

Dos and Don'ts in Language Teaching

- Make opportunities for learner to talk.
- Expect them to talk or respond to you (WAIT).
- Do not laugh at their attempts. Be serious.
- Shape and Expand their responses to be more adult-like.

Shaping

- Ask questions as if to confirm understanding of what learner has just said. Learner will repeat the 'improved' statement as if it was his/her own.
- A language is learned by speaking it.
- Adult may just say the phrase correctly.
- Learner may repeat once or twice.
- With continued 'shaping' language becomes more and more adult-like.
- Commands and Directions are okay.

Expanding

- Expand words or short phrases into more complete sentences.
- Try to get learners to use phrases/sentences **WITH VERBS**. (If s/he doesn't use a verb, supply one for her/him. Do this by asking a confirmation-type question to which a response is made with a longer answer.)
- Be matter of fact. Do not make a big deal out of it.

We have to transfer language behavior that often seems to come naturally in parent/child interaction into teacher/child interaction.

- Talk to learners only in Navajo.
- Expect a response in Navajo.
- Teach them what to say if they don't understand.
- Do not punish them if they should not understand.
- Set up situations where learners talk to the teacher and other learners in Navajo.
- Set up situations where learners ask questions to the teacher and other learners in Navajo.

ABOVE ALL, BE PATIENT!!!

From: Navajo Nation Language Project, Division of Diné Education. (2003). *Directory of secondary Navajo language programs* (Funded by ANA Grant No. 90NL0125, NNLP 97/08/27), Inside front cover.