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Students in Valencia Edgewater's Navajo literacy class taste the words as they form on their tongues.

Mimicking their teacher's pronunciation, students practice the sounds for the "a" sound or grit their teeth for the "i." The sounds change slightly as Edgewater adds diacritical marks: the high tones, hooks or glottal stops that signal rising accents, nasal overtones or other variations.

"Everyone knows language is important," Edgewater said during a break from a recent class in Piñon, Arizona. "We talk about it all the time, but we're not doing much about it."

Edgewater, a graduate student in the Diné Dual Language Teachers Professional Development Project at Northern Arizona University, teaches a variety of classes at the community

teaching strategies for parents, and literacy for speakers.



Students of all walks of life gather in classrooms, chapter houses and community spaces to take their language skills to the next level. It's all part of a community-based, grassroots effort to reclaim and revitalize the Navajo, or Diné, language.

“Everyone has different levels of knowledge and fluency,” Edgewater said. “Some people use the lanâ eâ r



