

## Teaching Comments on 2011 Arapaho Language Class Instruction

**January 24, 2011, class 1.** Today was the first day of the Arapaho Language class. The class is taught using the ASLA method and meets on Monday and Wednesday mornings. Students on an average will get about 2 hours of classroom instruction per week. The goal, similar to last year, is to see whether I can improve on student learning over last year's students. Over the Christmas break I increased the amount of language material they will need to learn and intensified the class. Things got off to a slow start due to a mix up with classroom scheduling and we didn't actually get started until 10:10 am. While it feels like I am working a little harder to get the class to know what they have to learn in the language, by the end of the class period they had moved through 25 single words and 15 sentences in Arapaho in about 45 minutes of instruction, demonstrating that they fully understood what they had been taught and appear to be right on track with last year's class.

**January 26, 2010, class2.** Three new students showed up at the start of class. The question I had was how quickly could I catch all three up to where the other students finished on Monday so I could continue to move them through new language material. I decided to film this class so I would have a visual record of how they did. I worked with the students one at a time, and after 17 minutes I was able to get all three students caught up with where the rest of the class had gotten to on Monday. At this point I started working with the other students as well as the new students to the class. After working with all the students (one at a time) for another 50 minutes the entire class had learned all of the first two skill sets, totaling 29 single words and 45 sentences or 74 different expressions in the language in 67 minutes. Several of the sentences learned were; A teenage boy is dancing, a bobcat is eating a mouse, a dog is playing with a ball, beavers are swimming, an airplane is flying by, a baby is sleeping, a young woman is reading, an old man is laughing.

**January 31, 2011, class3.** Today was the third class day, and for four students their second class day. We started class around 9:50 and went to 10:50, so they got 60 minutes of instruction. Today's instruction was focused on prepositional phrases. Prior to getting into these phrases I wanted to see how the newest students were retaining what was learned from Wednesday last week. I randomly moved Melissa through roughly 25 phrases from last week's class before moving her into the prepositional phrases. In about 15 minutes she had under control roughly 25 prepositional phrases (the class was video-taped but the tape is still at work so this will be revised after I watch the tape). After 60 minutes of instruction 5 students went through 34 prepositional phrases, in addition to being assessed on their retention of 40 verb phrases learned Monday and Wednesday of last week

**Feb. 2, 2011, class4.** Class started at 9:55 and went to 10:55. I began with those students who I didn't get a chance to work with on Monday. Halley was the first to start. Began with a brief assessment to see what she knew. After assessing that she knew her nouns and majority of verb phrases I moved to a bit of TPR. I pulled a chair out at the front of the classroom and told Halley in Arapaho to sit down, which she did. In Arapaho I next told McKenzie to go stand on Halley's right side, which he did after first going to her left side. I then told Andrea to side on Halley's left side, which she did, and Jeff to stand behind Halley. Then in Arapaho I let them hear me say; a man in is standing behind a chair, and woman is sitting on that chair between a man and a

woman. A man is standing on the right side and a woman is standing on the left side. They pretty much got so when I said in Arapaho; A boy is standing behind a child sitting on a chair between two boys, they knew what I was saying and were able to say it back to me. After this I finished working with the other students. The last student I worked with is having problems understanding and it took a bit of work to get her through. I believe this is because 7 days had past since I had worked with her. I will have to make sure that I spend some time working with each class so she isn't left lost. The class got 60 minutes of instruction (two hours this week) and already are showing signs of understanding more than what the students from last year understood by week three.

**Feb. 7, 9 & 10, TESTING.** There was no language instruction on these two class days (Feb 7 & 9) as students were tested. Students are tested one at a time, orally. It took approximately 3 hours and 50 minutes to test all students over the three-day period. Nothing is written, nor do students write anything during class instruction or for the exam. The test was supposed to consist of students demonstrating that they understood 20 words and 40 sentences when spoken in Arapaho, but ended up with them getting 27 words and 46 sentences. Last year's students wanted to show what they could say on their own in Arapaho, so I told this year's students they could do this as well. The average number of words said in Arapaho by students during the exam was 24, with the lowest being 18 and the highest 27, which a couple of students did. Of the sentences students said on their own in Arapaho, the highest number spoken was 45 out of 46, and the lowest spoken was 8 out of 46, with the average at 27 out of 46 spoken in Arapaho. It can not be over stated that students accomplished this after 3 hours and 50 minutes of language instruction. Students do not take any homework of any kind, written or non-written. Remembering this was only supposed to be a cognitive test, meaning students only had to demonstrate they knew what was being said to them in Arapaho, when students had gone through the full extent of what they were able to say on their own in Arapaho, they then listened to Arapaho spoken to them for the remainder of the exam, and demonstrated that they knew what it meant in English. When finished, all students got everything correct on this aspect of the exam, which meant that after 3 hours and 50 minutes of language instruction every student taking this oral exam (nothing was written) got 100% correct on a test that was supposed to be 20 words and 40 sentences but ended up being 27 words and 46 sentences.

**Feb. 14, class 5.** Tried something new with class. Introduced students to prepositional phrases. As I finished working with a student, the student then moved over to Robert, an advanced student in ASLA, who worked with the student on the first half of plural constructions. In this way we were able to exposure students more language. This seemed to work fairly well as I was able to get half the class through 34 prepositional phrases, and Robert got them through 20 plural word and sentence constructions. I will pick up the rest of the students next class. To date students have had approximately **4 hours and 52 minutes** of language instruction, and have been exposed to over 125 different ways to express themselves in Arapaho, covering a wide grammatical range.

**Feb. 16, class 6.** For this class I worked with have a group of students on the full set of plurals (50), while Robert worked with the other half on the first two language lessons to make sure that they were able to say all 34 words and 46 phrases in Arapaho on their own. It seemed to work well. Monday of next week is a holiday so there will be no class. We will see how well students

do on Wednesday of next week, after a full week of not having any Arapaho. An hour of classroom instruction used

**Feb. 21, Holiday, no class.**

**Feb. 23, class 7.** Did not videotape this class. Worked on prepositional phrases with students plus began having students learn to tell a joke in Arapaho. Class instruction = 1 hour

**Feb. 28, class 8.** Decided to put Mary through part of next weeks test. She went through a total of 50 phrases in Arapaho. After this brought up Haley, then Chris, who was followed by Andrea and then Toska, and worked with them one at a time learning new phrases for the last 20 minutes of class. Class instruction = 1 hour

**March 2, class 9.** Tested Melissa on first part of test, who went through 20 words and 50 phrases, all in Arapaho. After this students worked on learning to tell a joke in Arapaho for the last 35 minutes of class. Class instruction = 1 hour

**March 7.** Today's class was spent testing students, so no language instruction occurred. The test consists of students having to say a total of 20 words and 40 phrases in Arapaho, and then hearing 40 phrases said in Arapaho and saying what they meant in English.

**March 9.** Finished testing Chris, Haley, and Melissa. So far every students tested has gotten 100% of the test correct. Melissa was able to say 20 words and 64 phrases in Arapaho. One of the more complex phrases she was able to say in Arapaho was "A Girl is standing in front of a fence and a man and girl are standing behind the fence," "A man is sitting inside a house reading," "A baby is sleeping inside a cradleboard," "A dog is laying under a car," "A man, woman, and children are sitting inside a teepee," "A boy is standing behind a child sitting on a chair between two boys." While the other students aren't yet able to say this in Arapaho they can translate these from Arapaho to English. A sample of other sentences the class can easily translate from Arapaho to English and come close to being able to say in Arapaho are; A man is sitting between two windows, I see two birds flying above the ocean, they are seagulls. I see two cups on a table above two books, A man is reading inside a white house sitting in front of a window. A woman is riding a horse jumping over a stream.

**March 14, class 10.** Spent the first 45 minutes of class by having three students go through prepositional phrases. When they through with worked with two other students on plural constructions of words and sentences. The last 35 minutes of class was spent working on teaching them a variety of food items. These items were taught with corresponding colors. So students did just learn things like banana and bananas, grape and grapes, strawberry and strawberries, plus nine other food items, they also learn the color of these foods, such as, red strawberries, yellow bananas, purple grapes, in both plural and singular, since color has to agree with singular and plural as well as animate and inanimate. After class I finished Jeff up with his test. Thus far, students were tested on 26 words and 88 sentences (they were only supposed to get 20 words and 80 phrases to equal a total of 50 points for this test) and have ranged between 104 and 112 correct. This means all students tested have earned greater than 50 points for the test. To date students have had 9 hours and 52 minutes of actually classroom instruction, and can

say over 30 words, as well as over 90 sentences that they can add to or change in at least three different ways. Currently they are on a curve of learning a new phrase every 5 minutes of classroom instruction.

**March 16, class 11.** As a result of missing a week of class due to testing, I wanted to see get an idea of retention on some of the new language material that was being learned just prior to testing. I assessed several students on the last 16 prepositional phrases learned. Students have learned this language material well enough that I don't need to dwell on it and can move on. Assessed several other students on 50 plural phrases that cover an array of language situations. I will have to reinforce this material as several students are unsure of a number of phrases within this group. After this assessment, I began going over the joke with students. After working with the class on this for 15 minutes they have learned the first third. I hope that next class at least half of the class will have gotten through the entire joke. At this point in the term students have had just under 11 hours of actual language instruction.

**March 21, class 12.** At beginning of class I decided to really push the envelope. I exposed them to four different language situations. The first was 16 prepositional phrases, which they got through pretty easily. The second was examples of a variety of 50 phrases that expanded into complex sentences. Some examples of these are "Flowers are in a cup in water." "A person is holding porcupine babies." "A baby and his mother are smiling." "A white plate is between a fork and knife." "A boy is standing alone on a rock in the ocean." "A woman is riding a horse in the ocean." "Horses are running through the snow." "A bee is flying toward a flower." The class learned these and was able to say 38-40 of the fifty phrases I exposed them to fairly easily, they'll get the rest learned on Wednesday. After this they learned the second of three parts of the joke. Then I began teaching them a story in Arapaho about and pair of eagles that were separated and how the male went in search of his mate. They are picking this up really quickly and in the last 15 minutes of class, half of the students were able to say the opening two lines of the story in Arapaho. All this is taught orally and there is no writing or material that they take home and study. Total instruction time = **11 hours and 52 minutes**

**March 23, class 13.** I had ambitious plans for today's class, thought I was going to get them through the rest of the joke plus go onto learn more of the story; it didn't happen. I started with having the first student move through some prepositional phrases. That went well so I started the a different student with the same phrases then moved her onto learning various foods. But right at the start she identified the wrong food when I said it in Arapaho; the food was red strawberries but she went for the purple grapes. I moved her through a few different food items, which she correctly identified, but she kept choosing purple grapes instead of red strawberries. I saw an opportunity to teach her something new; a simple question, "What color is it?" referring to the strawberries. She openly admitted she had no idea what I was saying to her. So I told her the color of various things that I showed her, each time first asking her what color is it? Eventually she began to respond to the question, correctly saying the correct color. But each time I would ask her what color are the strawberries, she was clueless on the answer, even though she would correctly tell me the color of a student's shirt (which was red), her own coat (which was green and black), my pants which were black). I then realized as often happens, just because a student figures out the right answer to give, doesn't necessarily mean they actually know what the question is. Even with this realization it still took me about another 6 minutes to get the student

to understand what the question was. While it was great breakthrough for the student when that revelation happened, I was left with trying to figure out why it took the student that long to understand. After this I called on another student. We began going over singular and pluralized sentence constructions. These came after responses to questions asked in Arapaho like what are the dogs doing? They are lying on the grass (Her responses were always in Arapaho.). Where are the flowers? They are in a glass in water. What is the boy doing? He is standing on a rock in the ocean. What is the bee doing? It is flying toward a flower. Everything was going pretty good until I asked where is the plate. The response was supposed to be the plate is between a knife and fork. She hadn't a clue. So I asked her where is the man sitting, in order for her to clue off of the word between. She correctly responded in Arapaho "He is sitting *between* two windows." I next asked, "Where is the child?" to which she responded, "He is sitting on a chair *between* two boys." Then I asked, "Where is the plate?" She had no idea what I was asking. It was clear she was not listening to her own responses about things that were between other things. My initial plans for what I wanted to do were now out the window. After numerous tries to get her to understand I eventually had to ask her about twenty different questions, to which she gave correct responses in Arapaho before she was finally able to figure out the correct response. We now had gone through 50 minutes of class time so with only eight minutes left I quickly went through the beginning part of the story and class was over. What I realized what had happened was that students are not always listening to what is coming out of their mouths. They need to focus more on listen not only to me, but also to themselves, so their learning will be more effective. Hopefully Monday's class will move along better. **Class instruction = 65 minutes**

**March 28, class 14.** Worked with several students on plural constructions of sentences in Arapaho. The majority of students in the class generally seem to now know this language material. It is my hope that I can wrap this section up on Wednesday and get on with the next section. After working on the plural constructs, I moved onto the joke story line. Melissa was absent Wednesday of last week and I was curious to see what she knew of the joke after last working with her Wednesday March 16. I decided to have Mary tell the joke first so Melissa could hear it. Mary got through it with no problem. I then had Robert tell the joke. He also told the joke with no problem. Then I went to Melissa, who easily got through the joke. After Melissa I asked Cole to tell the joke. He got through about a third of it before he began to have problems telling it. He managed to work through about half of it before class time ran out. I will see how he and Jeff do on Wednesday, as Jeff was not able to make class today. **Class instruction = 1 hour**

**March 30, class 15.** Worked with Chris with plural sentence constructions, which he got through fine. Moved onto Halley who seemed half asleep and had to really work hard to get her to engage. Got her through about half of the material and then brought Jeff up who had missed class last week. He did reasonably well but when I moved onto foods he had trouble. Brought Tosca up and assessed her on plurals then foods, which gave her trouble. Brought Cole up who was reasonably fine with plurals but also had trouble with food. My assessment at this point is that I will have to move off of plurals and start class off fresh with food activities. Moved onto having students tell the joke. Robert, Mary, and Melissa got through the joke fine. Cole needed a little help but was pretty good. Next week is spring break so they won't be back in class again until April 11. The class has now had approximately 14 hours and 57 minutes of language instruction.

**April 11, class 16.** Had been bothered by the fact that class has been stuck on plurals sentences; decided it was time to move them on. Started class up with food items and sentences again. Began working with Andrea, who got through 20 words and 25 phrases without much problem. Moved onto Hailey who seemed to be resisting most of the time but did get through the material. Moved onto Chris next who also got through with little problem. After working with about half the class I moved onto the joke. Most of the class are able to get through almost the entire joke but will need a little more work before they are all able to tell it. Class instruction = 1 hour

**April 13, class 17.** Decided it was time to move class onto more phrases that have to do with food. Put forward entire section on foods (20 words & 35 sentences in all). Moved the first student through entire section in about 12 minutes. Only took about 40 minutes to work four students through entire section. In the last 20 minutes of class worked with them on learning the story of Co'ouu3ih'ooht. Was able to get them through about the first third of the story. Melissa seemed very promising so I asked her to come to my office hours so I could see if she could learn the entire story. Students added another two hours to their instruction time, now totaling 17 hours, and seem to be back on track. I think I should be able to get them up to the 6<sup>th</sup> language skill set before the term ends. Worked more (about 50 minutes) on the story with Melissa after class she is picking it up fast. Decided to have her come in on Thursday to work more on it. Class instruction = 1 hour

April 14. Melissa came in for about an hour today to work on the story with me. Very productive and I am very impressed with how quickly she is learning this. She is learning the story faster than it took me to teach my son and daughter. She got through some complex parts fairly easily. Line such as the mighty Bull elk, the land of the river people the otter, when the eagle arrived at the meadow. She has learned almost the entire story (6 of 8 parts) without being told any of the story in English, and was able to translate all that she learned thus far into English.

**April 18, class 18.** Had three students, one after the other, demonstrate cognition of food category. This consisted of me saying phrases in Arapaho things like; a woman is boiling potatoes. I am going to cook meat. A man is drinking soda and eating a sandwich sitting on a chair in front of a table. A boy is feeding a horse an apple. A man is drinking tea. A person is frying meat. A boy is eating corn, and the students demonstrating that they knew what was being said. After these three I had a fourth student come (Jeff) and told him to tell me everything he could say on his own about food in Arapaho; he produced around 35 phrases. In the last 20 minutes of class we went over the story of Coo'ouu3ih'ohut and the joke Ceebeh Ben Nec. Students received 60 minutes of classroom language instruction, and now total 18 hours of classroom instruction for the term.

**April 20.** No classroom instruction today. Students used the class to figure out what they would be doing tomorrow when they will be presenting at the Giving the Gift of Language.

**April 25, Class 19.** Finished off food group, then started class on clothing got through about 22 language items in this group. Class instruction = 1 hour