



Total Physical Response Language Teaching Program

WE HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE TO LEARN ABOUT THIS WONDERFUL PROGRAM IN CHASE, B.C. The program is offered through the Chief Atahm School in Adams Lake. Chief Atahm School is a full immersion school that teaches the Shuswap language to children from babies six weeks old to grade 7. They offer courses of TPR in the month of July. The first course is where you learn how to implement the language in your programs. They give you the tools to learn how to teach your language in your own community. The second course teaches you how to implement the stories in your language and eventually teach your legends in your language.

We have sent most of our Education Department and a part of our ECE staff this year to the training. We have enjoyed the training very much as the TPR teaches you how to have fun with your students and they want to learn the language. Our students in our Preschool and Daycare love this way of teaching as it gets them physically involved. They are up walking, playing with the props and getting totally immersed in the language that they are learning during that lesson. We also incorporate songs and dances into our language lessons and the children love it when Andy comes in with his drum and gets them singing and dancing to our songs. The children are picking up the language a lot quicker and it is not boring, mundane or routine. When it comes to the language component of our program, they cannot get enough of teaching time.

Brenda Paull, Syaykw Head Start (Sechelt)

The Adams Lake Band got involved with TPR after one of their teachers, Anne Michel, took a course in language teaching methods at Enow'kin Centre in Penticton. No one really knew what she was talking about when she tried to explain TPR, so staff decided to give her 15 minutes a day to start so she could show how it worked. That was in 1993—they have been using it ever since.

In spite of her enthusiasm for TPR, curriculum coordinator and language nest teacher Kathy Michel of the Adams Lake Band says that no language teaching method is a substitute for immersion. "I have a strong belief that we should be doing immersion. Immersion is not a language teaching method; it is a belief. If you have language speakers, you can teach in your language." For Adams Lake, TPR was a way to ensure that children entering their immersion program, who hadn't been in the language nests early on, would have enough language so they could survive in the immersion program. "It works really well for beginners. It is all we use for our adult language classes."

TPR is based on how children naturally learn their first language: first they are surrounded



by speech and gestures and they do a lot of listening and observing. Babies, for example, spend a year or more absorbing their mother language without being able to speak, but during this time they are internalizing the language—recognizing and understanding vocabulary, figuring out patterns, etc. in preparation for speech. Young children respond physically to the speech of their parents. TPR mimics this process and children are actively engaged with the language through movement. TPR is fun because it is active: children enjoy getting up and moving around. It is a good tool for building vocabulary, and does not put pressure on students to speak before they are confident and ready. Games and activities emphasize seeing, listening, and touch/movement.

July 3 – 13th, 2007

Total Physical Response Summer Institute, Level 1

Accredited 10-day institute for teachers of First Nations languages. Cost: \$800.
Location: Chief Atahm School,
Adams Lake Band, Chase, B.C.

A second institute focuses on TPR storytelling. It will likely be offered for summer 2008. Pre-requisites are Level 1 TPR and having implemented TPR in your program. For information on either institute, contact: Kathy Michel or Kim Dennis.
Tel: (250) 679-8837
Fax: (250) 679-8862

celebrating dads!

Father's Day Contest

We want to hear from you! Tell us about dads, uncles, or grandpas in your Head Start community and send photos of those important men in your lives! You can also share your ideas about how to reach out to welcome and involve fathers, send children's drawings showing the special men in their lives or showing them doing things with them, write poems, make cards for dads and send us a copy... Be creative!

Send submissions to the *Growing Together* Editor in the regular mail or by email. See the back page of the newsletter for contact info. Feel free to call or email if you have any questions.

**Deadline:
FRIDAY, APRIL 6, 2007**

All submissions received on time will be entered into a random draw for a prize on the theme of fathers!

