondent noticed some improvement in their Gaelic after exposure to the T.I.P.-influenced methodology. Forty-three per cent said they could understand and speak a bit more; 29 per cent said they could understand and speak a lot more, carry on a basic conversation, or were more fluent; 17 per cent said they could understand a lot more; 9 per cent said they could understand a bit more. In the focus groups, some people emphasized that they could *understand* more Gaelic but were still having difficulty in forming sentences and having a basic conversation. This is particularly frustrating for learners who want to learn quickly, who say this may have more to do with the frequency and length of the classes, rather than the methodology.

Instructor and student anecdotal information suggests that students are progressing; however, there isn't any measurable data on the students' progress. Clear learning outcomes have not been identified for the immersion classes, which makes evaluation difficult.

Students and instructors commented on the positive social aspects of community-based immersion learning. Immersion classes are enjoyable community-based, intergenerational learning opportunities that increase interest, awareness, and enjoyment of Gaelic language and culture.

Students and instructors have highlighted the "learner-friendly" aspects of the T.I.P. approach. Among many students there is visceral, heartfelt connection to the language. The classes have brought the language home and have inspired confidence in those who have taken a first step in overcoming their fear of learning and speaking Gaelic. A new learner

from Grand Mira spoke about how he feels now that “maybe this is do-able.” Survey respondents mention negative attitudes in some communities toward the Gaelic language, which may affect the confidence of students from areas once Gaelic speaking.

At present, the immersion classes are being organized by dedicated volunteers in each community. There is not a lot of communication between groups and no standard method of organizing, publicizing, or managing the classes. All of the 14 communities have received Gaelic Activities Funding to support their classes (on average this covers about 70 per cent of costs), and all charge registration fees to students (which on average pay about 30 per cent of their costs). Based on funding applications, no community group looks at other funding options to support their classes; however, partnerships have been formed to support costs, for example, free access to learning venues.

An instructor said that learners need somewhere to use the language outside of T.I.P. classes. Many ideas were mentioned in the focus groups and in the surveys on how Gaelic could be used more in the community. In some communities this is already happening: informal conversation groups have started, and some organizations are offering support programs to Gaelic learners, their families, and instructors.

Students and instructors both said there is a lack of learning support materials to use between classes. Except for recordings of the classes, students didn't have easy access to materials to support and accelerate their learning between sessions.

More than half of the instructors report there is a low level of awareness of immersion classes in the communities where they teach, and they feel that most people know of the classes through word of mouth.

An instructor said that some people feel threatened by the T.I.P. approach:

People think T.I.P. is it, as opposed to being part of the learning process. Some may feel that we are not aiming for a Gaelic community that can read and write. This is not the goal. The way the message was crafted, it looks like reading and writing was thrown out the window. We need to fix the message.

Another instructor said immersion methodologies are definitely superior, but also threatening:

Some students have a very firm pre-conceived idea that you can only learn a language if they see the written word. To some students any immersion situation is threatening. We should look at ways to dispel myths.

When asked to describe their level of Gaelic, three instructors said they were fluent, and the other respondents' answers varied from “comfortably fluent” to “low-level fluency.” Some instructors had difficulty describing their level of Gaelic; they seemed unsure.

When asked how often they use Gaelic, four instructors said they used Gaelic daily; however, the most consistent answer was when teaching. One instructor said that 10 years ago he had more contact with native speakers who constantly challenged and enriched his

own Gaelic, but many have since died. Overall, the answers of the instructors did not paint a picture of connected communities of fluent speakers. Most instructors welcomed the prospect of using Gaelic more frequently outside of teaching, if there were opportunities to bring fluent speakers together.

Both instructors and students expressed concern about the lack of standards for Gaelic fluency among instructors, which may result in some instructors teaching before they are ready.

All but one apprentice instructor had T.I.P. training with Finlay MacLeod (ranging from one week to two or three weeks). Some instructors taught Gaelic in school and university settings. All but 4 of the 12 instructors interviewed had experience teaching night classes or workshops. Most of the instructors taught through the medium of English in these classes and introduced reading and writing. Instructors generally preferred the T.I.P. methodology, although they say it is a more demanding form of teaching. While they all followed the Gaelic-only rule (to varying degrees) and used props, actions, themes, and activities to convey language, they seemed to have all developed their own systems of delivering T.I.P. The research reveals that instructors are dedicated, creative, resourceful, and adaptable. Every student surveyed said the instructor created a supportive learning environment.

Tutor training was the first priority for the instructors. When asked how their training needs could be met, some instructor suggestions were “regular meetings with other instructors,” “a course with Finlay MacLeod,” and “training with other second language teaching experts.” One instructor, who described the present situation as a “mish-mash of individual interpretations on what T.I.P. is,” was more specific:

We need an actual extensive training program by which we can certify instructors in the methodology as well as advanced language course for potential instructors. We also need secure funding for T.I.P. programs in the province.

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Gaelic in Nova Scotia

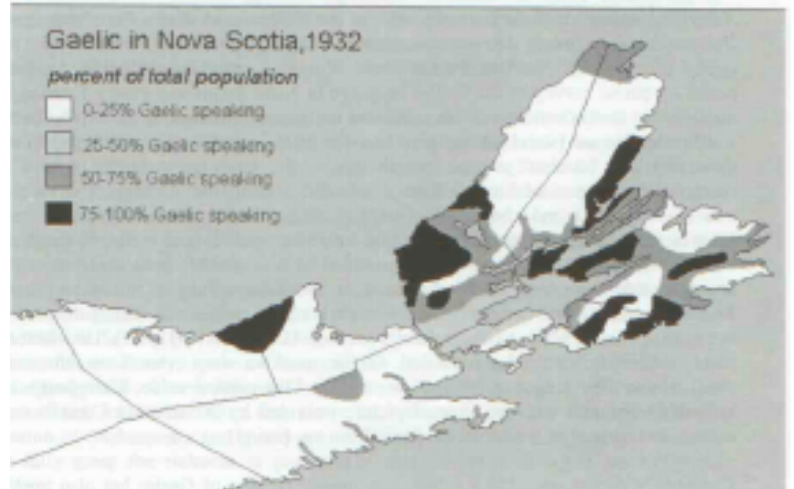
Between 1770 and 1850, thousands of Gaelic-speaking emigrants from the highlands and islands of Scotland settled in Nova Scotia. Families and neighbours left Scotland and settled together, creating new communities while maintaining bonds of kinship, a shared language, and one of Western Europe's richest oral cultures.

Census figures indicate that in 1901 there were 50,000 Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia; however, some researchers feel this is a conservative estimate¹.

Jonathan G. MacKinnon, editor of the Gaelic newspaper *Mac-Talla*, writes how thoroughly Gaelic speaking Cape Breton Island was at the beginning of the 20th century:

Areas of the island are as Gaelic in speech as anywhere in Gaelic Scotland ... The Gaels, almost without exception, adhere to two denominations: The Presbyterian Church and the Catholic Church. Of 39 Presbyterian churches and places of worship, Gaelic is preached in all but six. As this is written, there are 35 ministers in charge, 29 of whom deliver sermons in Gaelic. Out of the 37 Catholic parishes, only six are without Gaelic and of 41 priests there are only 10 who do not speak Gaelic. If we take parliamentary representation we find that four out of five representatives in federal politics are Gaelic speakers and five out of eight in the provincial parliament of Nova Scotia. And among our councillors, of which there are 78 in four counties—despite complaints there are not enough of them—58 are Gaels who speak Gaelic.²

Despite the Gaelic-speaking ability of clergy and politicians, the number of Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia declined to 25,000, according to the 1931 census. Gaelic was still spoken widely in Cape Breton and parts of Antigonish County. John Lorne Campbell, a Gaelic scholar and researcher from Scotland, who conducted a parish-by-parish census in 1932, found that Gaelic was still a majority language over most of Cape Breton. Results of Campbell's survey are shown at right. (From Kennedy, p. 83; solid black areas indicate 75–100 per cent Gaelic-speaking.)



¹ Michael Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia: An Economic, Cultural and Social Impact Study* (Halifax: Nova Scotia Museum, 2002), 63.

² C. W. Vernon, *Cape Breton Canada at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century* (1903; repr., Campbellville, ON: Global Heritage Press, 2006), 71–81 (English translation by Seumas Watson).

Gaelic was most widely used in rural areas where people continued to work the land and sea. It did not survive well the migration of Gaels to workplaces in cities and towns of the province and throughout North America. There is evidence, however, of the Gaels' music, songs, and kinship ties, and to some extent the language, being carried on in communities in Halifax, Windsor, Detroit, and Boston.

Linguistic scholar Elizabeth Mertz, who conducted interviews in Mabou and on the North Shore in the early 1980s, said it was in the early 1930s that people in these rural areas decided to not speak Gaelic with their children. "From the 1930s onward, the Gaelic population was not only shrinking in Nova Scotia, it was beginning to age."³

Reasons for this dramatic decline can be attributed to the low status of the language and its attendant values, lifestyle, and traditions in a rapidly changing economy and society.

The 2001 census indicates there were 415 Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia. Like other census figures, however, it does not capture the depth of influence Gaelic language and culture have had on Nova Scotia for two centuries. It doesn't account for the many native speakers who stopped speaking the language decades ago, or the many passively fluent speakers who may understand Gaelic but don't speak it and others who can speak a few words, having heard it as a child from a parent or grandparent.

In *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*, co-editor Leanne Hinton, who teaches in the Department of Linguistics at the University of California at Berkeley, describes languages that have fallen silent as "sleeping languages." Either there are no speakers left, or "those who know it no longer have any domain left in which to use it."⁴

Ever more rapidly, the processes of communications, globalization, displacement, and environmental destruction are resulting in abandonment (whether voluntary or involuntary) of their language by affected communities. The question is, can the languages ever be awakened, if those who see them as part of their heritage wish to do so?⁵

This report explores this question. It gives a background to an inspiring immersion methodology introduced to Nova Scotia in 2004 and reports on an evaluation of community immersion classes held in 2006 and 2007 in Nova Scotia.

³ Kennedy, *Gaelic Nova Scotia*, 83.

⁴ Leanne Hinton, "Sleeping Languages: Can They Be Awakened?" in *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*, ed. Leanne Hinton and Ken Hale (San Diego and New York: Academic Press, 2001), 413.

⁵ Hinton, "Sleeping Languages," 413.

Background to T.I.P. in Nova Scotia

Most of the meetings, lobbying, and energy expended for Gaelic education in Nova Scotia has been aimed at establishing Gaelic as subject in public schools. There were also many intermittent adult night classes and weekend or week-long immersions offered by universities, particularly St. Francis Xavier University, and St. Ann's Gaelic College. However, there seems to have been limited discussion on how best to teach an endangered minority language like Gaelic. This is not unusual, according to Hinton:

Perhaps the greatest cause of failure in the teaching of endangered languages is inadequate teacher training in language-teaching pedagogy owing not to a lack of diligence on anyone's part, but to a lack of opportunity and training resources.⁶

Hinton said pedagogy taught in universities is often aimed at teaching a foreign language, which still uses a "text and translation" method. She notes, however, that since the Second World War oral-based language teaching methods have slowly begun to enter the school system.

The reasons for learning an endangered or indigenous language are often different than the reasons for learning a foreign language. Often people are motivated to reclaim a language spoken by their ancestors, and this can be accompanied by a sense of urgency, as native speakers of this language may be elderly. The circumstances are also different. While it is possible to become immersed in French, English, or Italian, immersion experiences in some endangered languages have to be created, as is the case with Gaelic.

Inspired by the work of Leanne Hinton and others involved in indigenous language renewal, Finlay MacLeod, Director of Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich (CNSA) in Scotland (The Gaelic Preschool Council), came to Cape Breton in 2004 to raise awareness of Total Immersion Plus (T.I.P.), a language-learning methodology developed by MacLeod. T.I.P. is based on the principles of Dr. James Asher's Total Physical Response and successful language learning programs in Hawaii and New Zealand. It targets adult learners with a goal to bring them to fluency as quickly as possible. T.I.P. incorporates the following principles, as presented by MacLeod in 2004:

1. Instructors are fluent speakers between the ages of 19 and 99. Students participate fully in their own learning.
2. When possible, learning takes place in the home.
3. No translation. Everyone signs a "Gaelic-only declaration."
4. Communication is aided by body gestures, exaggerated expression, repetition, and props.

⁶ Hinton, "Sleeping Languages," 349.

5. Reading, writing, and grammar are not taught. There are no books, pens, or paper. Participants learn Gaelic as they learned their first language. Literacy comes after spoken fluency.
6. There is high emphasis on making the connection between the language and concrete activities, e.g., the cup you are holding and the Gaelic word for cup. Abstract concepts or situations are avoided.
7. There is a focus on creating a stress-free, fun learning environment, e.g., no question is asked by the tutor without their providing the answer.
8. Classes are limited to 15 per tutor. Students are expected to be conversational in Gaelic by the end of 200 hours.

During his first visit to Nova Scotia, MacLeod held a one-week tutor-training session in Grass Cove, Victoria County. Sixteen individuals, including students and instructors in training, participated. He also gave public talks in six communities: Glendale, Whycomagh, Mabou, Sydney, Lower Sackville, and Antigonish.

Enthusiasm for this methodology was evidenced by how quickly a course was organized after MacLeod's first training session. Christmas Island immediately secured Angus MacLeod as instructor and began a three-month weekly course in January 2005.

With the introduction of the Gaelic Activities Program in November 2004, community groups began to apply for funding to hold classes, planning, and further training sessions.

Community-based Gaelic Immersion Activity since 2005

- **April 18–May 3, 2005:** Finlay MacLeod returns to do a two-week training program in Grass Cove. More than 20 people participate through the week, including five instructors. Meetings with interested community groups are held in Glendale, Mabou, Sydney, and Halifax.
- **June–September 2005:** Sgoil Ghaidhlig a Bhràigh/Glendale Gaelic in the Home. Comunn Ghàidhlig 's Eachdraidh a Bhràigh sponsors a course with tutor Jeff MacDonald. Participants include beginning students and native speakers (12 full-time, 5 part-time students).
- **October 2005–March 2006:** Comunn Féis am Baile Beag, New Glasgow, sponsors six Saturday workshops. Attendance varies from 12 to 17 people, with a total of 25 different people attending.
- **November 1, 2005–March 2006:** Classes led by Angus MacLeod are held in Sydney, Christmas Island, and Baddeck throughout the week and in one community each Saturday, where participants from all three communities attend. Fifteen people in

- each group and four native speakers: 49 participants in total. (Classes were extended after January with support from St. Ann's Gaelic College.)
- **November 21–December 2, 2005:** Finlay MacLeod does a two-week tutor training course in Halifax. More than 30 people attend, including participants from the United States, Ontario, and New Brunswick.
 - **December 5–6, 2005:** A two-day strategic planning session, sponsored by Comhairle na Gàidhlig, is held in Port Hawkesbury. Thirty-one attend over two days.
 - **November 2005–present:** Comhairle na Gàidhlig begins the Cainnt mo Mhàthar project to develop a systematic way of collecting everyday Gaelic words and idioms. Material collected is to be used in Gaelic learning courses in Nova Scotia, including T.I.P. Research relies heavily on participation of paid, elderly Gaelic speakers.
 - **January 2, 2006:** Feis Mhàbu holds a public information session to communicate results of a feasibility study into a T.I.P. program in Mabou (100 people interviewed). It is attended by 37 people. Twenty-four sign up to be part of the first T.I.P. class in Mabou, beginning at tutor Ronald MacKenzie's home. Ten people attend the first course (100 hours).
 - **February 2006–present:** Sgoil Ghàidhlig an Ard Bhaile offers twice-monthly Saturday workshops. Workshops are attended by 3 to 20-plus people, with a usual group of 8 to 10 individuals. Instructors include Lewis MacKinnon, Kathleen Reddy, and Joe Murphy.
 - **Summer 2006:** A six-week immersion is held at St. Ann's Gaelic College. Instructors are Kathleen Reddy and Angus MacLeod.
 - **Summer 2006:** A two-week summer immersion sponsored by Sgoil Ghàidhlig an Ard Bhaile is held in Halifax. This one (and one held again in summer 2007) is attended by approximately 20 adults from Halifax, other areas of Nova Scotia, Ontario, and the United States. Instructors are Kathleen Reddy and Lewis MacKinnon.
 - **October 2006–present:** Sgoil Ghàidhlig an Ard Bhaile offers 20 three-hour, weekly evening T.I.P. classes beginning in October 2006. In April 2007, it begins another 10-week term, this time offering two levels on two different nights. In September 2007 it begins offering three nights per week (three hours) of Gaelic at three levels. Attendance is from 8 to 16 adults. In conjunction with the adult workshops in the fall of 2006 and winter and spring of 2007, it offers monthly children's workshops. Instructors are Kathleen Reddy and Lewis MacKinnon.
 - **September–November 2006:** Two levels are taught in Glendale by Jeff MacDonald: 15 beginning students (30 instruction hours) and 12 advanced students (24 hours) attend.

- **October 2006–May 2007:** Féis Mhàbu hosts two classes, one for beginners with Bernard Cameron and apprentice Sr. Clare Beaton (12 students) and one with Ronald MacKenzie and apprentice Jo-anne MacIntyre for those who are more advanced or who took the 100 hours the previous winter (9 students). Classes are held two nights a week for three hours.
- **October 2006–March 2007:** Classes are held two hours, one evening a week at homes in Antigonish/St. Andrews communities with Jeff MacDonald.
- **October 2006–November 2006:** Comunn Gàidhlig Cheap Breatuinn holds classes two days a week for eight weeks. On October 21, tutor Beth MacNeil is hired to do a beginner's class (20 hours). Nine people attend the advanced class regularly and 11 register for the beginner's class, with about half of these attending each class.
- **October 2006:** The North Shore Gaelic Singers Society holds a weekend immersion with instructors Amber Buchanan and Shannon MacDonald.
- **November 2006–March 2007:** Comunn Féis am Baile Beag holds 10 T.I.P. workshops on Saturdays (five hours) with instructor Joe Murphy, attended by 14 people.
- **January 2007–March 2007:** Classes are held in Glendale with Jeff MacDonald (52 hours and 15 full-time students.)
- **January–April 2007:** Feis an Eilein, Christmas Island, offers a beginner (six students) and youth class (five students) with Beth MacNeil (once a week) and one for advanced students with Hector MacNeil (10 students).
- **January 2007–present:** Weekly three-hour classes are held at the Celtic Music and Interpretive Centre, Judique, with Jeff MacDonald (12 students).
- **January 2007–present:** Weekly three-hour classes are held in Creignish with Jeff MacDonald. About 12 regular students attend.
- **January 2007–present:** Weekly three-hour classes are held in Port Hawkesbury with Jeff MacDonald.
- **February 2007–April 2007:** Comunn Gàidhlig Cheap Breatuinn offers a 10-week course with two instructors, Angus MacLeod and Beth MacNeil, and two full-time native speakers. Twelve people attend the beginner's course, and 10 attend the advanced class.
- **February 2007–April 2007:** Gàidhlig Agam Society in Baddeck holds a 10-week course with 10 students, one day a week for five hours. Tutor is Angus MacLeod.
- **Summer 2007:** A two-week summer immersion sponsored by Sgoil Ghàidhlig an Ard Bhaile is held in Halifax.

- **April–May 2007:** Joe Murphy facilitates five workshops in New Glasgow. Students from Antigonish, Prince Edward Island, and Antigonish were among those attending.
- **Summer 2007:** Week-long immersions are held in Glendale and Judique, organized by Jeff MacDonald. Approximately 10 students attend each session, privately organized by MacDonald.
- **October 2007:** T.I.P. classes begin again for 10 weeks in Baddeck. Instructors include Amber Buchanan, Shannon MacDonald, and Angus MacLeod.
- **October 2007–January 2008:** Comunn Gàidhlig Cheap Breatuinn sponsors a beginner, an intermediate, and an advanced Gaelic class with instructors Angus MacLeod, Beth MacNeil, and Amber Buchanan.

The information above suggests attendance of more than 400 at community immersion training, meeting, and planning sessions. More than 200 individuals across the province have participated in the T.I.P.–inspired process since MacLeod’s visit in 2004. Five new community groups have formed to offer Gaelic immersion classes in their community, and people who have never taken a Gaelic course before are signing up for a Gaelic class.

A new province-wide organization, FIOS, with a mandate to inform, plan, instruct, and provide services for Gàidhlig aig Baile community-based immersion programming in Nova Scotia, was formed in the spring of 2007. (Gàidhlig aig Baile [Gaelic in the Community] is a Nova Scotia term adopted by FIOS and the Office of Gaelic Affairs to describe a T.I.P.–inspired community immersion approach.) In co-operation with FIOS, the Office of Gaelic Affairs led an evaluation of T.I.P. classes that had received Gaelic Activities Program funding in 2006–2007. This evaluation included focus groups in 12 communities, a survey of participants, and interviews with 12 T.I.P. instructors.

Gaelic Learners and Their Communities

Research Process

A questionnaire, developed in June 2007 by the Office of Gaelic Affairs with input from Shamus MacDonald, president of FIOS, was distributed at focus groups held from June to September 2007 in Sydney, Christmas Island, Grand Mira, Mabou, Judique, Glendale, Cape North, Halifax, Creignish, New Glasgow, Antigonish/St. Andrews, and Baddeck.

Participants first filled in the questionnaire and then as a group discussed four subject areas:

- Describe your T.I.P. class (how it was conducted).
- What did you like best?
- What could be improved?
- Discussion on priorities

In addition to those present at the focus groups, organizers were asked to distribute the survey to other T.I.P. students. An additional 20 surveys were submitted by mail or e-mail.

Besides collecting quantifiable data, the survey and focus groups allowed participants to express their reasons for learning Gaelic, their Gaelic learning goals, the benefits of their T.I.P. classes, and their ideas on future projects or priorities.

The Learners

Most of the 74 Gaelic learners who filled in the survey were women (49); there were 25 men. Participants were asked to provide their age bracket, grouped in five categories. The age distribution is shown below.

Ages	Number
20 and under	4
21–35	7
35–50	16
51–65	31
65 and over	16

The age distribution survey results reflect the aging population of rural Nova Scotian communities, where most of the classes were held. Six of the seven people between the ages of 21 and 35, for example, were from the more largely populated areas of Halifax, Antigonish, and Sydney. Many of the focus group participants expressed concern that few young people were in the classes.

Middle-aged Gaelic learners, however, represent a living connection to Gaelic language and culture in Nova Scotia. Many heard Gaelic spoken in their homes and communities and enjoy Gaelic songs, music and dance. They seem to have a visceral, heart-felt connection to the language and culture. T.I.P.–based classes have brought the language home, inspiring confidence in those who have taken a first step in overcoming their fears of learning and speaking Gaelic. A Gaelic learner from Grand Mira commented on how he feels that “maybe this is do-able.” In some classes, the T.I.P. methodology builds on what the students already know. There were many stories of learners being thrilled to hear words and phrases they heard their grandparents or parents use.

Judique

Student A: What I love is when I recognize words that I heard in the past. Words my mother used that I forgot.

St. Andrews

Student A: I had no yen to do this even though my parents spoke it at home. I said I'd go to one class and observe. Jeff told us that night any Gaelic you had as a youngster would come back. Oh my goodness, I couldn't wait to go to the next class to ask him if this is a word. Every single one was pronounced correctly and it was a word! That's what got me. Oh I like this now. I am going to get more of those words.

Motivation

Survey participants were asked to choose three reasons that apply to them with regard to learning Gaelic. They were asked to rank them in order of importance, with (1) being the most important. They could also insert their own reason.

Reason for learning Gaelic	1	2	3	# of times in top 3	Rating
I always wanted to learn Gaelic, now I have the time.	14	8	14	36	3
My parents/grandparents spoke Gaelic and I want to carry on the tradition.	23	9	6	38	2
It's part of our heritage.	19	13	11	43	1
I like Gaelic songs/music.	3	8	12	23	4
I like the social aspect of the classes, we have fun.	0	6	6	12	6
I enjoy learning new languages.	1	1	0	2	9
My kids are learning Gaelic and I want to support them.	2	3	0	5	7
Gaelic is an important resource for community development.	2	5	7	14	5
It may help with career opportunities	0	2	1	3	8

The top two reasons for learning Gaelic show a strong heritage or family connection. The third most common response, “I always wanted to learn Gaelic, now I have the time,” may reflect the dominant age demographic of those presently taking Gaelic classes (over 50), possibly individuals who have grown children or are in retirement.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth rankings may reflect the communal aspect of Gaelic language and culture in Nova Scotia. Many respondents were motivated by Gaelic song and music, the language’s potential as a resource for community development, and the fact that they like the social aspect of the classes.

Lowest on the list of motivators were “It may help with career opportunities,” and “I enjoy learning new languages.”

Students supplied their own reasons for learning Gaelic. These include the following:

- Both my husband’s parents and my mother were native Gaelic speakers. We both did not learn Gaelic and would like to learn in order to speak it in the home to our children.
- I have always been interested in Gaelic. I have been working on it for several years.
- I have a 12 year old who wants to learn and there is nothing in this area for children/youth.
- I think it is an important part of our heritage and culture and that this tradition should be carried on.
- It has just always been important to me and T.I.P. was the best way I’d see to pull it together.
- Gaelic is one of the oldest languages and represents a culture often taking a second seat to Roman and Greek cultures, although analysis would suggest the Celts gave us many of our most precious institutions. No language should die. We can pray, play and entertain ourselves with Gaelic and be so much richer. It is a great gift for future generations.
- The retention of minority languages is necessary at the root level of ensuring the heritage and culture does not become eclipsed by the majority cultural groups.
- I believe Gaelic was one of Canada’s founding languages, especially Maritimes. It should be preserved and kept up as a living language. I believe we need to keep heritage languages alive like plants and animals. It, like Acadian and Micmac, is a founding language.
- Gaelic storytelling traditions
- Spiritual and social development
- Deep interest in history and culture ... My art reflects it. Someday (I) may be able to write plays etc in Gaelic. Currently (I) use Gaelic songs and bits of language in community based heritage theatre projects. Not from here but have an Irish background.
- I want to be able to cook in Gaelic in my own home, thinking in Gaelic.

- To connect with my ancestors in spirit
- It is the language of my people, and I sure would like to learn it, although it is more difficult at my age.
- I want to sing in it without an accent.
- Gaelic was the language of my ancestors and I would dearly love to see it survive and be able to converse in it.

Comments on the enjoyable social aspect of the classes were heard every community focus group.

St. Andrews/

Antigonish: I find that it really created a sense of community among the class. ... there is a general bond between people and we are all learning together. It is encouraging to see people in the community and have them come out with Gaelic that they learned.

Baddeck: For a group, we are finding that we really like to be together. It is a difficult subject, but it is common bond between us.

Halifax: We get on with the business at hand, but we have a lot of jokes. I think that is really precious to me.

Mabou: It was a lot of fun—a lot of laughter.

This was also a theme in response to Question 7 on the survey “Can you list any other benefits you gained from the Gaelic course?” Below is a list of answers (in their own words) given by survey respondents.

- Fun time
- I listen more now when I hear Gaelic being spoken.
- I am encouraged more—and have hopes of becoming a fluent speaker.
- I met other interested people who wanted to learn.
- The T.I.P. course has given me a big (just a start) in beginning to understand how to think in the language.
- I have a better understanding. I can recognize more words and phrases in conversations I hear. Have more confidence to try speaking. Felt I was always learning. I made new friends and acquaintances.
- I improved my pronunciation of words and learned idiomatic expressions. I gained more confidence in speaking.
- As a newcomer to Cape Breton, learning more about the people on the island and the Cape Breton culture.
- I gained all kinds of benefits: meeting many new students, learning the language, seeing the great differences of why people of all ages are interested in learning.
- T.I.P. has made me much more comfortable with both speaking and hearing Gaelic. I think this was in part because it was a relaxed atmosphere and let

you start speaking without being worried about saying something wrong. It provided a place to learn phrases and idiom both from the instructor and native speakers. We were able to learn about traditional ways of doing things through the course content.

- I find that repeating things over and over (makes) it much easier to remember it.
- I was able to speak with native speakers who otherwise I probably wouldn't have. I gained confidence to speak. I got to know other Gaelic learners. It has opened a lot of doors for me for other Gaelic activities and events.
- Connected with more Gaelic speakers in the community
- A stronger sense of community
- It is great to know that the course has generated renewed interest in learning Gaelic in our communities. There's a wonderful group of people who enjoy learning in a T.I.P. environment.
- The program encouraged one to try and speak more Gaelic.
- I met some great people. I learned some great recipes.
- Getting to know new people: a social outing.
- Speaking with older relatives: enjoying learning with community people.
- I am able to communicate on a wider range of subjects related to everyday life. Words come more naturally without much thought. I can now complete sentences better. I enjoyed the team atmosphere and fun involved in learning.
- We have become closer as a community. Whenever we meet one another outside of class we converse in Gaelic. It is bringing Gaelic words forth that you haven't heard in years.
- General appreciation of the richness of this language and the course is a blast: just wonderful fun.
- Enjoying the language, the teacher and classmates, including getting to know people.
- Enjoyable evening
- Enjoyable social event
- Increased vocabulary and comprehension. Ability to carry on a basic conversation—discovered a new network.
- I learned lots of useful phrases related to everyday activities.
- Provide confidence that I could learn functional Gaelic within a reasonable time. I met like-minded people. Beginning of a Gaelic stirring, I hope.
- T.I.P. gives a chance to learn and speak Gaelic.
- Less intimidated by Gaelic speakers, more confident. I have a sense that speaking is possible—is a more realistic a goal than before.
- A connection to the growing Gaelic community across the province.
- Great to be with like-minded people, learning about various aspects of the culture, getting the kids involved, opening new doors.

- An opportunity to have the time to really hear and start to recognize the sound of the Gaelic words, a method that encourages you to totally focus on the language and eventually feel at ease as you can understand more. Exposure to Gaelic history and people in the community. I heard a song that could have easily been lost. Stimulates you to create new experiences where Gaelic could be used.
- Enjoy the social aspects as well. I began to have more confidence singing. Positive attitude about the survival of the language and culture. I heard good stories, gained awareness of members of the group, their lives etc.
- Understanding of the deep feelings people who come from Gaelic speaking backgrounds have, how it is deeply important to them. Increased knowledge of culture and history.
- It was nice to socialize with people in the Gaelic language. I learned more about our culture and began to remember words I had heard as a child.
- Opportunity to practice speaking
- Really, really good fun. Great friends.
- A wonderful sharing of remembered heritage and tradition and a great sense of community and shared purpose.
- Love learning the new language. Love the open atmosphere. My son is taking it also so that's fun. Say hi and speak to other class members when you meet them.
- Getting acquainted with the students. Enjoying the local speakers.
- A lot of historical facts about places, names and traditions.
- Met some people with similar interests in the language.
- Confidence in using the language. Opportunity to be exposed to Nova Scotian Gaelic dialects, enjoyment and socialization.
- I met lots of new people with similar interests. Hosting T.I.P. class at my home frequently exposes my children to more Gaelic.
- Gaining information regarding our Gaelic ancestors. Meeting people with same Gaelic interest. Learning this language. Even I didn't have any interest until I attended T.I.P.
- Enjoyed learning Gaelic with like-minded people.
- Better appreciation for the beauty and flow of the language. Just concentrating on the basics, not reading, poetry etc. makes it easier to understand and to take part.
- I feel I am improving and am inspired to keep going.
- I was introduced to people from home that I never knew could speak Gaelic. The T.I.P. classes are very community oriented.
- The special aspect of gathering as a group all trying to accomplish the same result.
- The course really awakened an interest in me that I didn't realize was there to such an extent. Now I want more.

Many students are clearly motivated to learn Gaelic by personal, family, and community interests. The communal nature of the classes seems to keep them coming back and enjoying the classes. Every single survey respondent said that their tutor creates a supportive learning environment (Survey Question 15).

T.I.P.–inspired classes are enjoyable, community-based learning opportunities that increase interest, awareness, and enjoyment of Gaelic language and culture—but are the students actually learning to speak Gaelic?

Gaelic Ability

Eight survey respondents spoke Gaelic when they were young; 66 did not. A marginally greater number, 15, could understand Gaelic at a young age; 59 could not.

Forty-seven respondents had taken Gaelic classes before; 27 had not. Those who had taken classes before were asked where, when, and for how long? The answers ranged from a night classes to two years at a university.

Where they took a previous Gaelic course	# of times mentioned
Community-organized class	22
School	8
University	13
St. Ann's Gaelic College	10
St. Ann's Gaelic College online course	3
Sabhal Mor Ostaig, Scotland	1

It is evident that some students have been interested in learning Gaelic for a long time (some began learning in the 1950s) and have experience with different methods and learning contexts. In some of the focus groups, comparisons were made between the T.I.P.–inspired method and what students call the “traditional method” of learning to read, write, and speak at the same time, usually in a non-immersion context.

Glendale

Student A: I know from my experience, when reading and writing and translation were part of the whole program I learned nothing. I learned as little as I did with French that I took throughout school and came out with nothing. It seemed to inhibit learning.

Student B: I found they focused on grammar (at university). They taught you word by word. All through school I took French Immersion, so that's how I learned another language, being immersed in the language and having it around me all the time. (The professor) was speaking English while teaching you in Gaelic. That's what I like

about the T.I.P., you can't speak English and you just focus on Gaelic.

Other students however found the non-literate aspect challenging, and found themselves wanting translations and grammatical explanations.

Halifax

Student A: At first ... I found it really against my nature to have no books, no words, and no homework. I really wanted something written down so I could take it home and work on it. But I went with it and had faith and saw that no other students had these things either. It didn't take long for things to really stick with me because I was repeating words in context. It was just so different then the way I learned core French at school, which I've forgotten, because it is just memorization.

Student B: I know the methodology of T.I.P., at least at the beginner/intermediate level which we have been learning here, is an aural/verbal teaching method. It is also dominantly contextual. It is done in context to activities ... I really enjoyed the occasions when the teacher will break into English and explain the grammar behind why something is being done. I thoroughly enjoy the grammar side. It is the way I work when I work, and I am not just talking about languages. I am an analytical person. The rules are there for a reason and when you know the rules you can fly with what you are going to do. To me, that's important.

Participants were asked to self-report on their Gaelic ability. Most said they either had none at all or could speak basic phrases before starting the T.I.P. classes.

How would you describe your Gaelic ability <i>before</i> taking the TIP Gaelic course?	# of times mentioned
None at all	21
I could understand and speak basic phrases.	35
I could understand quite a bit, but couldn't speak it that well.	8
I could both understand and speak it a little bit	8
I could carry on a basic conversation	1
I was fairly fluent	1

When asked to describe their Gaelic after their T.I.P. course all but one respondent noted some improvement. Seven people said they could understand a bit more. The greatest number, 32, said they could *understand* and *speak* a bit more. Some respondents checked off more than one answer, emphasizing that while they speak more, they *understand* a lot more. Thirty-four responded in various ways to say that they could understand a lot more, carry on a basic conversation, or are much more fluent.

How would you describe your Gaelic ability <i>after</i> taking the TIP Gaelic course?	# of times mentioned
No change	1
I can understand a bit more	7
I can understand and speak a bit more	32
I can understand a lot more	9
I can understand and speak a bit more and I can understand a lot more (both checked)	4
I can understand and speak a lot more	8
I can carry on a basic conversation	9
I can understand a lot more and carry on a basic conversation (both checked)	2
I am much more fluent	2
	74

When students discussed what they had learned during the focus groups, they generally reported satisfaction with their progress. Students new to learning the language seemed to notice the greatest progress and expressed hope, enjoyment, and even surprise. A student from Glendale class:

I really enjoy it and I find that I am getting it!—even though I think I may never get this.

A beginner from Christmas Island:

I had never taken any kind of Gaelic before. I really felt I had learned. . .I think it was the repetition. You weren't intimidated. I think I didn't go to a lot of classes (previously) because I thought I'd be put on the spot and be expected to learn a certain amount in a certain time.

The survey results, which show students saw a noticeable improvement in their comprehension, are supported by focus group participants who expand on this point. A student in the Sydney class describes using Gaelic with her father, a native speaker:

I can understand quite a bit when he speaks to me and I think the T.I.P. program really helped. It helps develop your ear.

A Gaelic learner from Mabou expressed her satisfaction with the course:

I had been taking Gaelic for 10 years and the T.I.P. class actually forced me to speak the language—to get the words and phrases out of my head.

A New Glasgow student said the constant repetition was what he needed to make the language stick.

I think the best thing about it is one feels one is learning the language. I am learning to pronounce words carefully, learning grammar, vocabulary. In other sessions where I didn't have a sense of learning, I'd learn and forget. I need repetition.

It was common to hear students talk about how they were noticing other students progressing. A native Gaelic speaker, who is fluent and attends the classes in Judique, commented on how it took him a while “to get on to his (the tutor’s) style of teaching.” Having taken previous Gaelic courses, he was a bit sceptical about a course included no reading or writing:

But the whole thing is working. I can see an incredible improvement. People are now speaking who didn’t say a word in the beginning.

A student in the New Glasgow focus group pointed to the progress of someone who didn’t have a word of Gaelic before coming to their class:

She is an example of someone who didn’t have the reading and writing old-fashioned classes. So, she’s a true learner like a baby learning to speak before you read and write. She’s moved a lot quicker than those of us who have had those reading and writing classes and are stuck in limbo.

While generally many learners feel comfortable that they are learning, a few students feel they need more direction and help to bring their Gaelic along more quickly, as shown in this exchange among students in the St. Andrews/Antigonish focus group:

Student A: You learn a lot of Gaelic, but you don’t know how to make a conversation. No one ever teaches you to have a conversation. It’s Ciamar a tha thu?—and then you shut down, even though you have the language inside you to keep going. You almost have to have mock conversations.

Student B: It would really help a lot if there were a couple of people with a higher level (of Gaelic in the class) ... more people that can actually carry on a conversation would help immensely.

Student A adds that during their tea break, if students aren’t conversing with the tutor, they are usually not speaking or struggling to use their Gaelic with other learners. “If I am struggling and another person is struggling are we going to get past the weather?”

The Goal and the Path

Clearly students want to speak about more than the weather, as indicated in their answers to the following question:

What is your Gaelic speaking goal?	
Speak a little bit	3
To carry on a conversation	24
To become a fluent Gaelic speaker	27
To become a fluent in the Gaelic dialect of my family or community	15
No response	1
Other	4
I want to speak, read, and write Gaelic fluently	
I haven't decided yet	
To carry on a conversation and understand	
Just to keep experiencing the language. To read and write it.	

Some people added other goals, in addition to checking off the goals listed. These were

1. My idea has changed since the first T.I.P. sessions. I have an idea now that I could over time become a fluent speaker.
2. To converse with my parents and other relatives. Share what I have learned with my children.
3. I also wish to be part of a movement to increase the number of speakers in Nova Scotia.
4. To teach Gaelic to my children and other family members.
5. To be able to read and write Gaelic as well as speak.
6. Wherever it will take me.
7. To pronounce it perfectly in order to sing without an accent.
8. I would like to be able to sing lots of Gaelic songs without pronunciation being so frustrating and difficult.
9. I'd eventually like to read and write the language.

When asked if additional hours of immersion programming were offered in your community on a weekly basis would you attend, 61 respondents said yes, 8 people said no, 3 said maybe, and 2 people did not answer the question.

Respondents, however, also checked off many reasons for not attending more classes and provided their own reasons. The most commonly checked reason was “lack of additional courses in my community.”

What are some of the barriers to attending additional Gaelic courses?	# of times mentioned
My work schedule	21
My family demands	20
My other volunteer/community commitments	21
Financial	13
The lack of additional courses available in my community	26
Other	4
Winter travel	
Distance from home	
Illness	
I need more flexibility in my schedule	

When offered various scenarios for taking 100 hours of T.I.P. instruction, two thirds of respondents said they would prefer weekly courses to intensive weekend or week-long sessions.

To take 100 hours of Gaelic instruction, would you prefer . .	# of times mentioned
10 hours on weekends for 10 weeks	8
2 hours a night each week for 50 weeks	14
2 hours 2 nights a week for 16.5 weeks	31
40 hours a week for 2.5 weeks	14
No response	4
Other	3
2 hours twice a week, plus some activity days	
a combination that changes for winter months, i.e., weekends in winter	
a 3-week summer block in Sydney to follow up at Gaelic College (summer only)	

Learning Activity Outside of Class

Students were asked to check off anything they did outside of class to improve their Gaelic. Sixty-eight students did something and six people did not respond or did not do anything outside of class. Some people did more than one activity and some provided their own activity.

Activity	# of times mentioned
Listen to recordings	39
Listen to Gaelic online	22
Work by myself with Gaelic books, tapes and courses	42
Get together with Gaelic speakers for conversation	26
Talk on the phone with Gaelic speakers	6
No response or do nothing	6
Other	13

Other responses included the following:

- Listen to and learn Gaelic songs
- Listen to Gaelic songs, talk with Gaelic speakers
- A member of the Grand Mira Choir
- Practice myself, to myself
- Visit with native speakers. Go to most Gaelic events I'm able to. Trying to write Gaelic e-mail
- I hope to make the time to do some Gaelic online
- Practice with children and family.
- Listen to Gaelic music, perform Gaelic songs
- Listening to milling songs
- Sing milling and other songs with song group
- If there is a "Gaelic day" going on in a community or another community (on Saturday) I try to attend
- School courses
- I speak Gaelic at home with my dog and describe daily activity in Gaelic to keep the vocabulary I have accumulated

During his training sessions Finlay MacLeod told instructors to encourage their students to record the sessions and listen to them at home. Thirty-nine of the survey respondents, a little more than half, said they listen to recordings at home. In the focus groups, students said that getting a good sound recording can be difficult, especially if the tutor moves around a lot. They also said that it is challenging to find the time to listen to a two- or three-hour class during the week.

The most popular learning activity outside of class was to “work by myself with books, tapes and courses,” which may indicate that at least 42 students have some learning resources at home and are able to read and write Gaelic to some degree. Twenty-six people make the effort to get together with other Gaelic speakers for conversation. Classes in Christmas Island and Sydney, for example, have inspired students to gather on Wednesday mornings at the local convenience store/restaurant in Beaver Cove.

In New Glasgow Gaelic learners have *sriùbag aig* Tim’s, (tea at Tim Hortons). “We’ve done it about 10 times now,” said one of the participants, “it’s starting to stick.”

Some students attend other courses that are being held in the community, and some may attend more than one class per week. Twenty-two students listen to Gaelic online, a number that may increase as broadband expands into rural areas.

Most focus group participants said that students needed to do something outside of class to reinforce what was learned in class. One participant in the St. Andrews/Antigonish focus group emphasized the need for daily exposure. Picking up on that theme, another student said that recording the classes is crucial. “It is essential that people have a tape recorder and a microphone. Because two hours a week, we all know ... it’s a hobby.”

The Immersion Classes

Students were asked if they paid to attend the T.I.P. classes. Sixty-seven people said yes; 7 said no. The practice in some communities is not to charge native speakers or students, which may account for the number that did not pay anything. Students did not pay in Cape North.

Community	Amount
Grand Mira	\$2.50/hour
Sydney	\$2.50/hour
Mabou	\$2.00/hour
Creignish	\$1.60/hour
Pictou	\$2.00/hour
Halifax	\$3.30/hour
Judique	\$1.60/hour
Antigonish	\$2.50/hour
Glendale	\$2.00/hour
Christmas Island	\$2.50/hour

The hourly rate was either provided by the student, or if a lump sum was provided, the hourly rate was calculated based on the hours for each course.

Their Instructors

Students were asked about instructor preparedness and support.

Did your tutor always come to class on time and well prepared?	
Always	56
Mostly	14
Occasionally	3
No response	1
	74

Generally students were pleased with their instructors. There seems to be an appreciation for the personal work the instructors have done to learn Gaelic and the passion they have for the language. (Only two T.I.P. instructors are native speakers.) One student said their teacher has a “... very high standard. He’s not fooling,” but also makes the class enjoyable and offers much encouragement to the students.

They acknowledged that the T.I.P. methodology was physically demanding. In New Glasgow, they noted it was a good thing their teacher was also a marathon runner. T.I.P. also required the instructors to show their acting skills, which added to the fun and amusement of the classes. One student said his teacher has “no inhibitions. He does a lot of acting out. He can make a lot of faces. He’s a good actor.”

“He should get an Academy Award for acting,” said a student of a different teacher.

But their inherent teaching ability and love for the language is not enough. Some students stressed the need for tutor training and support. “Instructors need support, and they can’t be expected to be able to teach just because they have Gaelic,” said one student. In one group in particular there was discussion on the need for instructors to possess strong leadership and preparation skills.

In cases where students paid more, or made a commitment to pay up front, or if they have had a broader learning experience, they had higher expectations of their tutor. In these communities, more time in the focus group was spent on what needed to be improved.

Venues

Students were asked where their classes were held and were asked to rate this venue. Some classes were held in more than one venue. The following venues were used for the classes:

Location	Venue
Mabou	Homes
Judique	Judique Music Centre
Creignish	Creignish Glebe House basement
Glendale	Community Centre/home
Christmas Island	Christmas Island Firehall
St. Andrews/Antigonish	Various homes
Halifax	CNIB Building/homes/ school
New Glasgow	Sobeys Community Room
Cape North	Community Museum/home
Baddeck	Home
Sydney	Cape Breton Gaelic Society Building
Grand Mira	Community Centre

When asked to rate the venues, respondents generally seemed happy with them.

How would you rate this venue?	
Poor	1
Average	2
Good	14
Very good	22
Excellent	34
No response	1

During the focus group there was not a lot of discussion about venues, however people did seem to enjoy classes in homes if there was enough room. Homes provided a natural backdrop to everyday activities such as making meals, beds, laundry, etc. Community centres are accessible, yet often did not provide the props or background that a home provides.

Student Priorities

Survey participants were asked to prioritize initiatives to be done to advance community immersion in Nova Scotia. They were asked the question: **“Number the following goals for community Gaelic immersion in order of priority, with (1) being the highest.”**

Students also provided their own ideas.

Priority goals for community Gaelic immersion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Weighted scores of top 3 (x10x5x3)
Curriculum development	8	6	7	7	8	14	6		131
More tutor training	5	11	8	15	14	4	1		129
More instructors	15	10	12	9	7	4	1		236
Intensive immersion for motivated learners	11	17	9	7	8	8	1		222
Greater awareness of T.I.P. leading to more classes in the province	14	10	8	11	6	7	4		214
Bring T.I.P. instruction to youth (those under 20)	10	13	12	11	6	10	1		201
Bring fluent speakers from Scotland to teach	1	0	6	2	1	3	28	2	28
Your own idea	1	2	3	2	1		3	11	29

Students suggested the following ideas:

- Get the few remaining Gaelic speakers out to T.I.P. classes. (This) will raise desire of student to learn to be able to converse as they do. It will also show naysayers that speakers do exist.
- Gaelic nights for the community, e.g., bingo, tarbish.
- Locate local fluent speakers to teach class.
- Methodology development: finding ways of keeping spontaneity and local phrasing and dialect while still learning basic vocabulary and grammar.
- Providing immersion-based opportunities for learners interested in incorporating traditional knowledge into their lives.
- Seriously, I can't number these. They are all hugely important and I hope to see all of them met. For my own personal benefit, I would have really appreciated an intensive immersion, at least two to three months long, 30 or so hours a week. Everything thing here ties into the next.
- Instructors need to love what they are doing and have the ability to teach the language. Knowing the language alone does not make you a great tutor.
- Expand T.I.P. classes to every community and encourage parents to motivate children.
- We have fluent Gaelic speakers on Cape Breton Island, however we have to have some incentive for them to teach. There are also a number of Gaelic

speaking citizens in nursing homes where we could go as a class and have them speak to us.

- Hopefully the day will come when generations are linked, hopefully soon. Gaelic prayer hour in churches, Gaelic happy hour at the Celtic Music Centre, Gaelic performances in schools widely publicized and supported by the rest of us. Linking Gaelic past with real Celtic traditions. It strengthens the interest in the language, especially in the young.
- Introduce immersion into schools, P–12.
- I'd very much like to see more awareness in Metro (Halifax area) and more classes for children in some type of after school program or at school.
- Providing opportunities for elderly speakers to be gathered together to help T.I.P. students.
- Development of events using Gaelic only—this could relate to classes.
- Fluent speakers from our area have attended some of our classes (mostly elderly people) and this has enhanced it as I want to learn our own dialect.
- Radio or Internet show and co-ordinate with a written lesson in the *Oran* [local newspaper].
- CDs or materials to take home.
- More support materials.
- Preschool and primary should be learning as they learn so quickly.
- Bring together local native speakers or semi-speakers together with Gaelic learner.
- Have Gaelic speakers live in our homes for periods of time will maximize Gaelic exposure. This way the entire family gets immersed in Gaelic. If we are really going to learn Gaelic as quickly as possible we need to go to this level. Anything else is a hobby.
- More time: one hour a day works. Form an online, one-hour-per-night session for a year. One hour to two hours a week isn't enough. There has got to be a way communicating live one hour per night, even if it is via the internet.
- Speak Gaelic to babies at preschool. For adult learners, need to speak and hear it everyday.
- Outreach to groups/schools to tutor.
- I think more emphasis should be placed on targeting an even younger age group, i.e. playgroups, elementary school ages.
- Younger people
- Youth scholarships

The two priorities most frequently in the top three are “more instructors,” and “intensive immersion for motivated learners,” which both scored 37. The ratings from highest to lowest priority were

1. More instructors
2. Intensive immersion for motivated learners
3. Greater awareness of T.I.P. leading to more classes in the province
4. Bring T.I.P. instruction to youth (those under 20)
5. More tutor training
6. Curriculum development
7. Bring fluent speakers from Scotland to teach
8. Your own idea

Priorities one and two are related. In order to get more instructors, focus group participants felt that we need to create more fluent speakers, hence the need for intensive immersion programs.

However, most of the T.I.P. learners at present are not prepared to enter intensive immersion classes. In some cases, going from two hours to three hours a night for a Gaelic class, or more than one night a week, would be a commitment they are not prepared to make.

Regardless of their situation, many learners took a bigger perspective and said that support should be given to those who can make the commitment to do intensive immersion, particularly youth. The results for question 18 seem to reflect this.

There was some discussion in focus groups on how to best create this intensive immersion situation. One focus group participant said that bringing fluent speakers from Scotland should be top priority. He felt communities needed Gaelic speakers *now* and that bringing instructors in once a week would not create Gaelic speakers.

The option to bring speakers from Scotland was not seriously considered as a priority, let alone *the* priority. In some cases, participants did not see this as a practical, long-term solution. In Christmas Island, a learner said it may cost money that would be better spent on curriculum development and training. “There are people here who would like to make a career of this (teaching Gaelic).”

In Judique, a learner said she probably wouldn’t attend if someone from Scotland was teaching Gaelic. She liked the way her teacher brought their community into his instruction and drew on his knowledge of local families and stories. For some, local content and dialect were important. Generally, however, people felt that there is much we can learn from Scottish Gaelic speakers and to have them in the community is certainly a benefit.

When it came to discussing priorities, some focus group participants expressed frustration that the community immersion learning movement in Nova Scotia is disconnected and lacks planning and structure.

Curriculum development was a priority in Christmas Island, Glendale, and Mabou—communities that have had T.I.P. classes for the longest period of time. As a Mabou participant observed, they had gone through their honeymoon period (first 100 hours) and could see the need for more structure to guide the tutor and students.

Overall, however, curriculum development came low on the list of priorities. This may have to do with the work “curriculum,” which most people associate with school. When there was discussion on what this meant—a teaching plan with desired outcomes—some focus group participants said they would agree that this is a priority and may have changed their answer in the survey.

In Grand Mira, they cautioned that putting too much structure on Gaelic classes may deter some people:

I don't like the idea that you have to learn a certain amount at a certain time. It discourages people. They start to worry, what if I am not learning at the right level?

Students in almost every community asked for more support materials, also mentioned under Question 15. Suggestions included CDs or DVDs that students could take home, which reinforced language they had learned in a class, or prepared them for a new topic in class.

In Mabou, they suggested that it may be helpful if one good recording of the class was made using a clip-on microphone and a good recorder. Then copies of the class could be made for every student.

In Creignish, a student said any Gaelic material would be helpful, whether it be DVDs of Gaelic speakers in conversation or Gaelic books.

In Creignish and Baddeck, focus group participants said it would be great to have more communication between groups. They were curious about how the other T.I.P. classes were doing. They also said the opportunity to have visiting instructors and to attend another T.I.P. class would be helpful.

Many groups said that there needs to be more thought on how to get the elderly Gaelic speakers to the class or create opportunities outside of class to meet with elderly Gaelic speakers.

In Mabou, students discussed the development of an enrichment program that would take learning from T.I.P. classes to the community. “Have a mentor in the community that could spend one-on-one time with the students, helping to reinforce what they learned.”

There was also a comment on the need for standards for instructors in Christmas Island:

I don't know how strict you want to get, but you want to make sure that the person teaching has the pronunciation of the words. You don't want to make the qualification that they are teachers as such, but you don't want to put them in a position of teaching because you don't have enough (fluent) teachers. There's a tendency for that to happen here. You got to be careful.

In Judique and Halifax, there was discussion on the need for theory behind T.I.P. to be explained to beginning students. In Halifax, a student suggested an introductory DVD could be developed and given to new T.I.P. students as part of their course fee. On it, the teacher could explain the T.I.P. methodology, show some of the hand gestures, and perhaps give some basic phrases. Since the focus group, the Halifax group has started the process to do this work on a new website they are developing, which will promote their classes and explain the T.I.P. methodology.

Lastly, there was a need identified to support course organizers, perhaps with a kit on "How to organize a T.I.P. class."

The Instructors

Background

In December 2007, a questionnaire for T.I.P. instructors was created by the Office of Gaelic Affairs, with input from FIOS board members. Interviews were held with Joe Murphy, Kathleen Reddy, Bernard Cameron, Ronald MacKenzie, Sr. Clare Beaton, Joanne MacIntyre, Jeff MacDonald, Shannon MacDonald, Hector MacNeil, Angus MacLeod, Amber Buchanan, and Beth MacNeil. Interviews were held in person and on the phone. Three surveys were submitted by e-mail.

Gaelic Ability

Instructors provided 10 different descriptions of their level of Gaelic. Three said fluent; the others said conversational, semi-functional, functional fluency, not entirely fluent, comfortably fluent, low-level fluency, advanced learner, socially fluent, conversationally fluent/medium-level fluency.

Two of the instructors used Gaelic as children. One grew up speaking both Gaelic with the children in her community and English with her Gaelic-speaking parents, but did not report herself as fluent since she didn't speak Gaelic for close to 40 years. Another tutor didn't speak or hear much English until he went to school in South Uist. The rest of the instructors are all adult learners, most of whom heard Gaelic spoken in their childhood homes and/or communities.

Some instructors had difficulty describing their level of Gaelic; they seemed unsure.

Gaelic Usage

When asked about usage, four instructors said daily. They indicated that they socialized in the language—using it visiting, at milling frolics, when they see someone who speaks Gaelic in the community, talking on the phone. Three instructors mentioned using Gaelic with their grown and young children. The most consistent answer, however, was when teaching. One tutor said that he now uses Gaelic in totally different situations than 10 years ago, when he had more contact with native speakers who constantly challenged and enriched his own Gaelic (many who have since died). Today he said he mainly uses Gaelic in teaching situations. Another tutor said he uses it daily with the dog and cat. The answers reflected a bit of isolation and not a great deal of consistent contact with fluent speakers.

Every tutor said they would like to use more Gaelic outside their teaching experience. Answers included yes (8), definitely (2), Sure (1), and I'd like to speak nothing but Gaelic (1).

When asked what they needed to make this happen, the most common answer was more opportunities to bring fluent speakers together. Some responses:

1. More planned get-togethers with speakers.
2. There has to be more opportunity.
3. We need opportunities for speakers to get together. I'd like an immersion just for (fluent or advanced) speakers.
4. I would like a class to go to where I could learn more.
5. Bring really fluent speakers together.
6. More time at home, for starters, and a higher level of fluency, both for home and work.
7. By expanding the pool of speakers and building community. Developing economic incentives to keep speakers here.
8. More social events and greater personal effort to get out and visit people I know speak Gaelic.
9. More time. A Gaelic radio service.
10. I'd like to use it more with people I can learn from. More get-togethers with instructors.
11. A bigger social network or group of Gaelic speakers who phone one another. Meet as often as you can. Make a concerted effort.

Instructor Training and Teaching Experience

All but one instructor had T.I.P. training with Finlay MacLeod (ranging from one week to two/three weeks of training).

Three instructors are teachers; one took Gaelic teaching methods at Jordanhill, Glasgow (1 year). One tutor taught for a summer at the National Second Language Program at St. Thomas University, Fredericton. One had training in adult education; he also taught French.

University Teaching Experience

Two instructors teach Gaelic at the university level, where they use grammar texts, follow a syllabus, and administer tests and exams, just like any other academic course. One said that he has tried T.I.P. methods on his university students, but they didn't respond well. He said there seemed to be an expectation among students that they wouldn't have to immediately speak Gaelic.

He said he likes the grammatical method because it allows for independent work. Students have homework to do, and it gives them skills to use a grammar book and intensify their learning, if they choose to. It is a bit dry, though, he said.

T.I.P., he said, gets people speaking immediately, using everyday language. It is also non-threatening and appeals to those who want a less-academic approach. One drawback, he said, is that students become dependent on the tutor to feed them language, and at present it doesn't allow for outside work, other than listening to recordings of the class.

Another tutor said the effectiveness of the methodology depends on the outcomes desired:

If your (learning) objective is to impart a rounded, introductory knowledge of speaking, reading, and writing Gaelic, it (university course) works well. If, on the other hand, your objective is to bring students to functional fluency in the spoken language, without regard for reading or writing in the initial stages, then T.I.P. works much better.

School Teaching Experience

An instructor who taught high school Gaelic immersion and Gaelic as a subject said students don't progress as well in non-immersion settings.

You want a steep learning curve. It's very difficult for students to use the language naturally (in non-immersion situations). Immersion methodologies are definitely superior and far more effective than non-immersion methods.

She has also taught night classes using a non-immersion methodology, but finds the T.I.P. methodology more effective, although some adult learners may be hesitant:

Some students have a very firm pre-conceived idea that you can only learn a language if they see the written word. To some students, any immersion situation is threatening. We should look at ways to dispel myths. Once people have some experience in an immersion situation, they usually relax and realize it isn't as scary as they thought.

Another teacher said he follows a partial curriculum for teaching Gaelic at the elementary level. His work mainly involves some speaking and some reading and writing. He also uses repetition and visual clues on the wall.

Kids are naturally interested in schools where the language is supported and shown to be relevant to who they are. If Gaelic is kept in the schools, parents and children see it is important.

He said, however, that what kids actually learn is limited due to the fact he has them for only two 35-minute periods in a six-day cycle. He said it is not enough consistent time to bring them to speaking.

When asked how T.I.P. compares with other methodologies he has used in school and at night classes, he said, “There’s no comparison. T.I.P. has helped my teaching at school. It makes it more dramatic. Kids love it.”

An instructor who taught Gaelic for six weeks to grade 10 students, as part of a teaching practicum for her B.Ed., said: “I didn’t get the sense that students were learning or retaining a lot,” although she found that it was an easier teaching situation than immersion.

In T.I.P. you are always on the spot, and unless you are highly fluent and/or a native speaker, it is easier to make mistakes without knowing it every time. Natural speech is hard to achieve when one is always correcting themselves and is not overly familiar with any one specific dialect.

Community Gaelic Classes

Nine of the instructors had taught Gaelic in other situations (university, school, night classes, private tutoring); three had not. They used what they called the “old way” or “academic way,” which also involves grammatical explanations and teaching reading and writing.

Three tutors describe their experience:

- You are doing the same thing over and over. Students don’t learn. People get frustrated and quit. It doesn’t work. T.I.P. does. People are coming to fluency and continuing with Gaelic. At the end of the year they are as enthusiastic as ever. You can get them to speaking to the point where they want to learn to read and write. T.I.P. is a good starting point—good for new students.
- The old way is simpler for the teacher. There’s not as much preparation, but there’s no results. The students weren’t learning. There wasn’t any continuity—you’d get a group in the fall and a new group in the spring. It wasn’t bringing speech out. It wasn’t natural.
- T.I.P. is a better way ... No comparison unless your goal is to read and write.

Would T.I.P. Have Worked for Them?

Instructors were asked if they would have the level of Gaelic they have today if they had learned using the T.I.P. methodology. Two instructors said they did learn using T.I.P. Two instructors didn't respond.

The other instructors gave the following answers:

- I would have exceeded the level I am now.
- I think my conversational ability would certainly be what it is, but I would certainly need to have opportunities to use the language.
- I don't know. (2 instructors)
- I would have learned Gaelic more quickly
- I would be far beyond where I am now (as a Gaelic speaker). I couldn't help but be better. Learning Gaelic in this manner instills confidence.

Only one tutor felt he wouldn't have the level of Gaelic he has today with T.I.P. only. He said he did a lot of work on his own with grammar books to help him understand the structure of the language. He feels this was important for him.

The Immersion Classes

The number of hours and classes taught varies. Some instructors have been teaching steadily since 2005. Instructors based in Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) have taught several immersion sessions both at night and as weekend and week-long immersions. Based on answers given by all instructors, the estimated total number of hours of T.I.P. that have been taught in Nova Scotia since 2005 is 1,600 hours.

Most instructors began teaching with another tutor but eventually started teaching mainly on their own. On average, they teach nine students per class. Classes range from two hours in the evening to five to seven hours during the day. Most classes, on average, are three hours long.

The Optimal Class Length and Number of Students

When asked the optimal period of time for teaching T.I.P., instructors generally agreed that anywhere from one hour and 15 minutes to two hours was long enough before getting a break. Instructors felt that a two-hour class was not enough time, as students and the tutor(s) were just getting warmed up when the class ended. An instructor said that in his experience students learning in concentrated periods advanced more quickly. "Two instructors for six hours is good. By that time people have surrendered their minds to Gaelic," he said.

Some instructors volunteered an optimal number of students in the class, a question that was not asked on the survey. Some felt there should be a maximum of 10, others 15, and a

minimum of 5 to 8. Too many students can slow things down, but so can too few. If there are a small number of beginners with limited speaking ability, it is difficult to keep conversation going. However, if they can converse to some degree, it gives the tutor opportunity to focus on conversational skills.

Venues

Classes were held in a variety of venues. Sometimes instructors took the class outside—shopping, to a restaurant, graveyard, church, fishing, on a hike.

All the instructors who have taught in homes say this venue is ideal if the rooms are big enough. It's a natural comfortable setting, and all the props are there.

A Halifax-based tutor said that sometimes beginning students in the city aren't comfortable going to homes of people they don't know, so the classroom they use at the Nova Scotia Community College is a great community resource (albeit a bit sterile for T.I.P.—they can't boil a kettle in the classroom, for example).

The Gaelic College was offered as a good venue for a resident study body. Community centres and halls were described as neutral, easy-to-get-to locations. They are more difficult for the tutors, since they have to bring in props. An instructor said halls can be “echoey,” making it difficult for students to hear:

Large rooms affect the dynamic, especially if the class size is small; people seem to expect to be taught to, instead of interact and participate. The whole thing takes on more of a traditional classroom feel rather than a ceilidh or visit.

How Do You Conduct a T.I.P. Class?

Each tutor seems to have developed their own teaching system, which employs many of MacLeod's techniques. Ten instructors said their main rule is NO ENGLISH during the lesson (although their interviews suggest they all follow this rule). Some instructors may begin and end the lesson with English.

An instructor describes a technique he uses to deal with both languages:

To orient them to the Gaelic-only space and lessons, there has to be a re-entry to the space. So, (after the English introduction) they all go outside (the room or the building) and when they come back in it is Gaelic.

Gaelic-only can be a challenge, especially with older native speakers, said an instructor. He finds they kindly want to help the struggling student by translating. They also may enjoy the social aspect—whether it be in English or Gaelic. He said in the beginning he found it difficult to constantly remind them to speak Gaelic.

Repetition is emphasized by six instructors, so is creating a non-threatening environment. Most instructors seem to do this by employing humour or never asking a question without providing the answer. Instead of translating, they point to picture or props or act out phrases to communicate meaning.

Eight of the instructors described using props that they bring into the class or items found on site. They describe getting the student to hold the prop and pass it around as the instructor guides them in language associated with the item.

Seven of the instructors mentioned reviewing what was done in the previous lesson. One tutor said it is important to “link in” at the beginning—tell them what they are going to learn—and at the end, to tell them what they learned and are going to learn next. Then he has an English debrief the end of the class to find out from the students what they found difficult and valuable.

Instructors generally work on themes or activities focused on everyday living, e.g., making a meal, shopping, doing a wash. Breaking for tea is an important part of the lesson. Some instructors use games, songs, and local stories in their class. They also felt that taping the sessions should be mandatory for T.I.P. students: “If they don’t tape the sessions, what’s the point?” asked an instructor.

On average instructors spend one to two hours preparing for every three-hour class. This preparation involves finding props, vocabulary, and idiom to go with a theme and laying out a lesson plan. If not prepared, the instructors find themselves in an awkward situation of trying to “wing it.”

At the time of the survey, 8 of the 12 instructors were teaching T.I.P. classes. Except for an instructor who teaches only one class, those who were teaching were all teaching more than one class. One tutor was traveling to five different communities

Five instructors are teaching other types of Gaelic classes. These include private lessons; online lessons with the Atlantic Gaelic Academy; university courses at Saint Mary’s University, Halifax, and Cape Breton University, Sydney; and in schools.

T.I.P. teaching is not the main source of year-round employment for any of the teachers. One tutor mentions that it sometimes is her main source of employment; another said at present it provides about half her income. At the time of the interview, it was the main source of income for one instructor. Tutor fees range from \$15 to \$30 an hour, with preparation time and travel paid by some T.I.P. hosting organizations.

Awareness and Support in the Community

Six of the instructors said that there was not a high level of awareness of the T.I.P. classes in the communities where they taught. Two said yes. Other answers included: “moderate,”

“among some families,” “I don’t know, I don’t live there,” and “it varies from community to community.” The instructors felt most advertising was by word of mouth.

The Pros and Cons of T.I.P. Tutoring

When asked what they liked about T.I.P. tutoring, 8 of the 12 instructors said they like that the students are learning, and in some cases learning quickly. Three people mentioned that T.I.P. builds confidence in the students, and two others mentioned that they like the fact that it is bringing forth natural Gaelic in their students. Three instructors said that the classes are fun and that there is a positive spirit and camaraderie among the students. Instructors also made special mention of the native speakers, who are great assets in the classes and who seem to enjoy using the language again.

The instructors all said the classes have proven to be very effective at building community. “People are coming together who would never have come together,” said an instructor, who adds that his elderly mother enjoyed seeing the students come each week to her home, where the classes were held. “They are not only learning a language, but learning about the community and the culture.

Another tutor said, “Apart from learning the language, we are learning what it means to be a Gael: helping the elderly, sharing food and valuing each other for who we are.”

Intergenerational contact and confidence building, both among students and instructors, were cited as a strong non-language benefit of the classes.

Despite the effectiveness of T.I.P. and the social benefits of the classes, instructors find it a lot of work, and four of them used the words “exhausting,” “tiring,” “draining,” and “my brain is fried at the end of it.”

An instructor said she finds it difficult to correct students who have been learning for a while, especially if they may not be open to correction and added:

I don’t always feel confident in my abilities and I HATE the thought of teaching them only to find out you are wrong and have it on tape and ingrained in their brain by the next class!

Another tutor cited her own “lack of confidence and fluency” as a challenge.

An instructor said it is not the methodology but the teaching circumstances that he finds difficult. Most of the T.I.P. classes are scattered throughout rural areas, which can mean hours of driving for instructors. Night classes are a less-than-ideal way to teach and learn the language compared to more intensive periods; however, it is difficult to get most students to commit to longer periods of time.

An instructor said that “depression, burnout, coping with hopelessness and isolation” were some of the challenges she faced.

Since the classes do not have any form of student evaluation, an instructor said it is difficult to monitor the progress of the students. They also said there is nothing for students to move on to after 100 or 200 hours of instruction. There is a feeling of lack of stability with community-based immersion due to the funding structure and the volunteer organization of the classes.

“There are small groups putting the classes on: community volunteers whose skills may be limited ... There is little institutional support,” said an instructor.

Often it is the learners themselves who are organizing the courses, or the instructors, which leaves less time to focus on learning or teaching the language.

Instructors said it was challenging to book time for teaching and training when they work at other jobs, although they all felt that tutor training was crucial.

Tutor Training and Support

When asked how their tutor training needs could be met, most instructors said it would be good to “bring instructors together” where they could learn from and support each other and share ideas.

- Tutor A: Regular meetings with other instructors to share the little curriculum plans we have filled out. To brainstorm, workshop ideas and especially to progress our own grasp of the Gaelic so that we keep challenging our interests and creativity.
- Tutor B: A course from Finlay MacLeod.
- Tutor C: Training from other second language teaching experts would be helpful.
- Tutor D: Mentoring with fluent or native speakers.
- Tutor E: We need an actual extensive training program, by which we can certify instructors in the methodology as well as advanced language courses for potential instructors. We also need secure funding for T.I.P. programs in the province.

Six instructors mentioned “language training” when asked, “What support do you need?” All the instructors who are learning Gaelic want to improve. One tutor said:

I would like to have some periods of time where my job is to learn local dialect from some of the last of the best speakers, with both of us being paid for time spent together.

Help with administration, funding, preparation were also given as support needed to make their teaching more effective.

Areas of Concern

Instructors were asked, “What are your areas of greatest concerns for the future of T.I.P. in Nova Scotia?” This question builds on themes already mentioned in questions concerning tutor support and training.

Three instructors mentioned “tutor burnout.” Four instructors mentioned money: both to sustain themselves as instructors and to enable anyone to attend, whether they can afford the classes or not. Two instructors mentioned the lack of young people and parents in the class as a concern.

Some are concerned about the loose structure of T.I.P. One instructor described the present situation as: “A mish-mash of individual interpretations of what T.I.P. is.”

Another tutor shares concerns about the current situation:

It’s great the numbers that are involved, and have been involved, but the shine is fading. If T.I.P. classes remain very loose and casual, are we taking students along a path to fluency as quickly and directly as possible?

One tutor was concerned about Gaelic standards:

The lack of instructors and demand for instructors will result in instructors that are not ready to teach, who, at worse, are passing on incorrect Gaelic. How do we not discourage instructors who are coming along in their Gaelic, but are not there yet to teach?

He suggests a panel of recognized fluent speakers be put together to advise and provide guidance, support, and accreditation for instructors:

Make it a positive thing, not a negative thing. There should be an analysis of the tutor’s ability with constructive criticism on ways the instructors can improve their Gaelic. Don’t do analysis without providing help to the tutor.

He feels that we should strive for high standard for learners and that this is done through highly trained, fluent, and motivated instructors who speak idiomatic, natural Gaelic.

“There’s nothing wrong with putting the brakes to the T.I.P. classes until you can ensure the level of tutoring is high enough,” he said. “That would be a positive thing.”

An instructor expressed a concern that some people feel threatened by T.I.P.

People think T.I.P. is it, as opposed to it being part of a process. Some may feel that we are not aiming for a Gaelic community that can read or write. This is not the goal. The way the message was crafted it looks like reading and writing was thrown out the window. We need to fix the message.

Overall, it seems instructors feel that a learning system without formal guidelines, standards, a funding plan, effective training, and learning resources results in a system that works for a while but will lead to tutor burnout and ill-equipped and uncomfortable instructors who are themselves learning.

The Opportunities/Community Assets

When asked about opportunities for community immersion classes, instructors said the classes can produce more Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia, particularly if they are intensive immersion experiences. More students learning Gaelic this way could lead to more meaningful employment for instructors.

T.I.P. also offers opportunities for people to connect with their heritage language, traditional skills, and culture.

Tutor A: [The classes] are a good place to build intergenerational connections: share knowledge passed down through the generations: stories, songs, recipes, skills, tradition.

Tutor B: This is an opportunity for people to reclaim their own language. Our generation was cheated out of our own culture ... now we have to reclaim what should have been ours naturally.

When asked what assets our communities possess that are not being used to enhance or increase the effectiveness of T.I.P. classes, the overwhelming response was “native speakers.” While some of the T.I.P. classes include fluent, semi-fluent, or passively fluent native Gaelic speakers, the instructors felt there were many more to tap into.

“We have some capable Gaelic teachers in the community who are not being used,” said an instructor. “Native speakers, who are not involved, but possess local dialect so important. We have young people in the community, a nice physical setting, square dancing and culture in community.”

On the question of how to mobilize these assets, one tutor suggested that volunteer work be done for elderly people in exchange for them attending the classes. She suggested that someone be paid to work with the native speakers, setting up drives and a payment or barter system.

“Bring the classes to them,” suggested an instructor, who said they could go to nursing homes or where the elderly people are.

“We’ve got to get advanced learners, especially the young, into natural, everyday, conversational situations with native speakers,” said an instructor. “Get parents together and find out what you can establish in your communities to teach Gaelic to kids (and parents) through T.I.P.—maybe Saturday morning programs, ‘Ceilidhing for Comhradh’ groups. Get a good parent and youth group going in each community or at least in every county.”

Schools and other buildings, including St. Ann's Gaelic College, were mentioned as assets. Increasing the number of participants, especially in urban areas, was mentioned by an instructor: "We simply need to get better at publicity," she said.

An instructor said there needs to be better sharing of individual work instructors have done:

I think every community that receives GAP (Gaelic Activities Program) funding should submit, along with their final reports, three completed curriculum topics on a Cape Breton theme. If the communities were provided a "kit" for starting a T.I.P. course that included a list of needed curriculum subjects, it could help us plan classes and research interesting topics to build cultural content.

An instructor said more publicity at the school site level is important to make use of the school resource in our communities. Setting up community activities for Gaelic speakers to participate in existing community activities was mentioned.

What role T.I.P. classes will or can play in increasing Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia?

- A large role. I don't think speakers will be produced without it. I don't think it's the only thing, but it's key.
- I think over time it is going to have a huge role. It's a slower process than we like. If we keep at it we will see results. Before T.I.P. things were pretty dry for Gaelic. It brings a ray of hope.
- We are riding a wave of awareness about this new methodology called T.I.P. If we maintain the momentum and students are able to sustain their motivation/rewards for attending, then this "trend" could build a critical mass. It is a very important opportunity, and if we don't manage it well, I am not sure we will EVER have another chance.
- I think T.I.P. plays a large role in getting people started or enthusiastic. There was no interest before T.I.P.
- The only answer is immersion
- I think T.I.P. may be the most effective way we are aware of bringing many people to fluency in a short period of time or rather bring them to a level of speaking that would encourage them to continue their learning and spread it
- I think it can be an important and perhaps necessary FIRST STEP in re-establishing the Gaelic language in the province, bringing with it the richness of dialectal differences. There needs to be somewhere to take it!
- Virtually 100 per cent of the newly fluent speakers are from T.I.P. classes
- I think that T.I.P. classes can play a huge role in increasing the number of Gaelic speakers. T.I.P. has shown itself to be effective in dramatically accelerating language acquisition. If we can bring students to fluency quickly, we will experience a higher retention rate.
- Vital, especially for natural speech and local dialects to continue. I see no reason why the T.I.P. methodology not be adopted into the teaching of

Gaelic language to children. It's especially critical in the earlier stages of language acquisition.

- T.I.P. is community-focused, community-based. As such it can and does play a significant role in increasing the number of Scottish Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia
- They can play an important role, but need to follow through. Need to create an infrastructure so they can succeed. You could have hundreds more (students). It is a critical time. Give it another year and people will say, “we had T.I.P., what else is there?” We need to see success stories.
- Essential

Instructor Priorities

Priority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Weighted scores in top 3 (x10x5x3)
Curriculum development	0	2	0	3	2	3	1	1	10
More tutor training	5	1	2	2	1	1	0	0	61
More instructors	1	4	1	1	3	1	1	0	33
Intensive immersion	2	2	3	3	1	1	0	0	39
Greater awareness of T.I.P. leading to more classes in the province	1	0	1	2	1	4	3	0	13
Bring T.I.P. to youth	3	1	4	0	2	2	0	0	47
Bring fluent speakers from Scotland	0	1	0	0	1	0	5	5	5
Your own idea	0	1	1	1	1	0	2	1	19

The instructors rated their priorities in the following order of importance:

1. More tutor training
2. Bring T.I.P. to youth
3. Intensive immersion for motivated learners
4. More instructors
5. Your own idea
6. Greater Awareness of T.I.P. leading to more classes in the province.
7. Curriculum Development
8. Bring Fluent Speakers from Scotland

They also brought forth the following ideas:

- - Intensive Immersion for fluent speakers.
 - If you have completed one year, you should be exposed to the written word. There are so many contractions where you drop the consonant. If they saw it in print they would see the reason for it.. Set up situations with an activity.
 - Some type of follow up. Learners need somewhere to go, something to attend so they have the opportunity to practice what they have learned. Quilting groups, conversation groups, something. Difficult with a small number to find a common interest group to reach everyone but people need to use it or lose it.
 - Effective organization, funding and advertising on a province-wide basis.
 - Have an all Nova Scotia gathering to raise profile and esteem of language among Gaels and others. STFX Gaelic day is important.
 - Address guilt and baggage of people who don't speak Gaelic or don't speak it well enough. Almost need a support group for learners. Need an effective way of de-programming people who learned Gaelic through the old way of reading and writing.

Conclusion

The Office of Gaelic Affairs acknowledges and is grateful for the work done by so many volunteers, students and instructors to organize, learn and teach Gaelic in Nova Scotia. It is apparent that there is still a heartfelt connection to Gaelic in Nova Scotia and that many people enjoy the language and wish to see it continue.

While the T.I.P. methodology has inspired confidence and has advanced the Gaelic ability of many Nova Scotia Gaelic learners, there remain questions as to how to optimize resources and skills to create a more consistent and measurable learning system, while keeping spontaneity, fun and community spirit in the learning process.

Students and instructors have recognized a lack of fluent speakers as a challenge to maintaining and expanding learning opportunities. They felt a high priority should be to increase intensive immersion opportunities for motivated learners and instructors.

Curriculum Development was low on the list of priorities for both students and instructors; however both groups expressed a need for tutor language standards, tutor training and a more structured delivery system that was not dependent on volunteers and sporadic funding.

The Office of Gaelic Affairs will continue to work with FIOS, community organizations, government partners, and language planning specialists to plan for the long-term development of Gàidhlig aig Baile, while continuing to support ongoing community learning, which continues to grow in Nova Scotia.