# Navajo Language and Culture Expectations

## Stage 1

- Hardly understands anything at all
- Understands a little if they can see the action occurring
- Understands a little if the language is close to a language the learner knows
- Can perform simple communicative tasks using single words in naming articles in the classroom or listing their favorite foods
- Can use common phrases and expressions to complete simple tasks such as saying “good morning” and stating their name, age and where they live.
- Needs comprehension/listening tasks so they can internalize the vocabulary and a little of the major grammatical structures which will prepare them for the next stage when they will actually be conversing in a simple way.
- This is the building block stage.

## Stage 2

- Input is comprehensible if the learner already knows the nonlinguistic content of what he or she is hearing or if the communication situation is very predictable. There is more genuine two-way conversations with speakers of the language, although it takes a very patient native speaker to preserve in trying to communicate with a learner at this stage.
- Able to speak well in tasks that are fairly structured and predictable
- Uses sentences, strings of sentences, and recombination of learned words, phrases, and expressions with frequency of errors proportionate to the complexity of the communicative task.
- Begins to create new combinations of the language they have learned in Stage 1. Messages are understandable, but some patterns of error may interfere with full comprehension.
- It is natural for learners to move back and forth between stages, at one moment showing confidence and accuracy, at another moment losing both, when the complexity of the message interferes with the learners ability to produce it accurately or comprehend it accurately.
- The result of getting through stage two well is quite a bit of “fluency” in comprehending language which uses a variety of structures in connected discourse, with an ever growing vocabulary.

## Stage 3

- Can understand new information, but it still helps if that information is still specially geared to a new speaker’s needs. This means that meanings must often be negotiated. In order to keep increasing in comprehension fluency during this stage, the key ingredient is coming to understand the background information that everyone in the culture knows about, and in particular, learning this information in connection with the language that is associated with them.
- Because the learner can by now understand a lot of the linguistic content, it is possible to develop more ability for top-down processing “new” information of the non-linguistic content. If there is adequate input, the learner should be developing a sense of the different discourse genres and registers of speech.
- In stage three, the learner has increasing facility to produce connected narrative discourse (as in the ACTFL Advanced stage).

- The result of getting through stage three is that the learner is able to comprehend language related to a vast range of topics, situations and contexts, as well as easily process many social nuances.
- Uses sentences, strings of sentences, and fluid sentence length and paragraph-length messages with frequency of errors proportionate to the complexity of the communicative task.
- Students are able to produce and comprehend fluid sentence-length and paragraph-length messages, but as the complexity of the task or message increases, errors and hesitation become more frequent. For example, a Stage 3 learner might be able to describe another person in class with accuracy, but if he or she is described a viewpoint on a current social issue, there would be a higher frequency of error.

## Stage 4

- Learns most from normal native-to-native speech as it occurs in the whole range of life experiences.
- Understands most input, provided she/he attends to it. For example, native speakers may talk about the learner right in her presence, intending to tease her and get a reaction. If she listens carefully, she may get it, otherwise not.
- Has increasing facility in abstract and hypothetical discussions (as in the ACTFL Superior stage).
- Uses sentences, strings of sentences, and fluid sentence-length, paragraph-length, and essay-length messages with some patterns of errors that do not interfere with meaning.
- Conveys- messages with some patterns of grammatical errors that do not interfere with meaning.
- As the task becomes more complex (for example, providing a rationale or hypethesis), errors and pauses, to find appropriate words become more frequent.
- A learner’s awareness of culturally appropriate language, behavior, and gesture is languages.