



Jazz Walk Dancing was one segment of the five-day gymnastics clinic held at the Community Center this week. Teacher Linda Muralt from Portland's David Douglas High School showed girls the "jazz walk," part of a dance routine performed for parents and friends Thursday night.

Supergirl Susan Guerin was momentarily airborne while practicing a flying somersault over the horse. Gary Vanderhoef of Bend High School assisted girls in vaulting, uneven bars and balance beams. CDS Photos

INDIAN LANGUAGE SPEAKERS ENHANCE SKILLS

by Cynthia Stowell

Linguists and lifetime speakers of the Sahaptin and Wasco languages shared their talents at a recent workshop and new classroom techniques were the result.

Virginia and Dell Hymes, who have worked closely with local individuals off and on since 1951, spent two weeks at the community center this month helping speakers of the language refine their skills.

In turn, "students" made corrections in the Sahaptin word list compiled by Mrs. Hymes, offered new idioms, and slightly revised the alphabet to make it consistent for both Sahaptin and Wasco.

Sponsored by Central Oregon Community College, and organized by the Tribes' cultural heritage director Nathan Jim, Sr., the class focused on language teaching techniques. Sahaptin is offered in the public school system and both Sahaptin and Wasco have been taught in the COCC adult education program.

Traditionally oral languages, Sahaptin and Wasco are being taught by local women as written languages. Reading and writing have had to be learned by even the fluent speakers.

Teachers therefore welcomed the opportunity to work with the Hymes on developing their reading and writing skills. During the first week they reviewed the reading of sounds and letters. Then it was on to grammar and language patterns.

Dialogues were an effective method for learning and practicing the concepts, and the question and answer technique will probably show up in the classrooms this fall.

Ways of grouping words by sound or by stems and teaching them together were also discovered and used.

This class marked the first time Wasco and Sahaptin were studied together. They share the same alphabet and many of the same sounds, and where different, they provide useful contrast.

The Paiute language was even introduced into at least one session when Wilson Wewa, Jr. shared the number system and other words with the class.

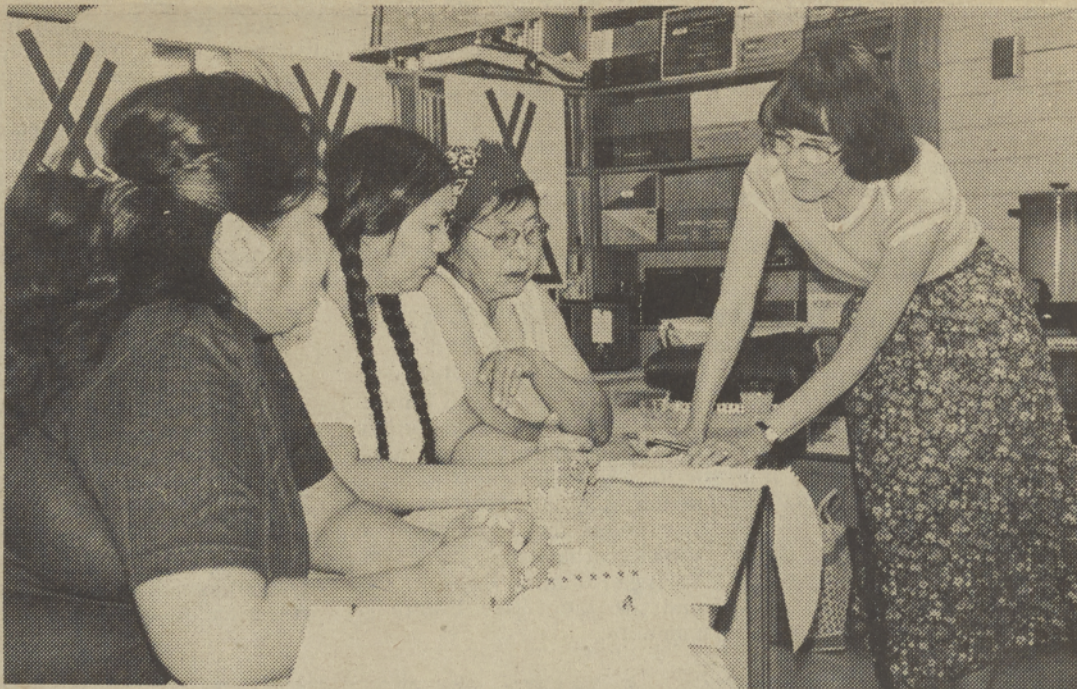
The Hymes were particularly pleased when Wilson was able to identify as Paiute the words scribbled in the margin of a well-known 1883 Sahaptin word list. The identity of the few words had been a mystery for years, said the Hymes.

No stranger to Wasco, or "kiksh" as it is known to various speaking groups, Dell Hymes, began studying the language in 1951 while a graduate student at Indiana University. For his doctorate, Dr. Hymes wrote a Wasco grammar. His main contacts through the years have been Philip Kahclamat and Hiram Smith.

In 1972 Virginia Hymes began learning Sahaptin, the language of the upper Columbia River basin. Her first word list, accompanied by language master cards, was assembled in 1973 with the cooperation of such locals as Susan Moses, Ellen Squiemphen, Hazel Suppah, Amelia Colwash, Linton Wini-shut and Verbena Greene.

Some of the same people who assisted Mrs. Hymes five years ago shared in the workshop this month. Such contact, along with the ongoing working relationship between Mrs. Hymes and Hazel Suppah, is bringing the linguist closer to an expanded dictionary, which she hopes to complete this year.

The new dictionary will go beyond the present word list to include more words, listed in alphabetical order by whole



LINGUIST Virginia Hymes (right) reviewed the grammar in recorded legends with Sahaptin language teacher Eliza Van Pelt, Amelia Colwash and Hazel Suppah. Rangila Photo

words or word parts, an English index, and an introductory grammatical sketch.

Whether or not it is published, the dictionary will be made available locally, as has all the Hymes' work.

The Hymes are by no means the first outsiders to take an interest in Indian languages of the area, although they have certainly been among the most attentive and involved. The first Sahaptin word list was made by a man named Biggs in 1853, shortly before the treaty. The most comprehensive list was done by Walker, a visitor to Warm Springs from 1880-1883.

Wasco, a Chinookan language of the lower Columbia River, has received much attention through the years, beginning in 1846 when a member of

an official U.S. exploring expedition wrote two short word lists for lower and upper Chinook.

One of the greatest contributions was made by Franz Boas, considered to be the father of modern American anthropology. In the 1890's he recorded a good part of the traditional stories of the lower Chinook, as well as writing a Wasco text and vocabulary. Boas's *Handbook of American Indian Languages*, a revolution in the comparative study of native languages, gives a significant amount of space to lower Chinook, using that tongue to illustrate linguistic concepts.

A comprehensive grammar and dictionary compiled by Walter Dyk in this century were

passed on to Dell Hymes, whose extensive files are invaluable.

In recent years Indians themselves have encouraged the preservation and teaching of their languages by asking that it be offered in schools and by forming such groups as the Sahaptin River Tribes Consortium, which is composed of five upper Columbia River tribes who speak variations of Sahaptin.

People who completed the class should be even better equipped to teach Sahaptin or Wasco formally in the classroom or share it informally with friends and relatives — another step closer to the revitalization of not only a language but a way of life.