

# Video series aids Inupiaq language

For a decade now, Inupiaq language specialists in Barrow have been teaching adults and children how to read and write in Inupiaq, finding that most of their teaching materials had to come from their own research and effort.

Now, with the development of the Video Series in Inupiaq Adult Literacy, the Inupiaq language specialists have a tremendous teaching resource available to them. The spec-

ialists had to learn to expect the unexpected when teaching literacy to adults, especially when the adults came from the outlying villages to take the literacy course. Now, it should prove to be easier.

A major problem for the teachers has been the "newness" of the written Inupiaq language. The inupiaq alphabet (atchagat) has only been standardized for the past 10 years or so, and approximately 75 percent of the North Slope Borough residents have no reading or writing knowledge of the Inupiaq language.

Some of the older people were taught to read in Inupiaq by Ahmogak and Webster in order for them to read the Bible. Unfortunately, they were

not able to teach all the people of the Slope at that time.

Various agencies, such as the North Slope Borough School District's Bilingual Program and the Inupiaq University have had some impact in teaching literacy to the people, but because of the vastness of the North Slope and the great distance between villages, they were only able to reach a small percentage of the population.

To teach literacy, the instructors have had to teach each other, develop their own lesson plans, and do all their own research.

The Inupiaq specialists have been very dedicated and united in their efforts to preserve the language. All of the success that has been achieved in the

Inupiaq Program has been due to the dedication of these specialists.

In the past, teaching methods have been geared towards children or those adults who had limited speaking knowledge of Inupiaq. With the development of the Inupiaq Literacy Video Series, emphasis is on the adult, who has a fluency in speaking Inupiaq. Also, with the help of satellite communications, people who never had the opportunity before will be able to learn how to read and write in Inupiaq.

Once again, the NSB Inupiaq Language Commission, the North Slope Borough Corporation and the Inupiaq Community of the Arctic Slope have worked together and crea-

ted the 35-part Literacy Series to reach those persons who are interested in learning to read and write in Inupiaq. The only requirement to take the course is that a person be a fluent speaker of Inupiaq. Plans are currently being made to have the Literacy Series shown on educational satellite TV within the State of Alaska.

Any organization interested in acquiring a set of the Inupiaq Literacy Video Tapes should contact: Eileen MacLean, Inupiaq Language Commission, North Slope Borough, Box 69, Barrow, AK., 99723. Phone: (907) 852-2611 ext. 284.

The price of the tapes is \$1,800 which covers the cost of duplication, stock distribution, and postage.