

## Teaching Comments on 2012 Arapaho Language Class Instruction

**January 23, 2012, class 1.** Today was the first day of the Arapaho Language class, and was video taped. The teaching methodology being used is the ASLA method, and the class meets on Monday and Wednesday mornings from 8:10 to 9:30. 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. After general introductions and explanation of students' role and responsibilities in the class, things got off to a very good start. By the end of the class period students had moved through 26 single words, 12 three-word combinations, and 20 sentences in Arapaho in about 50 minutes of instruction. The class appears to have a fully understanding of what they were taught and appear to be a little bit a head of last year's class learning curve. The class was video taped.

**January 25, 2012, class2.** A new student, from Prague, showed up at the start of class. My task was to catch her up to where the other students finished on Monday so I could continue to move the entire group onto new language material. The class was filmed so there would be a visual record of how they did. The student was getting over whelmed and began making a number of errors. Students are told that I will not inform them when they make an error. Thus, it is their responsibility to work toward knowing what they are saying is correct or not, and it is my responsibility as the instructor to keep track of the errors and work the student through the language material in such a manner so they realize their errors and then get them corrected. At the point the student was exposed to approximately 20 words and several word combination, even though the student had uncorrected errors, indications pointed to the student was getting overloaded so I decided to start working with the other students in the class. By the end of the class period, the entire class had gotten through 26 single words, 12 word combinations and 46 sentences, totaling 84 different language vocalizations. 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, a baby and mother are smiling, a man is smoking, an old Indian is sitting on a chair holding a pipe. This class was video taped.

**January 30, 2012, class3.** Today was the third class day. The class started at 8:15 and finished up around 9:20. Students are moving at a very fast pace, moving through 38 single nouns 52 verb phrases and 30 prepositional phrases, totaling 120 expressions in the language that they can understand. Some of the new phrases learned were; A horse is jumping over a bench a man is sitting on reading a paper; A girl is riding a horse jumping over a fence and stream; An eagle is flying above a lake; A dog is sleeping lying under a car. Students are also beginning to demonstrate their ability to say a number of words and phrases in the language. This class was video taped.

**February 1, 2012, class4.** Today was the fourth class day. Began assessing students' on language material. Began testing Dan by having him say as much as he could in Arapaho. In total he said 26 single words in Arapaho and 27 sentences, and demonstrated understanding another 17 phrases when said to him in Arapaho. Some of these phrases were; That man in bald; Elephants are walking; A woman is rowing a boat; A mother and her baby are smiling; a boy and his dog are praying (At this point I asked Dan in Arapaho if he prays. He understood and said in English no. I then told him in Arapaho how to say I do not pray and had him say that back to me); A young woman is reading a book; Beavers are swimming; A little mouse is sleeping. By the end of this class all but two students had been tested. All testing is oral, nothing is written. This class was video taped.

**February 6, 2012, class5.** Finished testing students. Since Native languages were not traditionally written, the exam is given as an oral exam, nothing is written, and consisted of students demonstrating an understanding of 20 words and 40 phrases when said to them in the language, but I also had 15 extra phrases. Students were given the opportunity to say what they knew in Arapaho first. All students were able to say 20 words in Arapaho, and ranged from being able to say a minimum of 26 phrases at the low end in Arapaho and 46 phrases in Arapaho at the high end. A few of the more challenging phrases they were able to say in Arapaho were; An Indian is sitting on a chair holding a pipe; A dog is flying and a man is chasing him; A woman is dancing on a table; A baby is laughing. The class was video taped.

**February 8, 2012, class6.** Finished testing last two students. The first student was able to say 20 words in Arapaho and understood 3 other words when said to him in Arapaho. He was not able to say any phrases in Arapaho but understand 40 different phrases when said to him in Arapaho. The second student said 23 words in Arapaho and understood two other words when said in Arapaho to him. He was also able to say 35 different phrases in Arapaho and understand another 16 when said to him. After testing the class was introduced to plural words and phrases in Arapaho. Some of these consisted of flower – flowers; women; child – children; egg – eggs; wagon – wagons; dog are lying on the grass; Airplanes are flying by; Babies are sleeping; Two girls are jumping into water; A mother and her baby are smiling; A bee is flying toward a flower; A baby is sleeping in a cradleboard; Women are singing. Overall, the class was able to go through 30 new verbal expressions in the language. The test was worth 60 points, plus extra credit points. The final test results had students get from 66 – 76 points on the exam. Didn't have camera so class not video taped.

**February 13, 2012, class7.** Moved the class through an additional 20 more phrases expressing plurality. In all the class has now been exposed to **and can understand** 42 single words and 120 phrases. Of this number they can say in Arapaho 38 single words and about 64 phrases. Some of the phrases learned during this class were; A mother is holding her baby sleeping in a cradleboard. One of the things about this sentence is that the students learned if they are focusing on the mother holding the cradleboard – then the verb for holding is said differently then if they were to focus on the mother holding the baby, who is sleeping in a cradleboard. Other phrases; Dogs are lying on snow. Two seagulls are flying above the ocean. I see four mosquitoes flying above that table. A wolf is howling. Four wolves are howling. A man is riding a wagon. Five deer are lying under a trampoline. Two girls are riding horses through a river. I see two little mice kissing. They were also exposed to two mice kissing each other. Other phrases they are learning were. I see an elephant flying. A cow jumped over the moon. Two men are standing in front of a white truck. Two men are standing in front of blue trucks. I see two cups on a table above two books. Puppies are standing on a wagon.

**February 15, 2012, class8.** Began by having individual students go through as many phrases in Arapaho as they could. At this point most of the students in the class are able to say just about 45 of the 52 verb phrases in Arapaho. After students got their turn at showing what they could say in Arapaho, they worked on understanding prepositional and plurals phrases. Students also are showing that they can say about 50% of these phrases in Arapaho, which increases what they are able to say in Arapaho to over 40 single words and almost 100 phrases.

**February 20, 2012; Presidents Day, No Class**

**February 22, 2012, class9.** Started class by having each student take 8 minutes to say everything they could in Arapaho. The least a student said was a little over 40 phrases, the most was close to 60 phrases. After this I wanted to show the class that even this early into the term they are capable of saying far more than they realize by having them say several phrases I had not actually taught them or they ever heard me say before. One of the new phrases they said were an elephant is swimming. A floating feather. Children are floating. At this point in the semester students have a base of over 160 phrases. What they are beginning to learn is that they can interchange these phrases to create as many as 100 more new phrases on their own. The last part of the class was getting students introduced to ten different types of foods along with their respective colors; for example red strawberries, purple grapes, green apple, etc. As of I calculated that by the end of this class students had received a total of 7.5 hours of language instruction or 453 minutes and had learned 30 single words and 164 different complete sentences/phrase in Arapaho totally 194 different speech elements in the language. When dividing language instruction time spent, 453 minutes, by 194 different speech elements it equals a new term or phrase learned every 2 min of instruction.

**February 27, 2012, class10.** Only a few students were in class today. I had them work some on extending what they were able to say in Arapaho on their own. This was done for the first 30 minutes of class time. The last 30 minutes were spent going over some of the more difficult phrases I wanted them to learn new food terms and phrases. Some of these were; fry bread, milk and cookies, Food is on the table; A woman is drinking milk; A man is eating a sandwich; A man is drinking coffee.

**February 29, 2012, class11.** Beginning of class spent on assessing students level before they take the midterm exam next week. The midterm will consist of them having to say 60 phrases in Arapaho, then translate 20 phrases from Arapaho into English, and another 20 phrases for comprehension. I also exposed them to a few new things, the word for camera, dragonfly, picture and the phrase "He is taking your picture." After this worked in 10 new phrases that dealt with food prep and consumption. Classroom instruction went for 66 minutes. At this point in the term students have had a total of 9.5 hours of instruction, and have been exposed to about 36 words 188 Arapaho phrases.

**March 5, 2012, class 12.** The first 50 minutes of class was spent giving individual students their mid term exam. The exam consisted of three parts the first was to have students say 20 single words and 43 phrases in Arapaho. The second was to have students listen to 40 different phrases said in Arapaho and then translate them into English, and for the last part students have to demonstrate that they understand 20 more phrases said in Arapaho. Because the exam is oral and students are tested one at a time, only half the class got through the first part of the test. The last 20 minutes of class was spent going over various phrases that dealt with food. Some of the new phrases learned were A boy is feeding an apple to a horse; A mountain lion is going to eat a deer; A man is drinking coffee; A woman is eating a bowl of fruit; I like the taste of meat so I am going to cook this meat; I cooked this meat now I am going to eat it; A woman is frying potatoes.

**March 7, 2012, class 13.** Continued testing students during the first 45 minutes of class. Was able to get several students finished with the rest of the exam. Two of the more challenging phrases a couple of students were able to say in Arapaho were; A boy is standing behind a child sitting on a chair between two boys. One student was able to add to this – One boy is on his right and another boy is standing on his left. The other phrase that three students were able to say is A man is reading a paper inside a white house sitting on a chair in front of windows. Thus far the students that have completed the exam have all gotten 100%. The last 25 minutes of class was spent going over things that involve food preparation and consumption.

**March 12, 2012, class 14.** Continued testing students for the first 45 minutes of class. This part of the test consisted of the student being tested listening to a sentence said in Arapaho and then telling me the English translation. Because this is done one student at a time, there will be one more day of testing students. The last 25 minutes of the class was spent introducing students to the beginning of a story – Don't Drink the Water.

**March 14, 2012, class 15.** Finished testing last students in class. The test consisted of 20 single words and 80 sentences. Each item said correctly, regardless of whether a single word or sentence, earned the student a half point; thus getting 100 correct language responses was worth 50 points. There were an additional 4 single difficult words and 10 very complex sentences that could earn students seven extra bonus points should they opt to try any of the extras. While most of the students only tried extras they were sure of, only one student opted to try all of the extras. I have to admit I had wondered if this year would break the testing results pattern; but it didn't. Since first offering this language class in 2004 to present, every student that has taken the first two exams has gotten 100% of the test's language items correct. On this exam, two thirds of the class received 54, one student got 55 points and one student got everything correct earning 57 points. After the exam, the last 20 minutes were spent working on learning a story. Students were able to get through close to half of the story. The story is taught only in Arapaho, without the aid of any English translations.

**March 19, 2012, class 16.** Had wanted to move back to teaching class the story, but decided to assess where they now are with their Arapaho speaking. I assessed that I may have moved them through the prepositional phrases too quickly as there are close to half of the phrases that students are not able to say in Arapaho. Rather than stop teaching the story I've decided to use the first 35 minutes of the class to get them better grounded with prepositional phrases, and then use the back 35 minutes to continue working on the story. Students received about 60 minutes of class instruction.

**March 21, 2012, class 17.** Worked with students on prepositional phrases. Found it interesting that although the students didn't feel confident with these types of phrases, when working with them students demonstrated that they knew these phrases better than they had credited themselves with knowing. I ended up working with students longer than planned to get them feeling more comfortable before moving onto the story. The class seems to be picking up this story faster than last year's class; after about a total of 65 minutes working on the storyline the class has learned about half the story.

**April 9, 2012, class 18.** Students were off for spring break and have not been in class for 19 days. I decided to see what their cognitive retention rate was like after their break. Working with one student at a time, I said partial sentences in Arapaho that they had to complete and also demonstrate that they understood the content of what was said. On the basis of how they performed this task I have estimated that their retention rate was around 98%. We did this exercise for about 50 minutes, then in the last 18 minutes of class we did more work toward learning the story. One student was able to say about 95% of the story in Arapaho. I'm hoping to get the rest of the class up to this level next class.

**April 11, 2012, class 19.** Worked on the story for the first 40 minutes of class. While all students are just about able to tell it in its entirety, they are little unsure about the meaning in certain parts of the story. We will get to work more on this over the next two classes before the workshop starts. The last 25 minutes of class was spent reviewing sections of skill sets 3, 4, and 5. Cognition is just about without error for all of these but students needed a little more work so they could produce the sentences that make up these skill sets more confidently. I also did a few short translation exercise where I said something in English and students had to say the sentence in Arapaho. While they demonstrated a fairly high skill level with this exercise, it needs to be strengthened.

**April 16, 2012, class 20.** I wanted to make sure that students understood what the story meant in English so we worked through that for about 40 minutes. This was achieved through the use of Arapaho that they already understood to help them understand the Arapaho from the story without the aid of English. After I was reasonably certain that they understood what the story meant, they worked on translating phrases said in English into Arapaho. Instruction lasted for 70 minutes.

**April 18, 2012, class 21.** The class worked on building up their Arapaho speaking ability. Some of the things they did was to translate parts of fairly well know songs into Arapaho. A few of the song lyrics they did this with were; Blue Skies smiling at me; Some where over the rainbow blue birds fly; When Irish eyes are smiling. After playing around with this each student had to tell the story in Arapaho. On Friday when they tell it at the workshop, this will be the first time that it will be translated and heard by them into English.

**April 23, 2012, class 22.** At 8:20 am I began assessing class over material that students were presented with over the course of the term. This was done with individual students for the entire class. The exercise also helped me to identify areas that were weak, due to my either not spending enough time on, or completing overlooking. Generally speaking, students showed a very high retention rate along with an ability to puzzle out new speech forms.

**April 24, 2012.** Gave a student an early test. The test was orally given; no writing, and had elements that required him to synthetically create sentences he had never actually heard said in class as well as listen to sentences he had never actually heard said in class. One example of this was the following. The student was asked for the first time, Do you eat meat, to which he had to reply. After replying he was told in Arapaho a sentence with words (those **bolded**) in it that he had never heard **I am not going to eat that meat because it is spoiled**. The student was able to figure the sentence out fairly easily with only the word **spoiled** giving him the most difficulty and taking the most time to figure out.

**April 30, 2012.** Tested last student. Was really concerned that the student might not get an A and break a pattern of every student that has taken the final, as well as all other exams for this class, have gotten 100% on every exam. When all test items were tallied, the student received a 75 out of 75 on the final.