

Mapping Planet Earth

Classroom at a Glance

Teacher:	Stephanie Appel
Language:	French
Grade:	2
School:	Radburn Elementary School, Fair Lawn, New Jersey
Lesson Date:	March 8
Class Size:	23
Schedule:	30 minutes, two times per week

Video Summary

In this lesson, students practice vocabulary for the continents and oceans. They begin by reviewing vocabulary for the solar system, then narrow their focus to planet Earth. Finally, as a class and in pairs, students practice the continents and oceans vocabulary using Total Physical Response and maps.

Standards Addressed

- Connections: Making Connections

Read about these standards at the end of this lesson.

Key Terms

- Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES)
- Total Physical Response (TPR)

Definitions for these terms can be found in the Glossary located in the Appendix.

Class Profile

“I like to do content-based lessons because I think the students enjoy it. It’s language that is meaningful to them. They like knowing that they can talk about something that’s real in the classroom.”—Stephanie Appel

School Profile

Stephanie Appel is a traveling teacher in New Jersey’s Fair Lawn School District. She teaches grades 1–4 French at several elementary schools each year, including Radburn Elementary. The Radburn community is made up primarily of professionals, with a number of foreign-born families, mostly from Russia and Israel. Many students hear a language other than English at home, so they are familiar with different language structures. Radburn Elementary offers on alternating years either French or Spanish to first-graders. The school’s 400 students continue with the same language they started in first grade, all the way through fifth grade.

Lesson Design

Fair Lawn School District’s elementary foreign language teachers—all of whom are traveling teachers—designed the district’s elementary curriculum to address the needs of novice learners. The curriculum uses the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning and the New Jersey World Languages Curriculum Framework as guidelines (see Resources), particularly the Framework’s cumulative progress indicators, which mandate what students should know and be able to do at specific benchmark grades. The team meets weekly to share activity ideas and make sure they are providing a comparable experience for all elementary school students in the district.

When designing lessons, Ms. Appel and her colleagues have four goals:

- to integrate content with the classroom curriculum;
- to address the three modes of communication within each unit;
- to assess during the unit and in a final culminating activity; and
- to recycle previously taught materials in the new unit.

The Lesson

In the videotaped lesson, students practiced vocabulary for the continents and oceans. In addition to knowing this vocabulary from a previous French lesson, the students were familiar with the geography content from their general classroom curriculum. To reinforce learning, Ms. Appel tries to introduce topics at the same time that they are being covered in the regular classroom, although sometimes she teaches topics before or after they occur in the general curriculum. She often requests copies of materials used in the classroom that she can translate into French at a simplified level. Students are excited to recognize information that they already know, and enjoy putting it into another language. But even if the information is brand new, says Ms. Appel, “there’s an equal excitement about it because they don’t know so much, and there’s a curiosity.” Classroom teachers also benefit when a topic is introduced in French class because once students know the content, less regular class time has to be devoted to it.

Year at a Glance

All About Me

- Personal information: Name, age, feelings
- My home: House, family, pets

Me and My Community

- School: Subjects, likes/dislikes, classroom activities/objects, comparison with France
- Town: People and places in the community, careers
- Transportation: Going to places near and far

Me and My World

- Solar system: Nine planets and their positions, using ordinal numbers
- **Continents of Earth: Seven continents, land and sea, animals associated with each continent, French-speaking countries, Canada**

Class Profile, cont'd.

Key Teaching Strategies

- Content-Based Instruction: The teacher promotes language acquisition and/or cultural knowledge through subject matter from a range of disciplines.
- Providing Comprehensible Input: The teacher introduces language that is slightly beyond students' current ability to understand and uses visuals, gestures, rephrasing, and/or props to establish meaning. The goal is for students to comprehend language through context.

Analyze the Video

As you reflect on these questions, write down your responses or discuss them as a group.

Before You Watch

Respond to the following questions:

- What accommodations do traveling teachers (that is, teachers who do not have their own classrooms) have to make?
- What kinds of activities engage second-graders in a language class?
- How might you connect with content that students learn in other classes? How might you work with general classroom teachers to establish this connection?

Watch the Video

As you watch "Mapping Planet Earth," take notes on Ms. Appel's instructional strategies, particularly how she organizes multiple activities and connects to content from other subject areas. Write down what you find interesting, surprising, or especially important about the teaching and learning in this lesson.

Reflect on the Video

Review your notes, and then respond to the following questions:

- What strategies does Ms. Appel use to hold students' attention?
- What evidence do you see of students learning geography content? What evidence do you see of students learning French?
- What techniques does Ms. Appel use to maintain communication in French when speaking with students?

Analyze the Video, cont'd.

Look Closer

Take a second look at Ms. Appel's class to focus on specific teaching strategies. Use the video images below to locate where to begin viewing.



Video Segment: From Review to New Learning

You'll find this segment approximately 6 minutes and 30 seconds after the video starts. Watch for about 2 minutes and 30 seconds.

The class reviews vocabulary terms for the solar system, and then focuses on Earth geography.

- What does Ms. Appel learn about students' language development?
- How does Ms. Appel respond when Yasmine has trouble answering?
- At what point does the class shift to new learning?
- How does Ms. Appel help students understand what the map represents?



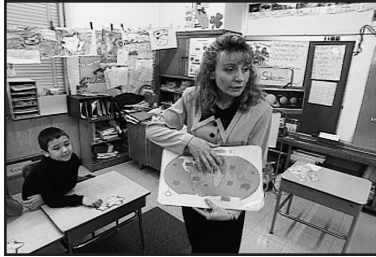
Video Segment: Becoming the Teacher

You'll find this segment approximately 14 minutes after the video starts. Watch for about 4 minutes.

Students take turns asking their classmates to identify the continents on a map.

- How does Ms. Appel facilitate the activity for students who take turns leading the class?
- How does Ms. Appel structure the activity so that it is a positive experience for all students?

Analyze the Video, cont'd.



Video Segment: Working in Pairs

You'll find this segment approximately 21 minutes after the video starts. Watch for about 4 minutes.

Working in pairs, students label the continents and the oceans on a world map.

- What is the purpose of the pairs activity?
- Observe the two featured student pairs and answer the following questions for each pair: Which student takes the lead? How do the students interact? What language pattern is used in French? When do the students use English?

Connect to Your Teaching

Reflect on Your Practice

As you reflect on these questions, write down your responses or discuss them as a group.

- What techniques do you use to help you stay in the target language with your students?
- How do you identify and then teach vocabulary for topics that interest your students?
- When students are unable to answer open-ended questions, how do you help them formulate an answer?
- For teachers of higher grades, how might you adapt some of the activities that Ms. Appel uses?

Watch Other Videos

Watch other videos in the *Teaching Foreign Languages K–12* library for more examples of teaching methodologies like those you've just seen. Note: All videos in this series are subtitled in English.

"Holidays and Seasons" (German) illustrates connections to other content areas and features a teacher without a permanent classroom, and "Food Facts and Stories" (Spanish) shows older students making connections to science.

Connect to Your Teaching, cont'd.

Put It Into Practice

Try these ideas in your classroom.

- When teaching thematic vocabulary, use visuals to convey meaning and to help students remember words. Incorporate the visuals into multiple activities; repetition in different contexts helps set words in students' memory. Ms. Appel used a wall map, manipulatives of the continents, a poster of the planets, and actual soil and water samples to reinforce vocabulary. She used these materials in several activities, including full-class and pairs practices, to give students different opportunities to use the words. Illustrated children's books, Web sites, magazines, or even your own creations can provide good visuals. When traveling abroad, plan ahead to collect authentic materials that you can use in class.
- Develop students' language comprehension by directing discussion. When introducing a new topic, let your end of the conversation initially dominate the class. Students can concentrate on absorbing and understanding the material; gradually, their language output will increase. Along the way, create opportunities to check for student comprehension. For example, Ms. Appel used simple, but extended, conversation during her class. When asking questions, she elaborated and paraphrased to provide students with rich input. Students were then allowed to respond with words and short phrases that demonstrated their understanding of the content and the language.
- Introduce and practice vocabulary learning using gestures and facial expressions that connect with the meaning of the words or phrases. Ms. Appel used gestures with students to practice the vocabulary and to assess their understanding of it. Students of all ages can be encouraged to associate gestures with certain words, and can be expected to understand new vocabulary with the help of gestures and facial expressions.

Resources

Lesson Materials

"Am Stram Gram"*

Lyrics to a traditional French rhyme used in the lesson

* These lesson materials can be found in the Appendix.

Curriculum References

New Jersey World Languages Curriculum Framework

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/frameworks/worldlanguages/>

Standards

National Standards for Foreign Language Learning

Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century defines what students should know and be able to do in foreign language education. This lesson correlates to the following standard:

Connections: Connect With Other Disciplines and Acquire Information

Standard 3.1: Making Connections

Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.

Notes
