

Food Facts and Stories

Classroom at a Glance

Teacher:	John Pedini
Language:	Spanish I
Grade:	8
School:	Michael Driscoll School, Brookline, Massachusetts
Lesson Date:	January 9
Class Size:	14
Schedule:	40 minutes daily

Video Summary

In this lesson, students make connections to science, health, and math during a nutrition discussion. They talk about the effects of a fast-food diet, using a variety of authentic materials including the Food Guide Pyramid and a fast-food restaurant menu. Later in the lesson, they use Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS) to learn and practice new vocabulary.

Standards Addressed

- Communication: Interpersonal, Interpretive
- Cultures: Products
- Connections: Making Connections

Read about these standards at the end of this lesson.

Key Terms

- affective filter
- authentic materials
- performance level
- realia
- Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS)

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

Class Context

“I think it’s important that we touch upon history, science, math, and all the other curricula in our Spanish class to show that these things are done in this language. In different countries that are Spanish-speaking countries, they do study science. They do study history. They study math. So do we. But when you put it in that kind of a context, the emphasis is not anymore on trying to acquire the language.” —John Pedini

School Profile

John Pedini teaches seventh- and eighth-grade French and Spanish at the Michael Driscoll School in Brookline, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston. The school’s 400 students in grades K–8 are largely from the Washington Square community, a culturally diverse neighborhood with a large immigrant population. The school hosts Brookline’s Russian bilingual program, and all students in grades 1–6 study Mandarin Chinese. In the seventh grade, students can begin the two-year Spanish program—an equivalent of one year of high school Spanish. In the videotaped classroom, students had been speaking solely in Spanish during class since October of the eighth grade.

Lesson Design

The Driscoll foreign languages department determines their curricula using the Brookline Learning Expectations and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (see Resources). The Learning Expectations describes the topics and performance levels that students are expected to master at each grade level.

Year at a Glance

Review of seventh-grade themes and grammar

El Ecuador: Talking on the Phone

- Giving, accepting, and refusing invitations
- Making suggestions

El Ecuador: Meals and Food

- Ordering in a restaurant
- **Nutrition**
- Food in different cultures

Texas: Shopping

- Clothing; Local shops
- Art of bartering in an open market
- Buying gifts; Giving opinions on purchases

Puerto Rico: Health

- Mental health; Stress management; Feelings
- Physical health; Visiting the doctor

Puerto Rico: Vacations

- Past events
- Making future plans

Final assessments and final projects for the full two-year course

Class Context, cont'd.

For the Spanish program, the department also chose a textbook that addressed all of the themes they had selected and that supported their proficiency-based curriculum. When designing his lessons, Mr. Pedini customizes the curriculum to meet his students' needs, and uses the book and ancillary materials to reinforce student learning.

The Lesson

The videotaped lesson was a culminating activity that got students actively involved with food and numbers vocabulary. One of the teaching methods that Mr. Pedini used was Total Physical Response Storytelling, in which he wrote an original, engaging, and age-appropriate story that built on his students' previous vocabulary knowledge while introducing new words. To strengthen the activity, he used key elements of the TPRS formula in his story: an exaggerated narrative, a short list of new words, a repetition of key words, and three different scenarios. He also included opportunities for students to retell the story and to answer questions to demonstrate their comprehension.

Mr. Pedini began using TPRS after attending a workshop by Blaine Ray in September 2001. "I said, 'Wow, this makes a lot of sense,'" recalls Mr. Pedini. "So, of course, I immediately went back and used it." At another conference he attended, Mr. Pedini got the idea of using points to help motivate his students. He awards points to students based on their participation during activities, and takes away points if students speak in English. Students can then trade in their points at the end of the term to improve their grades.

Key Teaching Strategies

- **Acquiring Vocabulary Through Authentic Materials:** The teacher uses documents from the target language to teach new vocabulary and to provide students with vocabulary practice.
- **Content-Based Instruction:** The teacher promotes language acquisition and/or cultural knowledge through subject matter from a range of disciplines.

Class Context, cont'd.

- **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.
- **Role-Playing:** Role-playing is an activity in which students dramatize characters or pretend that they are in new locations or situations. It may or may not have a cultural element. This activity challenges students by having them use language in new contexts.

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:

- How can Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS) be used to present and have students practice new vocabulary?
- What are the instructional advantages of using stories or narratives to teach new language?
- What kind of content base do you provide when teaching vocabulary themes? For example, when teaching food-related vocabulary, Mr. Pedini focuses on the issue of nutrition.

Watch the Video

As you watch "Food Facts and Stories," take notes on Mr. Pedini's instructional strategies, particularly how he uses TPRS to present and have students practice new vocabulary, as well as the types of authentic materials that he uses. Write down what you find interesting, surprising, or especially important about the teaching and learning in this lesson.

Analyze the Video, cont'd.

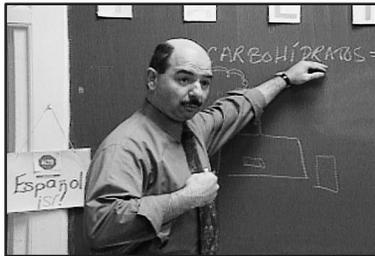
Reflect on the Video

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

- What are the various devices Mr. Pedini uses to teach vocabulary and help students remember new words?
- Identify the various steps in the TPRS activity.
- How does Mr. Pedini help students feel confident enough to perform during the TPRS activity?
- What steps do students complete as they learn the vocabulary?
- What Standards does the lesson meet, and how does it meet them?

Look Closer

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



Video Segment: Teaching Vocabulary and Content Together

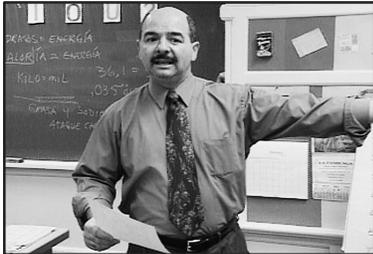
You'll find this segment approximately 6 minutes after the video starts. Watch for about 5 minutes.

Mr. Pedini and his students use authentic materials to discuss food's nutritional value.

- List the authentic materials that support meaningful learning in this segment. How are they sequenced? Why are they sequenced that way?
- How does Mr. Pedini get meaning across to students? What kinds of questions does he ask? What nonlinguistic clues does he give?
- How do students show they understand?

Analyze the Video, cont'd.

- What evidence do you see that students are using background knowledge in their responses?



Video Segment: Telling the Story

You'll find this segment approximately 14 minutes after the video starts. Watch for about 4 minutes and 30 seconds.

After students have a solid understanding of the vocabulary, Mr. Pedini builds upon the food theme in a TPRS activity.

- What elements in the story appeal to these middle school learners?
- What roles do students play in this segment?
- How is interest maintained among the students at their seats?
- What elements of the storytelling episode aid student learning and memory?
- What evidence do you see that students are learning?



Video Segment: Retelling the Story

You'll find this segment approximately 21 minutes and 30 seconds after the video starts. Watch for about 3 minutes.

Students retell the story, featuring new actors and a student narrator.

- What observations about student learning can you make from this activity?
- What function does this activity serve?

Analyze the Video, cont'd.

- Why does Mr. Pedini accept repeated errors, such as *señora* instead of *señorita*, and *busca para* instead of *busca*? What is the reason for allowing mistakes that do not interfere with meaning?
- How well does the student narrator perform, given the time frame for the lesson?
- Are the seated students still involved and attentive?

Connect to Your Teaching

Reflect on Your Practice

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

- How do you track students' vocabulary acquisition from awareness/understanding to usage in context?
- How comfortable are you creating original stories that appeal to the age group you are teaching? If that is not your strength, where else could you find a story?
- How can you help students feel comfortable with the performance aspect of a TPRS activity?
- How do you use vocabulary and concepts from disciplines with which you are not very familiar?
- How might you present unfamiliar vocabulary words that have no cognates? In other words, how do you communicate the meaning of new words that are not related to words in other languages?

Connect to Your Teaching, cont'd.

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.

"Sports in Action" (German) features students engaged in TPRS, and "Mapping Planet Earth" (French) illustrates connections to other content areas for younger students.

Put It Into Practice

Try these ideas in your classroom.

- To successfully link vocabulary to other disciplines, first refresh or advance your own learning through good authentic materials. Collect materials that are age-appropriate, appeal to your students' interests, and parallel their course of study. Posters, books for young people, magazines, Web sites, and other realia provide highly visual contexts that help learners remember new vocabulary. As you travel or attend professional meetings, look for illustrated classroom references. These will be especially important in subject areas where you feel less knowledgeable.
- Storytelling is a powerful teaching method for all age groups, particularly when there is a set of key vocabulary terms and structures that can be taught as lexical phrases. You could use a story like the one Mr. Pedini wrote, or one that another teacher has shared with you. Most teachers find that the best stories are those created for a particular group of students. Students memorize these stories easily, comprehend grammar structures in them that they have not studied before, and then use the structures in retelling. You can use stories to begin lessons on current events, cultural practices/products, films, literature, and more.

Connect to Your Teaching, cont'd.

- When introducing new material, you can be the “expert” who helps students acquire new concepts and the language. Plan your interaction, but be prepared to adjust to how students respond and to how well they understand the material. For example, Mr. Pedini uses a variety of materials to build a discussion about nutrients, but he constantly checks to see if students understand and if they can respond meaningfully. The interactions are student-centered despite Mr. Pedini’s lead role in the discussion, because students are primarily absorbed in the pursuit of meaning.
- When designing a health-focused lesson in a foreign language classroom, it is important, not only to present accurate information, but to be aware of potentially sensitive issues, in this case regarding nutrition and eating habits. Here are a few things to keep in mind:
 1. Recognize that dietary habits vary from person to person. Some students may be vegetarian or vegan, some may have restrictions on certain foods due to religious beliefs or for medical reasons (for example, allergies and diabetes), and some may have an eating disorder or be on a doctor-ordered specialized diet. Refrain from recommending specific foods as sources of a particular nutrient.
 2. Show sensitivity to overweight students. It’s important to educate about the health dangers of overeating and overindulging in unhealthy foods, but refrain from using language that can be demeaning and embarrassing.
 3. Be cautious about presenting information that could be frightening to younger students. For example, although students at this age may not be at risk for certain health problems like heart disease, they could still be left to worry about their parents or other loved ones.

Connect to Your Teaching, cont'd.

4. Talk about nutrition in terms of “guidelines” rather than “rules.” While it’s important that students be aware of their dietary habits, preaching strict calorie counting can be intimidating or even damaging, particularly to anyone dealing with an eating disorder. In general, keep in mind that calorie requirements vary among individuals.
5. Avoid discussing fad diets, even if you are attempting to debunk them, as this can add to the confusion, frustration, or temptation that students already feel toward them.
6. Consult with your school’s health teacher to make sure that students receive consistent information from class to class.

In general, students need to know they are responsible for making decisions about what they eat and learning how to make the right choices.

Resources

Lesson Materials

Food Guide Pyramid Worksheet*

The worksheet students used to compare nutritional guidelines from different countries

* These lesson materials can be found in the Appendix.

Curriculum References

Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/>

Public Schools of Brookline: K-8 Learning Expectations

<http://www.brookline.k12.ma.us/Page/1792>

John Pedini's Recommendations

Web Resources:

Blaine Ray: Total Physical Response Storytelling

<https://tprsbooks.com/>

Information about TPRS, including relevant links and planned workshops

Yahoo in Spanish

<http://espanol.yahoo.com/>

The Spanish-language version of the popular search engine; find food Web sites by searching under *Sociedad* and *Gastronomia*

Standards

World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages

The *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* create a roadmap to guide learners to develop competence to communicate effectively and interact with cultural understanding. This lesson correlates to the following Standards:

Communication

Communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple purposes

Standard: Interpersonal Communication

Learners interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions.

Standard: Interpretive Communication

Learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics.

Cultures

Interact with cultural competence and understanding

Standard: Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives

Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied.

Connections

Connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career-related situations

Standard: Making Connections

Learners build, reinforce, and expand their knowledge of other disciplines while using the language to develop critical thinking and to solve problems creatively.

knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.

Notes
