



Maya Mam language and culture revitalization in a diaspora community

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Roadmap for talk

1. Background: Mam context in Guatemala and U.S.
2. Unofficial Mam language classes in Oakland
3. Community-Based Design Research
4. Impacts of language revalorization

1. Background: Mam context
in Guatemala and U.S.

Mam context: Guatemala and the U.S.

Mam people have endured and continue to endure discrimination in Guatemala

- Conflict Armado (1960-1996): Beginning of migration region from Guatemala to U.S.

Henry: “How am I going to keep this language alive?”

- I never gave up
- I am here preserving the language

Origins: Mam language class in Oakland, CA

Why did a Mam class start?

- skepticism and shame about language
- turned into support and excitement

Latinx Cultural Center at Laney College

Once word got out that Mam classes might start, people in the community started showing up enthusiastically.

2. Unofficial Mam language classes 2019 - present



Center for
Latin American Studies
University of California, Berkeley



LATINX
CULTURAL CENTER



How we teach

Spring 2019 - Spring 2020, we taught on Laney College campus

Since March 2020, we have been teaching through Zoom.

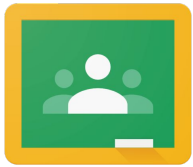
Spring 2021

Beginner class (pronunciation, greetings, weather, body parts, simple sentences)

Intermediate class (Mayan calendar, women's issues, complex sentences)

Conversation practice

A look at some of our
teaching tools



Google Classroom

- Make assignments
- Grade assignments
- See student progress
- Localize all links and materials



Google Drive

- Make lessons on google slides
 - Organize materials
- Upload videos
- Upload Zoom recordings



Mam in Oakland

[Home](#)

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Mam language study



Google Sites

Weekly 1-min videos

Mam

1. **Henry:** Je'y Lucrecia, ti' ta'y?
2. **Lucrecia:** B'a'n ta' qini, ya'n tiy ti ta'y?
3. **Henry:** B'a'n ta qini chjonti tu'n ntzaj tqani.
4. **Henry:** Jatum naji?
5. **Lucrecia:** Naj qini tuj tnam Xjan Xwan, ya'n tiy?
6. **Henry:** Naj qini tuj jun tnam Oakland.
7. **Henry:** Atm q'ij, jb'al b'ix mo cho'w tuj Xjan Xwan?
8. **Lucrecia:** Tzluw at nim q'ij, ya'n jan tuj Oakland?

English

1. **Henry:** Hey Lucrecia, how are you?
2. **Lucrecia:** I am good, and you?
3. **Henry:** I am good, thank you for asking.
4. **Henry:** Where do you live?
5. **Lucrecia:** I live in San Juan Atitan, and you?
6. **Henry:** I live in Oakland.
7. **Henry:** How is the day, sunny, cold, rainy for you in San Juan?
8. **Lucrecia:** There is a lot of sun, and in Oakland?



Quizlet

Grammar and vocabulary flash cards.

You can add **audio** so students can practice listening.

An example from our intermediate class:

○ tzaj tq'on Henry laj u'j qiy.

Translate to English.

Henry gave ten books to us (exclusive).

The Quizlet logo consists of the word "Quizlet" in a white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within a solid blue rectangular background.

Quizlet

kamiġj xno'l

You can
upload
pictures and
label
diagrams





Flipgrid

Students can record themselves speaking and watch other students' videos.

An example video:

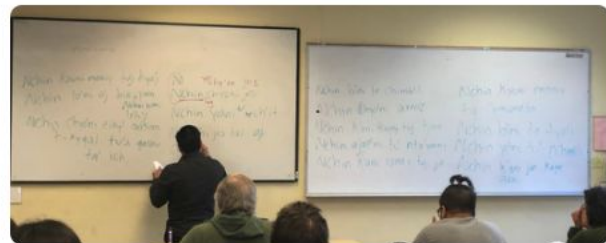
<https://admin.flipgrid.com/manage/topics/17503180/videos/173960397>

Mam language workshops fall 2020

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67 responses • 1758 views • 1 comment • 18.1 hours of engagement

Join Code: [mamfall2020](#) [Add a CoPilot](#)



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<input type="checkbox"/> Actions	Title	Last Response	Active	Share	Actions		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Speaking practice 4 Responses	Oct 19, 2020	Active	Share	Actions		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Get to know someone! 6 Responses	Sep 26, 2020	Active	Share	Actions		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning Mam sounds 11 Responses	Sep 23, 2020	Active	Share	Actions		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Intermediate class: Greetings 5 Responses	Sep 26, 2020	Active	Share	Actions		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Count to 10! 20 Responses	Sep 12, 2020	Active	Share	Actions		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Welcome to Mam class! 21 Responses	Sep 7, 2020	Active	Share	Actions		

Our students are in...

FOUR
COUNTRIES



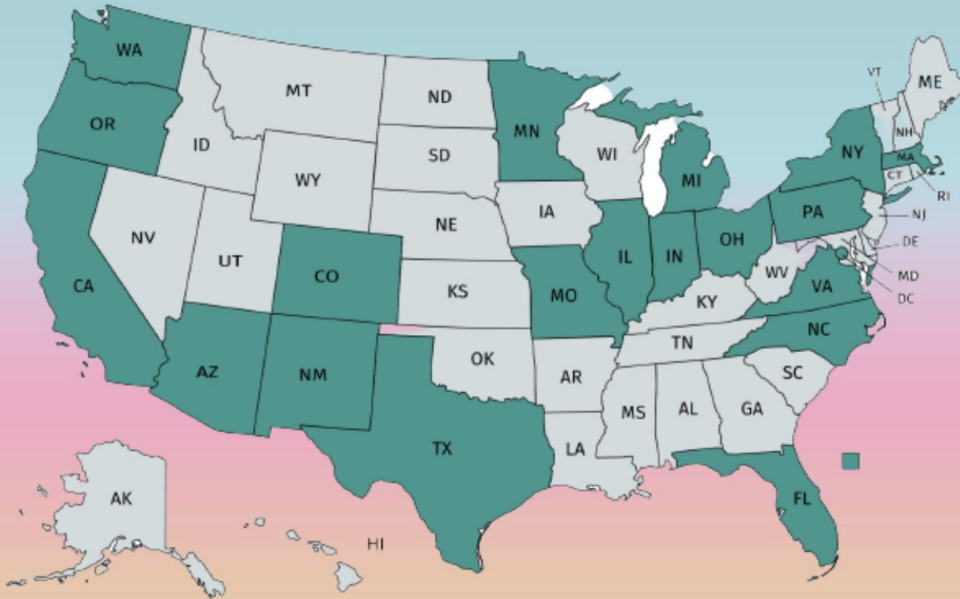
CANADA

UNITED STATES

GUATEMALA

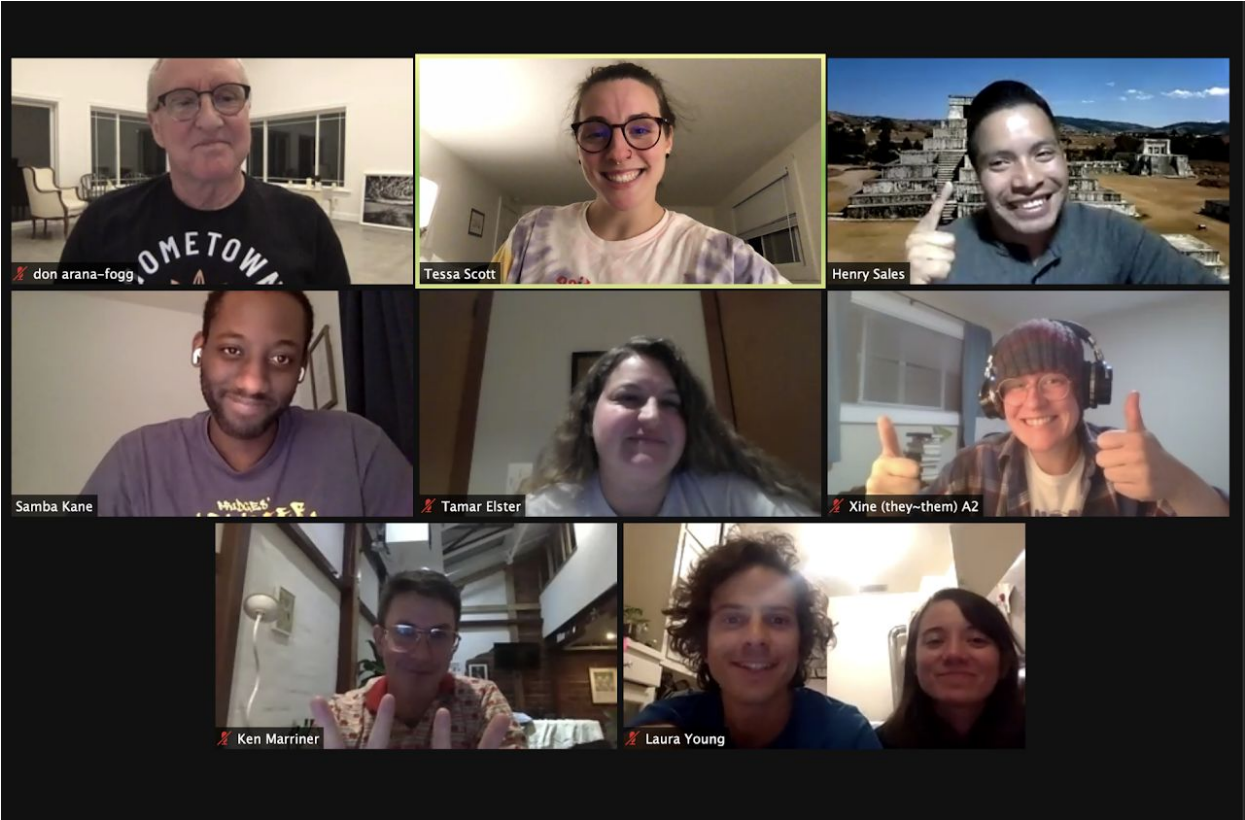
EL SALVADOR

TWENTY (20) U.S. STATES



3. Community-Based Design Research

Research Project: Student perspective



Research Project: Student perspective

- “So I would say my goal for language is... to share, on a basic level, what I provide and [to show] my heart, **to welcome them [Mam community]** and see them thrive, so somehow being able to share that wish...But **I know a little bit goes a long way..** just being able to say hi and how are you and welcome, I know that that **shows a lot of hospitality**. And so that's also a desire.. My first goal, is to even be able to share with them I know a little bit of your language and I care to learn more and **that we value you and we think your language is beautiful and hope that you continue to keep it alive here, you know, and teach your kids and have them teach their kids”**
(Interview, February 2021)

Research Project: Workshops

Two sets of workshops:

- For former/current students:
 - Co-creation of materials and activities for the course
 - Integrating the community's knowledge about teaching and learning to improve the course experience
- For Mam community members:
 - Sharing what their experiences have been with Mam language students
 - Integrating the the communities' communicative needs-- what do students need to learn?
 - Creating materials and topics to be integrated into the course
- Vision: An official language course at California community colleges

4. Impacts of language revalorization

Impacts of language revitalization

- Mam language activism: teaching Mam and supporting Mam students
 - Future: more elective Mam classes
- Creating networks of Mam teachers
 - Lucrecia - in Guatemala teaching via Zoom
 - Mam high school students who are coming and observing the class “I want to do that!”



Silvia Lucrecia Carillo Godinez.
San Juan Atitán, Guatemala.

Qo xnaq'tzan tuj tzalajb'il
tu'ntzan tjaw ch'iy qchwinqlal

We teach with happiness for a better future

Chjonte kyiy

Thank you

Links

Website: <https://sites.google.com/berkeley.edu/maminoakland/home?authuser=1>

KQED article:

<https://www.kqed.org/news/11855640/how-native-speakers-are-helping-1300-mam-students-in-oakland-through-remote-learning>