

Creating Travel Advice

Classroom at a Glance

Teacher:	Fran Pettigrew
Language:	Spanish III
Grade:	11
School:	McLean High School, McLean, Virginia
Lesson Date:	March 20
Class Size:	30
Schedule:	Block schedule, 90+ minutes every other day

Video Summary

In this lesson, students learn to communicate about vacations. They work individually and in pairs to express their personal travel interests, and read a letter from a Chilean teacher requesting travel advice for her students. Working in groups, they identify places for the Chilean students to visit in the United States.

Standards Addressed

- Communication: Interpersonal, Interpretive, Presentational
- Connections: Making Connections

Read about these standards at the end of this lesson.

Key Terms

- authentic materials
- native speaker
- negotiation of meaning
- proficiency level
- thematic units

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

Class Context

“A real challenge to a teacher at this level is to give kids new information and find ways for them to actually incorporate new vocabulary and grammar in their spontaneous production of the language. You really have to create multiple opportunities for kids to use this new material that you’ve given them.” —Fran Pettigrew

School Profile

Fran Pettigrew teaches Spanish III at McLean High School in McLean, Virginia. Located four miles from Washington, D.C., the community of over 60,000 includes professionals and U.S. government employees, as well as international businesspeople and government officials. The 1,500-student high school is fairly diverse; 20 percent are Asian, largely from Korea. About 50 languages are spoken by McLean’s international student population, although most students do not need ESOL classes. The school focuses on college preparation and offers Spanish, French, German, and Latin language classes.

Year at a Glance

Teen Culture

- Student life
- Fashion and clothes
- Entertainment
- Leisure time

Rights and Responsibilities

- Home
- School
- Community

Future Plans and Choices

- Education plans
- **Vacation plans**
- Careers and jobs

Environment or Humanities

Class Context

Lesson Design

When designing her lessons, Ms. Pettigrew draws upon the Fairfax County Program of Study, a series of themes and topics for each level of language study (see Resources). She also works with the Standards, the ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners, and authentic materials to create thematic lessons that match her students' level of linguistic and cognitive development. At this level, she wants students to communicate in multiple time frames, interpret authentic texts at intermediate or advanced levels, and understand key points and some details when reading or listening to a native speaker.

The Lesson

By the time Ms. Pettigrew's students began the lesson on creating travel advice, they had practiced talking about their own vacations. They had also researched one of several vacation spots in the U.S. and prepared to discuss their findings with their classmates. This lesson moved students away from thinking about personal experiences and toward more abstract thinking, an important part of Level 3 learning. Students' final letters to the Chilean teacher served as a written performance record.

Key Teaching Strategies

- **Getting Information From Authentic Materials:** The teacher provides students with authentic materials from which they draw information that can be used in discussion or in other follow-up activities.
- **Integrating the Communicative Modes:** The teacher plans a series of tasks that involve all three Communication standards. Students often begin with an interpretive task that provides new content and new language for interpersonal discussion. The new content and language are then combined in an oral or written presentation.
- **Providing Corrective Feedback:** In a process of negotiation, the teacher mediates student learning by verbally or nonverbally helping the student focus on a point of confusion around a language form.
- **Student Grouping:** The teacher designs activities that allow students to engage in multiple types of interactions, including working with partners, in small groups, and as a whole class.

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 are the benefits of having students work with authentic, linguistically challenging materials?
- How do you design group work to ensure successful communication?
- What is the teacher’s role during group work?

Watch the Video

As you watch “Creating Travel Advice,” take notes on Ms. Pettigrew’s instructional strategies, particularly how she communicates with her students and how students communicate with one another. 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:

- How does Ms. Pettigrew encourage communication as she interacts with students?
- How do students use their authentic materials during the discussion? What content from other disciplines is in the materials? What challenges do the materials present?
- What instructional approaches does Ms. Pettigrew use to make the materials accessible?

Analyze the Video, cont'd.

Look Closer

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



Video Segment: Understanding a Letter

You'll find this segment approximately 8 minutes after the video starts. Watch for about 3 minutes.

Students read a letter from a Chilean teacher requesting travel advice for her students.

- Why does Ms. Pettigrew ask students to read the letter twice? What is the purpose of the first reading? The second reading?
- How do these reading strategies promote interpretive communication?
- How does the letter establish a context for the remaining activities?

Analyze the Video, cont'd.



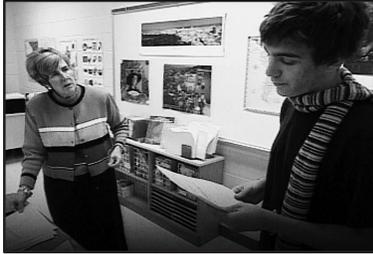
Video Segment: Group Interactions

You'll find this segment approximately 11 minutes and 30 seconds after the video starts. Watch for about 3 minutes and 30 seconds.

The groups refer to their research to come up with travel recommendations for the Chilean students.

- How do students interact with one another?
- How does Ms. Pettigrew create an environment in which students feel comfortable working with one another?
- How does working in a group advance students' understanding of the materials? Do you think students would have reached the same level of understanding if each had worked alone?

Analyze the Video, cont'd.



Video Segment: Correcting Errors in Meaning

You'll find this segment approximately 21 minutes after the video starts. Watch for about 1 minute and 30 seconds.

The groups report their recommendations to the class. As Jesús presents his group's opinions, Ms. Pettigrew asks questions to clarify what he means.

- What communicative errors does Jesús make during his report to the class?
- How does Ms. Pettigrew help him clarify his miscommunication?
- How does Jesús react to Ms. Pettigrew's comments?
- Jesús says "I need" (*Necesito*) when what he means is "The students need" (*Necesitan*). He then clarifies the subject of the phrase (the students/*los estudiantes*), but still makes a verb-form error (*necesitas*/second-person singular instead of *necesitan*/third-person plural). Why do you think Ms. Pettigrew lets this error go?
- Ms. Pettigrew explains her guidelines for correction. How does she follow her guidelines in this segment?

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 obtain appropriate authentic materials for your lessons? How do you use them with your students?
- In activities like Ms. Pettigrew's, how are you a negotiator of meaning with students? What kinds of errors do you correct, and when do you refrain from making corrections?
- How do you sequence learning? Do you start with the material you want students to learn or skills you want them to demonstrate, then create a culminating project that uses the new skills? Or do you first plan the culminating project and then work backward? What are the advantages of each approach?

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.

"Comparing Communities" (French) illustrates the integration of the three modes of communication, and "Promoting Attractions of Japan" (Japanese) shows students preparing to advise travelers about tourist sites in Japan.

Connect to Your Teaching, cont'd.

Put It Into Practice

Try these ideas in your classroom.

- Integrate the three modes of communication. Begin a lesson with an interpretive task in which students read or listen to an authentic piece (for example, a poem, newspaper article, or diary entry). The text should present ideas and language that stimulate student thinking beyond opinions or knowledge they already have. Next, ask students to respond according to their proficiency level, making sure they are reasonably challenged. For example, Ms. Pettigrew wanted her Spanish III students to acquire new knowledge and use it in oral and written discourse. They worked with lengthy descriptive materials from vacation sites posted on the Internet. If your students are at a lower level of proficiency, you might vary the task and choose smaller pieces of text, such as visuals with accompanying sentences. Students can report out, summarize, or react briefly to the content. Once students have an understanding of the information, they can shift to talking about the pieces. In doing so, they will begin to incorporate language meaningfully from the authentic material. Finally, have students give oral or written presentations in which they use their new knowledge and language skills.
- When deciding whether to correct a student, try not to interrupt his or her thoughts or the flow of language. When a student miscommunicates, seek clarification or better understanding of the message. When a student asks for help or shows by gesture or expression that help is needed, give assistance. To encourage communication, do not correct errors that don't interfere with meaning. Patterns of errors that you feel students should be controlling better should be noted for follow-up work. For example, in the video, when Jesús clarified that it was the students and not he who needed more time, Ms. Pettigrew accepted his meaning. Jesús did, however, make another verb-form mistake ("you" singular instead of "they"). In ignoring this second error, Ms. Pettigrew was able to maintain a flow in the student report without turning the exchange into a rule-based lesson.

Connect to Your Teaching, cont'd.

- Group students to generate multiple opportunities to communicate. Start a lesson with a quick whole-class or pairs warm-up to get students speaking in the language. This is ideal for short tasks. For more complex projects, let student interests or choices determine the grouping. You can also organize groups according to ability or personality.

Resources

Lesson Materials

Florida Worksheet: Student Work*

A sample worksheet completed by a student during the group activity (includes English translation)

Letter Writing Task*

Performance prompts that students used to write their final letters

* These lesson materials can be found in the Appendix.

Curriculum References

Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) and Testing for Foreign Language

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/foreign_language/index.shtml

Fairfax County Program of Study

<https://www.fcps.edu/academics/high-school-academics-9-12/world-languages>

ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners

<https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-performance-descriptors-language-learners>

Fran Pettigrew's Recommendations

Web Resources:

USA Tourist.com

<http://www.usatourist.com/espanol>

Travel news and tourist information for U.S. destinations (available in English, French, German, and Spanish); note: Ms. Pettigrew and her students used this site to research information about travel destinations for this lesson

Yahoo in Spanish

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

The Spanish-language version of the popular search engine

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.

Standard: Presentational Communication

Learners present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers.

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.