

American Indian Oral History Collection
Transcript Record

Tape Number: 626 Side: 2

Date of Taping: 4/16/70

Field Worker(s): T. Weber Breiser

Location: unknown

Tribe(s): Mescal

Narrator/Event: Mr. O. Davis - New Mexico Economic & Social Development Seminar

Additional Narrator(s): _____

Subject(s): Personal Teaching Experiences at Ft. Wingate
Student Reaction to learning English,
school attendance, etc.

Comments:

Education

eber Graiser

Davis

Mr. Davis tells of his teaching experiences at Fort Wingate, and the student reactions on learning English and having to go to school, in general.



Tape #626
Mr. Davis
April 16, 1970
Interviewer - T. Weber Greiser

QG.- T. Weber Greiser

AD.- Mr. Davis

QG. Where did you teach?

AD. In Fort Wingate, elementary boarding school.

QG. And how long did you teach there?

AD. For over a year.

QG. What grades did you teach?

AD. Well, I had a special class, which consisted of children who were achieving at the first grade through the sixth; I also taught at Fort Lewis College, English as a second language during the summer.

QG. Can you give me some more information about this special class that you taught?

AD. Yes, mostly children were from about 12 to the normal 6th grade age, to around 19. And they were evenly distributed about, they varied in the class because they were not very good about staying in the classroom. It varied from 19 down to as low as 12 students a year, but they won't stay. Particularly if they are not achieving well, they get tired and they want to go home. This is one of the bad things about a boarding school, the Navajos as you know are very conscious of their families; they have this extended family thing, are you familiar with that?

QG. Yeah. This was a boarding school? And all the students there were Navajo?

AD. Almost 100%. There were a few others but very few. The ones that had other lineage came from other tribes had some relationship to someone who was working for the BIA.

QG. What did your teaching involve mainly?

AD. It was a self-contained classroom. We had all of the elementary subjects that were normally taught in the elementary school.

QG. And you said that you taught first through sixth grade?

AD. Yes, because some of the children could not read when I got there even though they were like 14 years old.

QG. Were these like special problem children?

AD. Yes, they were. They were children that could not achieve at the levels even at the 2nd to 3rd or 4th grade level which is below the grade in which they were put. If they were in the 6th grade, they were probably achieving at the 1st and 2nd grade level. This is normal of the Navajo. And they think that any Navajo child who is only 2 grades below his level, is doing pretty well.

QG. How about some more background on this school itself, what grades are?

AD. The grades there at the elementary range from the 1st through the 8th. Now I was teaching in the upper elementary, which is the 7th and the 8th grade, but the children that I got came from every class in the school, above the fifth grade, that is including the fifth grade and above.

QG. How many students would you say were going to school?

AD. There were about a thousand there, most of the time there was around a thousand.

QG. And they were all permanent boarding students, they stayed there?

AD. Yes, they stayed there. They were released to go home occasionally. They got special permission, but all of them would go home at Christmas time, and at Thanksgiving, and at Easter.

QG. Would parents very often visit the school?

AD. The only time that we had any visitors from parents was at Christmas and at the end of school, when they came after the children. Sometimes when they would bring them back. Or if they for some reason or other would have to come down there to see the child or to pick the child up, that is the only time we ever saw them.

QG. Do you think that there was a problem because the student was separated from their

parents?

AD. Oh, naturally there would be and the Navajo culture because of the dependence of one Navajo upon the other in the family. This would normally be a fact, but the living conditions is such among the Navajos that it is almost impossible to run a school on a bussing basis. The Gallup school district does this, but they have considerable trouble, because the roads are so poor out there, especially in the winter time.

QG. Where exactly is the boarding school located?

AD. Well, it is at old Fort Wingate, it is 12 miles east of Gallup and 2 miles south.

QG. Were there any Indian teachers at this school?

AD. Yes, there were two Navajos that had gone to Oklahoma colleges and had gotten their degrees. One is a Hopi. There was an awful lot of black teachers there. And of course this involves some situation in the south as they integrate the schools, and a lot of these persons were forced to get another job, outside of the south and they found that BIA was willing to accept them. And of course you will find a lot of colored teachers, I think we have around 30, around 30 teachers and about 16 of them are black.

QG. How many of them were Indian?

AD. Well I knew of 3, there may have been more than....

QG. Now, the non-Indian teachers, do they ever have sort of a cultural-orientation deal?

AD. Oh yes, everybody gets two weeks.....all BIA teachers have to go through two weeks of orientation; it is rather long and detailed. They go into discussions on culture and all the aspects of the Navajo culture itself. We had speakers from Window Rock, and we had speakers from.....people who had been with the

Indians for like 25 to 30 years, and then there were some that hadn't been there too long, but had been in deeply enough to where they knew the problems. And the Navajo language itself presents a problem because it's such a soft unstressed language, it is difficult for us to tell when they are talking to each other and for that reason it created discipline problems in the classroom, particularly with the older children.

QG. Where there any culture courses taught for the students?

AD. Well yes, this is a part of the over all picture, particularly in the.....but the culture that was being taught was not Navajo; it was American culture, now there are some schools over on the reservation which do stress the Navajo culture. And they are bi-lingual, the one at Rough Rock is.

QG. So at the Fort Wingate school area it might be like an etiquette?

AD. Oh yes, that was one of the first things that I had to do when I went there for my first orientation was to go through a meal with a group of Navajo children. They had three teachers, one at each end of the table and there were eight Navajos, four boys and four girls, and they did this so that we would be able to help them and try to strike up a conversation with them, to get the feeling of the whole thing.

QG. How receptive were the students?

AD. Well, they accept most everything as a matter of course, the trouble with the Navajos and some of the other Indians, such as the Zuni's, is that the only reason that they want to go to school is for the board and room. You see, their living conditions are such that at home, they don't have much and they can't keep clean because they have to haul their water a long distance. But we did have children that did live within four or five miles of the school. These

children would often go home at night and stay a week and then come back, there would be lice crawling out of their hair and this sort of thing, because they had been sleeping on those sheep pelts. They sleep on the ground. And that is one of the reasons at these boarding schools cleanliness is a tremendous factor. And when they first come back from a holiday or when they first report into school they take these instructor aides into the dormitories and it takes them about a week to get them cleaned up; hair cut and all that crud.

QG. What would you say would be the greatest efforts in the academic subjects.

AD. Reading.....well actually I think it's English as a second language but the most important one would have to be reading, but these all work together. And they stress English as the second language, and it has to be taught at least one hour a day by itself, and of course the reason that I got involved in this is because I had attended the army language school and all of the test that they had were evolved from the Spanish language and they used the same method that is used in the language school. So, I had no trouble getting right into it because I had intended ten months of language courses.

QG. They gave the English second language courses every year at the school?

AD. Yes, this was a part of each students daily course, the first thing we taught every morning was one hour of English as a second language.

QG. But this is to every grade?

AD. This is to every grade, including the kindergarden. And they had graded books that go all the way up to the 8th grade, and well actually there are three different books and they are separated in such a manner that they cover those grades, and they are quite strict about using them, and using them properly, because this really works if you use it right.

QG. How successful would you say it has been at the Fort Wingate school?

AD. Well, there is an awful lot of apathy among the Navajo and of course BIA is a bureacracy and they stumbled over themselves with the government system that they use. I would say that they are successful to a point as far as they can go, and that most of their difficulties have been overcoming the resistance of the Navajos themselves, because they don't really want to learn. And this is every teacher that I have ever talked to has always said that the biggest stumbling block in teaching the Navajos is the fact that they don't care whether they learn or not. They really don't want to learn, all they want to go to school for is for board and room.....

QG. Would you say that the Indian teachers there have more success with their programs?

AD. I would think less. Yes, because they try to put in a great deal of Navajo and other Indian language. Because they spoke their language and then too the Indians more or less look to them as being above them. They look at them as being equal, and there was too much familiarity among them. And as a matter of fact, this Okie woman, I never seen a teacher who was so utterly helpless as far as discipline. She just couldn't handle anything.

QG. The Indian teachers had more discipline?

AD. They had more discipline problems than we did. And some of the better teachers that had less discipline problems were teachers who had taught in the ghetto in the black ghettos and they were black people, and they knew how to handle this problem. And one of the best ones that I have ever seen he was from Dallas.

QG. How far were you allowed to carry discipline?

AD. Well, you were not supposed to touch them, it is the same as it is in Albuquerque.

But this is not for.....people who had discipline had to do something on their own to get it. ~~You don't get it simply by saying to do something on their own to get it.~~ You don't get it simply by saying the rules, if they know that they can get by with it, they will go just as far as you will permit.

QG. But the students respected them for this?

AD. Well, I don't know if it was exactly respected for, this is hard to say. But, however, we got results and that is the main thing.

QG. It seems that if the students knew that there wasn't suppose to be any, say, physical discipline.....

AD. They know that, they are impressed with that.....

QG. They might report it to the.....

AD. Oh yes, they report it to the inspector aids for all the Indians, and most of them have been in the American culture for a long time and they understand the problems. They have problems with it themselves and they use the same system. If they don't do what they want them to they floor them, and of course they could get fired.....They have a system whereby the students can't get in to see the people who are in charge. And the counselors, and when they do recognize what is going on and they won't listen to them. So this is, this is one of the problems you got two separate factions in a boarding school. You have the teaching section and the counseling section. Well, the counseling--these are the people who take care of them in the dormitory. See and they are the ones who live with them. And then the teachers, of course, are separate on the other side and they go from one side to the other each day.

QG. Could you tell me some more about the teachers aids?

AD. Yes, we only had two teacher aids as such in the upper elementary, but one of

them was an Indian, one was a Navajo and the other one wasn't. They were really sharp. They were both from the University of New Mexico and they had had two years, I think, of college there. And the ones who work in the dormitory though most of them don't have any problems though.....

QG. The counselors?

AD. No, the counselors have to be a counselor, but the counselors are only the directors of the instructor aids who take care of the children in the dormitory. It is a complicated affair, and there are so many more who work in the dorm with the children than there are in the classroom. Each teacher has his responsibility to the number of children assigned to him in a classroom. But in the dorm they have to have people there 24 hours a day and most of them are of Indian descent, most of them speak Navajo. Now some of the counselors do not, some of the counselors were.....oh, people from Oklahoma, and they were more highly educated and very versed in our grafting culture, and, therefore, it was easier for them to straddle a fence between the instruction and the counseling.

QG. How many counselors did they have?

AD. Let me think, 1, 2, 3, 4.....they must have about 8 cause one who was the head of girls guidance, they call it guidance rather than counseling, and a boys guidance, actually they have to be counselors.....

QG. What specifically did they do?

AD. Well, they just say that everything went well in the dormitory and then in the evening they had maybe a one hour class that they had to instruct.....something that had to do with culture.....

QG. Did they ever do anything along the lines of talking to the children about going on to further education?

AD. Oh yeah, oh yeah.....but.....

QG. But your school only went to the eighth grade?

AD. Yes, now in my school, the main thing that they want to do is get into high school, those that had the desire. But in high school, they came up against this thing with reading and low achievement and they had to provide for this, but you see, the high school was just across the road.....Fort Wingate is one large building and everything is new and it is a beautiful place, and we do a lot of vocational training. There are some of the children who are real good and who do want to go on to college, but I would say that the percentage is quite small.....somewhere in the area of 1 to 2%.....

QG. Is there any way that you think that you could improve this percentage?

AD. Oh, I don't know. I couldn't say. There are so many factors involved here, and I don't think that I who was there only as a teacher for one year could have a solution for something that people have been trying to figure out for 20 and 30 years. People with Ph.D. that are working on it and really haven't come up with a solution. They will work on something for a while, and they think that language is the biggest barrier and if they ever get language conquered it might be easier, but it takes about 3 or 4 years to get to where they can speak English and they can't teach them in Navajo because Navajo is not a written language.....

QG. Can I ask you why you left Fort Wingate?

AD. Well, yes. The main reason is because they wouldn't give me any quarters down there. They had a lot of empty quarters at the high school but they wouldn't give the elementary people any. They promised me a lot of things that they didn't give me. I couldn't see leaving here and going out there and not getting at least a decent location.

QG. Do you think that if you had been given quarters there, you would have stayed?

AD. I probably would have. I probably wouldn't have been teaching, would have been in the administration cause I was headed in that direction when I quit.

QG. Do you think there are a lot of teachers that go through a lot of frustration?

AD. Oh I'm sure they do, and I don't think that there is a single teacher out there that isn't completely frustrated. Because this is the most difficult teaching that anyone ever did, believe me.

QG. Do you think that they usually stay there very long?

AD. Well, maybe some resign to the fact that they can't make much headway, then, they just go ahead and do what they can and don't take it too seriously.

QG. How about the courses like math and sciences?

AD. Well, those are all part of the curriculum, they have some, in the seventh and eighth grade they have some pretty good science teachers.....

QG. Cause I know that some of the students that I talked to at the University said that they felt that aside from English, which was the greatest lack that they felt was present, that they felt like math and sciences weren't stressed enough. That they hadn't gotten enough in high school.

QG. Well, here is the reason for that. It's simple enough. They have difficulty with the reading material, and when you change from regular reading into the reading of science it becomes 3 or 4 times more difficult and they simply couldn't handle it and you had to get down to such a low level that it just isn't worth the time. And the same thing with social studies, this is the big problem when you get into these fields, like social studies, sciences and math, the children can't understand it. It goes right over their head, they can't understand what you are talking about, because they don't have the command of

the English language. See?

QG. You were teaching a special class for slower children. Say do they have a special class for the children that are more advanced, who realized the value of an education?

AD. They don't have anyone like that. Well, let's say this.....you say the ones that realize the value of an education.....no, they don't because even the best ones are even two grades below their grade level. This means that if they are in the eighth grade, they are probably reading at an sixth grade level. And if they are in the sixth grade, they are achieving what a fourth grader should..... Now these are the good ones. And then you have the poor ones who can barely read. And they will go up to as far as the sixth grade and they still can't read anything but second and third grade material.

QG. How about.....do you know anything about in the high school, say in the junior year, if some of the students decided what they wanted to do? If they wanted to go on to college?

AD. Yes, they are very receptive to that, and they'll work on it over there. All those teachers over there, will work on it over there to make sure that those children get to go on to school, especially in the high school.....and their biggest problem in the high school though is discipline. They have so many discipline problems that when they do get some children that do want to learn they have got so many problems of others in the class that don't want to learn that it becomes increasingly difficult for the teachers.

QG. The discipline problem becomes worse, perhaps from grammar school to high school?

AD. Well, let's not say that it is worse exactly, let's say it just becomes a bigger problem because the children are bigger, they are grown and it is pretty hard to

teach grown people something when they are playing games. And that is what it amounts to, you can make the kids listen at the elementary levels, but as they get older they don't. Now that isn't to say that they are all like that, I'm only saying that there are too many that way, and I don't feel like I am qualified to say about the high schools and the secondary level beyond the eighth grade because I didn't see enough. We went over there maybe once a week. We had infrequent contact with some of the teachers, but I got the same attitude from the teachers that came there where we lived.....we lived in a place called?.....a dozen single people mostly living there, and they had lots of friends that went back and forth from the high school and we had a big living room and I used to talk to them and it is not any different from the elementary school except that the children were bigger.

QG. Now you say that the high school was a new school, and it had really good conditions there, what was your school like?

AD. Very poor.....the reason most of these schools are new over there, but the reason that ours wasn't was because old Fort Wingate has been there since 1906. Actually it was there before that, some say it was there since the 1870's. A lot of those buildings have been renovated and renovated and re-renovated to the point where they were no good anymore. And then they did build one building which was the lower elementary, of course the sixth grade was a new building. Actually it was two buildings but they were sort of connected and then we had two big..... buildings that we used for the 7th and 8th grade. These had been high school buildings while they were building the new high school.

QG. Do you think a change in the physical condition might affect kind of the pride... in the.....

AD. I don't think that the physical plan has too much to do with it, really. They don't seem to mind. They only think they can get is better than what they have at home. They don't seem to mind as long as they get good food and don't have to work too much. They don't care much about working. The big trouble, Ted, is attitude. And this I've discussed this with a lot of people, because when I went to Fort Lewis I came in contact with all the instructor aids and a lot of the teachers and all the schools throughout the Navajo reservation, they took people, one from each school. Sent them up there, that would be people who had experiences and knowledge in these different courses that were being taught to these instructor aids, and we all lived together in the dormitories at Fort Lewis and we talked a lot about these things. And the things that seems to bother them most is the fact that they don't really want to learn and the fact that they have such a language barrier, and I have found this even with the instructor aids and people that were working in the dormitories that I was teaching English to, and methods of English as a second language. I found that some of them had such a poor reading ability that they couldn't understand what we were talking about all the time. We had to explain it over and over again. And they're the other ones were teaching the Navajos in the dormitories.

B. But it is improving, I am sure, because they are working on it. They have been having a lot of workshops, they had a big workshop when I was at Fort Lewis, I didn't go to it, it was at Fort Wingate. They had a thousand teachers there for a month. Teaching them methods and the teachers were all from UCLA everyone of them and all of them with Ph.D.'s.

QG. And they were going to be teaching in Indian schools?

AD. No, the teachers were from Indian schools, this was a workshop for Indian teachers

and these people were hired by the BIA to hold this workshop. Simply to develop something, they are still studying this, and they aren't getting no where. There are so many stumbling blocks in Indian education that.....

QG. I don't know.....I have kind of gotten the idea that Indian students in public schools are better achievers than those in the boarding schools.

AD. This is true and I think the reason is that they learn English a lot faster..... You see, when you put two Navajos together, they don't speak English, they speak Navajo. You put one Navajo with ten American children and he speaks English, he has to. He picks it up, but he won't do it as long as he has got two Navajos there you see. They are all in the corner speaking Navajo. You see this is the difficulty with social culture, we are teaching them an American culture and they don't want to learn the culture, they want their own.

QG. So in the boarding school, then it is this continued.....

AD. Call it what you want, you can't seem to change their attitude by sending them to a boarding school, because all they're doing is thinking about is going home and they aren't really too concerned with anything except what time it is and when are we going to eat.....After I had the children in there for about two months, I put a stop to that, but you have to use some hard-handed gadgets on them, particularly those.....because some of them are delinquents, they were in jail and all sorts of things; 16 and 17, 18 years old.

QG. How is the problem of run aways?

AD. Well, it happens occasionally, especially when you start putting the pressure on them. Usually the parents bring them back though, they make them go back. Once in a while they don't. Sometimes they will take off and go cross country on foot and maybe 50-75 miles in the winter time, they have even had some deaths. I imagine

and this is what the guidance people have to do, they had to watch them, and try to keep them happy once in a while, so that they won't run away. I had one boy that would threaten me and tell me he was going to run away, he would always tell me that. And I said good so you want to go now. I would hand him his hat, and he wouldn't go. They'll steal anything I don't care how simple. They very vain and they will parade around like for no reason at all.

- AD. This here is the administration building and this is the dormitory, the big boys dormitory, and the girls dormitory is just around the other side of this page. And this is our year book, some of the children helped, I published this thing, here are some of the pictures. Here are some of the counselors; here is some that are in girls guidance, and she is the secretary, and the head of boys guidance and his assistance. And this is head of guidance.....Here are the teachers in the upper elementary school.....See you can see the black ones, there are three or four of them here.....three, four, five....six.....there are six of them.....and of course I have the rest of the classes of the lower elementary back here. You see, we put them in groups and here you can look through them.... One of the best teachers I saw was a colored woman that had been here quite a few years. She came from Chicago. Here is the kindergarden.....we called them beginners...
- QG. Now do most of these schools put out year books like this?
- AD. No, not now, the only reason that they had this put out was the head of the department wanted to put it out and she knew that I did photography and so she wanted me to work on it and of course.....?.....and so I contracted this thing and we sold these for \$1.00 a piece, not really that fancy but \$1.00 is a lot of money to an Indian child. Now here are some of my kids, here are some of this

page, they were all listed as sixth graders. You can see as we look through here that there were some small children.....?.....

QG. Did the children really like this?

AD. Oh yes, this was great, they thought that this was wonderful. They would steal them from each other. Of course, if they happened to have \$1.00, they would buy one and have someone steal it from them. And then the next day, the ones that had the money would go back and try and get another one. Well, I think we ordered around 3-400 copies. We had all of them sold. I had some of these boys help me and they got all of the receipts mixed up, cause I wasn't aware that you can't trust an Indian with money or things that.....And I trusted them with the receipts. When I got them back, you wouldn't believe what a mess they were..... I couldn't even tell how many I had, I had to guess at it, because they had messed it up, and shuffled them.

QG. Seems like something like this would really help them.....

AD. Oh yes, it really did, they really liked it and the ones that I had helping me were pretty good children, they were the ones that will probably wind up going to college, that is if they can make it. Of course there isn't any reason why the Navajo shouldn't go to college cause they had plenty of scholarships.

QG. They were pretty active in athletics, weren't they?

AD. Oh yes, they go big for that, especially in basketball. This coach that we had he had a 7th and 8th grade team, boy they were good, they played just like some of the varsity here, some of them.....Here are these Indian guys.....there was a colored guy too.....here he is.....they all liked him. There was this trade school on Central just east of Wyoming, they guy had one of these.....?.....

QG. Was there a school newspaper there, too?

AD. Yes but.....?.....They did it once a week. This was done as a project by eighth grade, and one of the Indian teachers had charge of that. He taught English, because he really wasn't qualified to teach math or history. And then he spoke Navajo to them all the time, but the trouble was that everything that they wrote had to be gone over by him. And he was a little shaky in his composition, and sometimes the stories that he put out were hard to understand. If you were a Navajo it was great, but if you weren't it wasn't.....?.....All these illustrations were done by one of my students, a 19 year old boy, he was a great artist. Now he started here, and he drew this, this.....that.....and all of these in here. He did some of the work.....now look at that one. Now this one woman here was the head cook and this guy was a Navajo he was a seamstress. Now let's see, here is the graduation pictures.....they gave everyone one of these and they thought that was great. Take it home and show it to their parents, their parents couldn't read it but just the same.....

QG. How many of your eighth graders have graduated and went on to high school?

AD. Well, I would say most of them, but I tell you what, they start dropping out in high school about the second year, when they get old enough that they can go to work, when their parents kick them out, they can move around a bit.....they get in jail.....right around there they start dropping out. Really more of them drop out of high school than they do in the elementary school. Then they are really not old enough to do anything except herd sheep. But when they get into high school, and if they are having a tough time, they will drop out and go home. Then the guidance people try to go and get them and try to talk their parents into sending them back. The Navajo council wants all these people to go to school.... they figure that is the only way that they are ever going to make anything out

of the Navajo tribe is to get them to go to school. And I have heard all of these people, Nakaii and all of these people talk and I don't think that anyone that has been in the BIA for a year could get by without hearing them about 3 or 4 times. Everytime anything at all.....Nakaii has to come and talk to them and we went over there to Window Rock and we went over there to the Navajo council, we took our class over there for a tour of the museum and we had a picnic out there at Window Rock right out there under the big window, you know, and we went up there and saw some horses, and hiked around..... just a little outing you know, and after that we went over there to the council hall and you know we had made arrangements prior to the day that we went over there and we came in as guest. And we introduced all the teachers to the council.

QG. Now do the council members ever come over to the school itself?

AD. Only when there is something happening, you know, some kind of picnic.....something to where they are giving free food.....only when they are invited.....

And they had a couple of open houses while I was there and we had quite a few parents come in. They really can't understand what is going on. They come in and look around and then they hunt for food, that is all there is to it. And then they don't find it.....?.....and it is really hard to talk to them, only the better educated ones and the younger ones. This is the big problem because they all speak Navajo at home, they all speak it in the dormitory. And I have learned from my own experience that you cannot learn a foreign language unless you speak it day and night. That is the only way that you can learn to speak it.

QG. There also has to be the desire.

AD. Yeah, you have got to want it. Of course, that is the thing they don't particularly care, they herd sheep, and they can speak Navajo, and that's the way that they

feel about it. And that is what I say, that attitude is the number one obstacle in Navajo education. Cause once you can over come that attitude, this don't want to learn, and this clinging to the Navajo culture and if they could figure out some way to teach them in Navajo.....That is the only way that I can see that they can overcome.....and there is no way that they can do that because there are no books in Navajo. I have got one out there in the garage that is written in Navajo, but what they use, is they use English.....they sort of adopted English into it.

QG. Yeah, well that is a point you know, like teaching a Navajo because, when you study a foreign language, they first start off the class they don't start off the first morning talking to you in that language.....They'll speak in English and tell you.....

AD. About half the time.....well when I started with my Indians we had about a month where they gave us the English, but we had words a word list, a vocabulary list... they all had the equivalent meanings written on it, so that you could tell what they meant. Then they were given to us orally and then after we had been there a month they stopped giving us anything in class except.....?.....

QG. Do you teach English like that.....like giving them the word list?

AD. Well, I use dialogues, you don't have too many word lists, you have some but you use dialogues. And these dialogues.....let's see.....it is just.....it seems like, "good morning, my name is Jim, I am going to the bank, do you want to come with me?" And it is like two people talking you see.....One will say one thing, and the other one will answer. And then the other will say something and then he'll answer. And you do it in such a way that all they have to do is change the sentence around. And they let him give the whole sentence each time. See, if

I ask you, "Do you like to eat chicken?" and you say "Yes, I like to eat chicken" this is the way that they make them answer. They make them answer in complete sentences. They don't talk the way that we do. Because if you do, they lose the meaning. So you have to make them change the sentence around, and we did it in both....orally and written. I usually use about 20 to 30 minutes of oral language in the morning and then I would use about 20-15 minutes written. And we always start out with the menu, I have it on the chalkboard, I wrote the menu on it today for the next meal. And we talked like that.....?.....and they even talked like that. And when you got to the book list, and to the other things they would be talking about somebody going to work in the city, you know.....But oh, if you wanted to start talking about hogans and horse.....this is great. So that's what you had to do. You had to switch it around a little bit to keep their interest going. And it took a little knack, I kind of fell on my face, the first month or so because I was very disappointed. I didn't like what they did for one thing. I hadn't done any special education, and I didn't want to do it because I would rather teach gifted children. This was something given to me and I had to do it, but I didn't have the interest to do it, but after I got a hold of this girl, who couldn't read at all. She was congenial cripple; she had been treated, but it had affected her mind and she was about 14 years old and she couldn't read a word. We had her in the seventh grade. Couldn't read.....not a word. So Mrs. Harris who is the head of the upper elementary asked me if I didn't want to take some of those seventh graders in the class cause some of the sixth graders were falling out, and so I said yes. And she gave me some seventh and some eighth graders. This girl came in there and so I was started of testing them you know, to see

if they could read. I had a beginning reader and she couldn't read any of it and so, they wouldn't let her work in the serving line. So they had to go down there an hour ahead my class did, they had them on for six weeks and so for a solid six weeks I spent one hour with that girl reading, and I used word list you know. I put them on a big chart and everyday I would make her review those words. Just the basic 500 words, that they taught in the English language to the first grade, there were the first and second grade readers and I finally got her to the third grade when I left there. It takes a lot of work, and it is frustrating, very frustrating, because you think that you are doing fine and then all at once they get tired and quit on you.

QG. Do you know anything about the organization called Southwestern Lab¹....?

AD. Yes.....

QG. Are they doing any work out there?

AD. They are doing some kind of research.....they go out and sample here and there.

QG. Well, from the way I understand it, they are putting programs in the schools. Kind of the English as the second language programs.

AD. Well, this may be something that I am not familiar with. The last I heard they were working on some new readers over there. I took a class from Dr. Gorman last year which is on the elementary curriculum and they had a girl in from over there that had a bunch of layouts, for that stuff and instead of having Jack and Jill went up the hill, they had Burt and Bob and all this Navajo stuff..... went down to the corral and they hitched up the horse and they rode the ponies and they went out and herded sheep and all this sort of stuff.

QG. Kind of doing the thing that you had to do?

AD. Yeah, that's right.....just a little different. What they were doing, they were

setting it, they were substituting the environment of the Navajo into our curriculum as a substitute.....

QG. Isn't that what you said that you had to do?

AD. Yes, you have to do that to keep them interested. Everytime I ever had an art class, I had two people who always wound up drawing something like a hogan and a corral and the father and mother and sister. I have a bunch of those pictures over at school, which they drew. Some of them are great artist.

QG. Well, isn't that true too, you give a child in the city a paper and you tell him to draw, he'll draw a regular house, his mother and father.....?

AD. Yeah, they draw what they like.....

QG. Or what they are familiar with?

AD. Usually it is what they like.....Because I have one kid that won't draw anything but airplanes and he wants to be a pilot and today.....I caught him doodling when he should have been working, and he had drawn a combination of one of these planes and snow buggy's. This is the kind of stuff that they do, see.....but Indians who draw horses, and I had one kid.....I'll bet he drew 150 horses while I was there and everyone of them different. Everytime we had art, he would hurry up and get through so he could draw a horse.

QG. After we finished this session, Mr. Davis mentioned off the tape that peyote was a problem among the student at his school, he says the reason that they gave for the use of peyote was to help them learn things better. He said that students would appear in the classroom under the influence and they were given certain signs to look for. And then they would know, and would take care of whoever the student was, trying to bring them down.

END OF TAPE