



Poetry and Differentiated Instruction in the Middle-School French Classroom

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Introduction

How do you meet the diverse learning needs of every student in your middle school world languages classroom? How do you ensure that the newer or struggling student is able to comprehend, participate, and communicate, while the more seasoned or able student is also adequately challenged? How do you place vocabulary in a context that students will remember in a visceral sense, so that they will be able to automatically retrieve it when needed?

I propose the use of poetry, in particular the reading, memorization, and recitation of poetry, as an invaluable method to accomplish these tasks in such a way that students will both enjoy what they are doing and experience a sense of confidence and success at being able to memorize pieces of French poetry.

French language audio book and podcast author Camille Chevalier Karfis says that in France, children memorize and recite classic works of poetry from the age of eight years old. Then beginning at age fourteen, they start to analyze that poetry (Karfis). I think this is a great way to build a foundation which students can then revisit and use to develop analytical skills, for an ultimately deeper understanding of the poetic work.

This unit will provide a framework for incorporating poetry in the middle grades language classroom to support differentiated language learning, allowing each child to progress at his or her own pace. General techniques and practices that can be used across levels will be included, as will demonstrations of how they may be applied in slightly different ways in grades five through eight. Although the examples are for French classes, these strategies may be easily adapted to other classes of languages.

I have found that by using poetry and song created around a theme, students are able to process usable chunks of language more fluidly than by just learning isolated vocabulary out of context. It is also a way to supplement paired conversation practice while keeping students listening to and speaking the language together.

Rationale

In middle school world language classes, we tend to have students with a wide array of language knowledge and skills. In my school, an arts magnet middle school in New Haven, Connecticut, language is offered as an enrichment class; if, based on state mastery test scores, students do not need math or reading enrichment, they are placed in a French, Spanish, or Chinese class upon entry in fifth grade. In general that student will remain in that language class for all four years at our school. If a student is initially placed in an enrichment math or reading class, but test scores and school performance assessments indicate that it is no longer needed, then that student will be moved into a language class; also, we get new students in each grade each year, as well as transfers during the school year. This happens frequently in sixth grade (this year about half of my sixth grade class was new to French); to a lesser degree in seventh and eighth grades (this year my seventh grade had five new students, my eighth grade three.) Sometimes these changes will happen at the beginning of the year, other times partway through the year. We don't have beginning and advanced classes for each grade, so new students enter a class full of students who have already been studying the language for one, two, or three years.

Clearly the skilled world languages teacher in this situation must develop a system for meeting those varied needs in the same classroom. Not that the story is any different in other disciplines; as teachers we are all, by definition, also differentiators. This unit attempts to address and offer solutions to the particular challenges of differentiating instruction in a middle school world languages classroom, using poetry.

At my school, the fifth and sixth grade curriculum is exploratory preparation for upper level study in seventh and eighth grade. Completing the seventh and eighth grade years successfully will allow a student entry into second year French at the high school level. In fifth and sixth grade the focus is on exposure and vocabulary-building, with lots of song and role-playing to develop a love of language and a foundation that is fostered and expanded in seventh and eighth grade. The seventh and eighth grade curriculum is literally the high school year one curriculum spread out over two years instead of one. The focus here is on communicative functions and grammar skill building, within a thematic context. All classes meet four days a week, for fifty minutes per class.

Oftentimes a student's first reaction to the news that they will eventually be memorizing something in a foreign language is that they can't do it, that it is impossible. The satisfaction visible on a student's face after proving that assumption wrong is invaluable. By consistently requiring these memorization and recitation tasks, the fear factor slowly disappears. The process of memorizing poetry helps students to develop a feel for and an understanding of the language being studied. And any time you can offer a student an opportunity to achieve a goal he or she thought impossible is priceless in terms of boundary-breaking and limit-busting.

In the process of memorization, students are able to progress at their own pace. Some will stay at the pronunciation level of performance and will struggle to say the words as they should. Yet they will continue to make meaning of the language, to find connections between English and French as they struggle to understand the language, and to develop a sense of both spoken and written French. Other students will begin to connect words, pronunciation, and meaning, and will be able to recognize vocabulary in other contexts. Using poetry in the world language classroom is an invaluable tool in its capacity to allow for differentiated instruction in this way.

Progression of Planning, Grades 5-8

In this section, I will elaborate on how I plan instruction differently for grades five through eight. In all my classes, we will learn a different poem each marking period that relates to the theme of our unit and/or to language structures we are studying.

I use poetry in my classes starting in fifth grade, where students have an average age of ten years. In general I have found that in the fifth and sixth grades students benefit most from poems or songs with simple concepts based around vocabulary themes. Simple, related vocabulary helps students learn words and phrases in relation to each other, which allows them to implicitly categorize and classify the words in their heads.

In planning for sixth grade poetry work, I try to revisit vocabulary learned in fifth grade in new ways. That helps give the returning sixth graders a foundation off of which to build, while at the same time giving the new sixth graders an opportunity to build much of the same vocabulary as the returning students.

In seventh grade students can start to handle some more complex language or conceptual learning. Basically, some will "get" the conceptual learning and some will function at a surface understanding. While that is also true for eighth graders, they can begin to handle more and should indeed be introduced to slightly more complex themes. This same continuum comes into play within each class, as slower-progressing students can function at a surface understanding, focusing on pronunciation and memorization of terms, while others are able to adopt phrases and apply them in different ways.

As you can see, much of the differentiation work starts with the choice of poem. It is important to consider the composition of each class of students before deciding to use a particular poem. It must fit the needs of the diverse student population within each class.

Guiding Principles - Comprehensible Input and Gradual Release of Responsibility

This unit is led by two guiding principles, comprehensible input and gradual release of responsibility. By following them, you will be able to craft and hone your unit based on sound language teaching philosophies. These principles naturally guide differentiation planning, as they will show themselves in different ways for different students.

Comprehensible Input

As students begin to learn French, they need to be surrounded with a lot of comprehensible input (so termed by Stephen Krashen.) In our case, this refers to spoken and written French language that the student can understand, plus just a little bit more. Krashen refers to this as $i + 1$, where i is the student and what he or she can understand, and the $+1$ is the little more that is beyond what he or she can understand at first. This is in opposition to the type of teaching in which the teacher just presents the information, and the student eventually learns it. Here the teacher must find a way to give every student the feeling of understanding most

of what is happening, with just a little that is incomprehensible until learned. In a class of many different learning styles and language levels, this can be quite a challenge. By choosing poems that use much previously-learned vocabulary, currently-studied vocabulary, and cognates, all students are given input that is comprehensible, with just enough that is new or incomprehensible upon first introduction to engage the brain in meaning-making and problem-solving. Not that students will be able to totally understand everything in the poems upon initial inspection, but that most of the key vocabulary words will be identifiable, with prompting, and enough material will be new, so as to be challenging in a surmountable way. Even if a student has difficulty identifying some words as cognates initially, once this is modeled by the teacher and the student sees how many cognates are really there, the feeling of not understanding is immediately washed away. In this way, using poems can help keep each student at a relatively $i + 1$ performance level.

Gradual Release of Responsibility

I follow a variation of the Gradual Release of Responsibility model used in reading instruction in planning my poetry units. ¹This model is broken down into four phases: Demonstration, Guided Practice, Independent Practice, and Application. Each student may perform at different levels during each phase, and students may accelerate through the phases at different paces, allowing for multiple methods of differentiation over the course of the unit. As each phase is introduced, I will present a variety of complementary instructional strategies, as I would or have explored them in my classroom. The needs of your students as well as time constraints will determine how you choose to use and combine them in your instruction, just as they determine the choices I make in this regard each time I approach poetry.

Demonstration - Strategies

The poem is introduced in the Demonstration phase. I like to visualize the phases in terms of a parent holding a child's hand while crossing the street. In this phase, hands are held tightly and the parent, by gluing his or her own arm to the body, keeps the child very close, protecting the child with proximity and situational control.

Recite the poem once, without giving a written copy to the student. Act out whatever vocabulary possible and try to put proper tone and emphasis in the reading. Read it several times, with different intonation each time. Use images to accompany the reading; this allows students to make meaning out of what they can at first just by listening. Then distribute a written copy with which students may read along during a re-reading of the poem. Students will connect the sounds they heard with the actual words on the page.

Follow with choral repetition, breaking the poem down into lines or smaller phrases. This naturally leads to the Guided Practice phase, although the Demonstration and Guided Practice phases should be alternated as needed. Rather than spending a day on demonstration, then a couple days on guided practice, and a few more on independent practice, I go through those stages each day and revisit them frequently. This keeps things fresh and allows students to perform where they feel most comfortable for at least part of the class, with varying periods of warm-up and challenge based on daily individual performance level. I start each class with some demonstration before moving on to guided practice, just to make sure that all students are getting what they need in terms of modeling, variety, and practice, and are starting on the same page.

Guided Practice - Strategies

During the Guided Practice phase, the parent, to continue our visual image, unglues his or her arm from the body and extends it out, allowing the child to do the same. This gives more autonomy to the child, who may

now swing arms or even lead. The protective link remains, but it is made less strong. Just as sometimes the child may pull too hard and fall from the parent's grip at this point, so the student may stumble and lose confidence. That is why it is important to return to the safety of the Demonstration phase frequently.

To mix up the Guided Practice phase, in addition to the regular choral repetition referred to above, try incorporating some of the strategies mentioned in the "Rhythm and Sound" section (discussed later in this unit) of varying the sound, volume, or pace of your voice. At tough sections, go back through it and break it down into smaller chunks, focusing on individual sound chunks and then slowly stringing them together until the majority of the students are saying it at least fairly well at a fairly normal pace. One half of the room can say a line together, and the other half can say the next line together. By speaking in a group, students are still given some guidance in terms of practice and pronunciation. This serves as a sort of security blanket, as mistakes are covered by the number of other voices repeating at the same time in the room.

For written guided practice, a cloze (fill-in-the-blanks) version of the poem can be used on an overhead projector, with or without a word bank depending on daily goals. Filling it out should be modeled with the class, using think-aloud techniques for determining the logic of certain choices over others. Multiple choice questions may be written in the same format used in local high-stakes reading tests for practice. These same exercises may be done or modified for Individual Practice as well.

It can be beneficial and interesting to find recordings of different people reciting the poem, to use throughout the unit, so students hear different accents and interpretations. The internet is a great resource for this, especially if you don't have access to French-speakers willing to do such favors! If you have a class webpage, recordings may be uploaded so students can access a model at home.

Independent Practice - Strategies

At the Independent Practice phase, the parent stays on this side of the street and watches carefully as the child crosses on his or her own. The parent still coaches the child, reminding him or her to look both ways and to cross in the crosswalk, but the child ultimately crosses the street independently.

For Independent Practice, students can practice at home, a verse a night, for twenty to thirty minutes a night; parents must sign in the student's agenda that the student did the practice. The student can also teach the verse to someone else; here it could be a parent, sibling, or friend. Although this opens up the possibility of a student not doing the assignment and just getting a friend to sign the required slip, I believe that it can work with minimal "cheating." And I do believe that presenting a situation in which one could cheat, but either does or doesn't, is a valuable situation for that student to be in, and one from which the student can learn a lot. This works better in grades five and six, although it may be used judiciously in grades seven and eight.

Students can illustrate a verse or verses of the poem so that they begin to associate images with words, and writing accuracy or other areas of concern may be checked. As indicated in the previous section, a cloze version of the poem may be used for individual written practice and/or quiz assessment to check for understanding and logical language choices. The vocabulary can also be used in other contexts, including multiple choice questions that prepare students for high-stakes testing.

Once the students have started to memorize the poem, I have them "snake" around the room, and each student has to say one word at a time, from memory. If I mistakenly put this activity too soon and students struggle too much with it, I allow students to use their poem sheets. This is another way in which this unit provides for automatic differentiation: Students who feel they need to may use the sheet longer, and those

who feel more advanced can do away with it sooner.

Once the poem has been practiced sufficiently, have students recite it from memory in front of the class, as a sort of check-point. At this point I just track and score memorization and pronunciation, although you may choose to focus on different areas. ² I use a copy of the poem and highlight pronunciation errors in one color and forgotten/jumbled words in another color. Well, truth be told, I circle pronunciation errors and underline pronunciation errors, then I go over that with two highlighters! I can't work between two utensils that fast, but the color-coding does help students to study effectively. Although it depends on the length of the poem, usually I will subtract one point for either forgetting or mispronouncing a word. I instruct students to make eye contact with me if they want a word fed to them for a point deduction, so that students don't struggle needlessly. Oftentimes one word is enough to get them going again! Afterwards, the student gets the feedback and now knows what to practice.

To keep students in the "audience" engaged, have them try to list any words they think are mispronounced or forgotten. Then they can give their sheets to the performing student, who can check teacher feedback. If there is a discrepancy, those students can meet and determine what is correct, or the teacher can read the whole poem slowly and students can pay special attention to where they had pronunciation errors. Or students may be allowed to listen and absorb, rereading their poem as the performing student recites. Again, it depends on the group and the circumstances.

Sometimes students will have mastered the poem here, at the check-point. To have these students continue along the same track would be a waste of time. The following are some possibilities for students who are already ready to move on. They can be given a new poem that has similar but more advanced vocabulary and/or themes, accelerating their pace and broadening their vocabulary base. They can use the current poem as a base but change key words into something new, to develop word-play ability and comfort, as well as to give an advancing student the opportunity to get detailed feedback based on accuracy and logic of vocabulary he or she chooses, thereby differentiating content according to interest. Once the new, morphed poem is written, these students can memorize it, illustrate it, and recite it for the class. Or they might be allowed the opportunity to plan a more formal presentation of the poem, complete with costumes and props that elucidate the meaning of the poem, which the whole class could also do.

After students reach the check-point, I like to use the following exercise for the students who have not gone on to any alternate mastery extensions. I adapted it from a theater exercise learned at a teacher workshop with Long Wharf Theater in New Haven. It was originally demonstrated for actors to practice intonation and delivery of lines. I use it differently, to practice and perfect pronunciation in a non-antagonistic way. After already having practiced the poem in different contexts or formats, a student will read a line, then I will read it, saying it correctly whether or not the student did, but not placing emphasis on the correction. This allows the student to correct him- or her-self rather than the correction coming from the teacher. Then the student will re-read it, oftentimes self-correcting; then the whole class re-reads it. The next student follows the same cycle. I don't correct errors, even if a student makes them after my repetition. Students will eventually get it. And of course, all that repetition is doing the whole class wonders!

For Independent Practice, student will also engage in different types of paired practice, as detailed in the section below, called "Paired Practice."

Application - Strategies

Our visual metaphor concludes with the Application phase. The parent stays at home, while the child is off, to

a sleepover, a dance, college. The parent replays all the preparation time mentally, fearing that the most important rule or tip was forgotten. The child returns home fine, or calls home for advice. As teachers we prepare our students to perform without us, though we are still there for support and encouragement as needed.

In the Application phase, have students recite the poem from memory, for a final assessment. The final rubric I use for this can be broken down into the following sections: Pronunciation (30 points), memorization (30 points), fluidity (11/10 points), tone/attitude (11/10 points), professionalism/presentation (11/10 points), and audience participation (10 points). I give examples of each category, from the best to the less perfected, so students are clear on what is expected of them. The reason fluidity, tone, and professionalism have a possible 11/10 points is that in those categories I award an extra credit point for perfection or for going above and beyond. I believe, especially in the middle grades as students are learning a language, that it is important for students to feel confident and comfortable that although errors will still happen, it doesn't mean that they aren't performing at a high standard for early language learners. So a student earns full points in these categories for doing really, really well, and extra points for perfection.

I do the math for each poem to decide how many points are deducted per word mispronounced or forgotten. Pronunciation and memorization are strictly point deductions for misspoken or forgotten words. Fluidity is rated on a scale of 1-11, though the lowest score I will give here is a 6. On my rubric, points 1-5 are labeled as "Courage" points, points for showing up! A score of 11 is absolutely 0 unnecessary pauses or missteps, completely fluid and natural sounding. A score of 10 is 1-2 missteps or pauses, a 9 is 3-4, an 8 is 5-7, a 7 is 8-10, a 6 is 11 or more. Tone/attitude refers to the tone or attitude of your recitation as it pertains to the poem. I isolate certain areas of the poem that require or urge appropriate tone and attitude, at least five. An 11 is all identified areas match. The rest depends on how many areas are isolated, in a descending pattern. As in the Fluidity section, points 1-5 are labeled as "Courage" points. I tell students beforehand that tone is important, and demonstrate throughout the unit all types of tone accord, but I do not explicitly state which areas are going to be scored. If a student demonstrates appropriate tone on a section that I didn't previously identify, I write it in on the rubric and count it. Professionalism/presentation refers to the overall presentation demeanor of the student. In this category, deductions are made for things like asking to start over, giggling, talking to students or breaking character during the recitation, moving around and exhibiting nervous gestures. I award an 11 for 0 deductions, a 10 for 1, a 9 for 2, an 8 for 3, a 7 for 4, and a 6 for 5 or more, with points 1-5 again awarded as Courage points. Audience participation points are deducted if there is misbehavior of any sort during other people's recitations. The points deducted are at my discretion, and before recitations we discuss possible causes for deduction.

Clearly this is just the guideline that I use, that I find to be fair and appropriate for my middle grades French classes. I highly encourage the use of a rubric, if not this rubric, to ensure equitable grading practices and to give students the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. Also, in the middle grades I allow students to retake an assessment of this nature. I decide beforehand if the new grade can replace the old or if it is just marked in addition to the old. If it is to replace the old, I replace it even if it is lower, to encourage students to only retake when they are prepared to do so.

Strategies and More Opportunities for Differentiation

When selecting a poem, I keep the following things in mind. Will the poem lend itself well to any of the strategies listed below? Does it incorporate any of the linguistic elements discussed below? I find that it is not useful or really possible for me to split these up according to a set of strategies and a set of linguistic elements, as I consider all of these possibilities when planning for poetry, and they are so inter-related that grouping them further would be redundant. I do not claim this list to be exhaustive; what follows are just the standard basics that I find myself most consistently incorporating.

Categorization

As one of the research-based strategies proven to increase student achievement (Marzano), categorization may be used in many different ways. Students can categorize nouns and adjectives into masculine or feminine, singular or plural. Vocabulary can be categorized into parts of speech, verb forms (first person singular, etc), as well as thematically (days of the week, colors.) Students can place given words into predetermined categories, or create their own categories based on a word list. They should be encouraged to be creative and to think outside the easily-identifiable categories that immediately come to mind.

Cognates and Bridge or Stepping Stone Words

I will discuss the vocabulary for each poem in terms of three different categories of cognates: Easy-spot, vocabulary-builder, and French-Spanish cognates, as well as bridge or stepping stone words. In class I refer to these word categories as les cognats simples (easy-spot), les cognats complexes (vocabulary-builders), les cognats espagnols (French-Spanish), les cognats compliqués (bridge/stepping stone words).

Easy-Spot and Vocabulary-Builder Cognates

As the names indicate, I label as "easy-spot" cognates those words that practically jump out as the same or similar in English, so it is easy to spot them. "Vocabulary-builder" cognates are either words that have similar roots, but require a little more work to uncover them, or words that are similar enough to be "easy-spot" but not used frequently enough to be easily-accessible to middle school students without teacher prompting. These words help students to make connections with a broader English language vocabulary as well as a French vocabulary base. Some students will focus on the easy-spot cognates, as that is where their own $i + 1$ leaves them most comfortable, while other students will relish an opportunity to develop a deeper language connection base with the vocabulary-builder cognates and the bridge words discussed below.

Spanish-French Cognates

Since I have many students who speak varying degrees of Spanish, identifying Spanish-French cognates helps those students to use their own special tools to decipher language, and gives them a sense of accomplishment at being able to do so. I am not a Spanish-speaker myself, and I do not claim to include a complete list of such cognates in my lesson discussions. Just some ideas, words that I have found to be similar enough to evoke student connections, or words that I can use to help broaden language skills by modeling a similarity that a student had not previously considered.

Bridge or Stepping Stone Words

Bridge or stepping stone words are those words that serve, as the name indicates, as a bridge or stepping stone to the actual meaning. The association is there, but it is loose; students need another step, modeled by the teacher, to make a connection. By seeing the teacher think-aloud a stepping stone connection, students begin to develop the same linguistic skill, as well as confidence in that skill. An example of a bridge word is *le temps*. Although it means "time" in this poem, it means "weather" in a different context. During our weather unit, I introduce *le temps* as related to "temperature," but that you can't stop there. "Temperature" is a bridge or stepping stone to "weather" as you often consider the temperature when discussing the weather. So I give *la température* as a better cognate for "temperature" and stress that it is a bridge to understanding that *le temps* means "weather."

Paired Practice

There are different ways to pair students together for practice, and I like to incorporate several of them, to meet different needs. Sometime I pair like-performing students together so that they can progress together and feel equal; sometimes I pair somewhat-weaker and somewhat-stronger students together so that the stronger can help the weaker and reinforce learning by guiding/teaching. But I never pair strong opposites together as it just frustrates everyone and makes the weaker student feel bad. Students can also be paired by choice, or some random correlation, just to mix it up.

In class I assign two different "color" pairs, *bleu* and *rouge*. The blue pairs are assigned for like-leveled practice, and the red for stronger-weaker performance. The pairs change based on performance on some assessment, whether a pre-test, a post-test, or a formative assessment of some sort. Changing the pairs after each unit helps students to learn new learning styles and averts the possibility that students feel too cognizant of their "role." Keeping them together for different elements of a unit helps it to not get too confusing, though I have been known to assign entirely different pairs for a particular activity if I think changing the pairs will be of benefit. I generally don't tell students the specifics of the pairings, although they may figure it out. ³And since it is based on performance on particular assessments, students don't end up feeling like they are labeled as a "low" or "high" kid, and the stigma of being the "weaker" student in the pair seems to be avoided. I will reiterate that these pairings are based on data of some sort. Too often teachers assume that a student will perform a certain way and should be in the "weaker student" category when it is not always the case. And students can sense that.

In pairs, students can practice reading the poem, helping each other pronounce properly. They can practice memorization, as one student can recite and the other can read along, prompting the reciter as needed. They can practice alternating lines or words from memory, or putting the poem to a tune for memorization practice, or acting it out.

Repetition

Repetition is important in many ways when planning this type of learning. Repetition within the poem can help trigger memory in several ways. First, if a particular phrase is repeated, then when students get stuck you can give them just the first syllable of the phrase and it is often enough to get them on their way to the rest of the line. Second, it can help establish a rhythm to the text, so that rhythmic or sound clues can be helpful (see "Rhythm and Sound," below.) Third, repetition of vocabulary across different contexts (textbook work, classroom activities, conversation, reading comprehension) allows the student to process the vocabulary at his or her given pace. While some students will get the vocabulary the first time they encounter it, others will need many different methods and instances of repetition before it becomes "automatic." It is worthwhile to

find poems that repeat previously-learned vocabulary while practicing new vocabulary as well.

Rhythm and Sound

When selecting a poem, I try to find something with good mouth-feel, something fun to wrap your mouth around and produce. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say that I try to exploit that quality in the poems I choose, as I (like many) absolutely adore the sound of the French language. Stressing the different sounds created by the words helps students to link sounds together, for both linguistic and memorization benefit. Drawing attention to the different stretches in your face when words are enunciated lends a kinesthetic sense to the practice that some students may need.

I find it easier to remember vocabulary when I enunciate it more, and my students seem to as well. If I have them repeat after me while reading the lines, it is much more interesting to do when I am exaggerating the sounds and then they are too. And it allows me to open up the door, declaring that no one will look sillier than I will, so let loose! It is so important to have an environment in which students feel safe, and by showing them it is okay to get silly, they are put at ease. Also, sometimes I recite lines in a certain voice, and then they must repeat in that voice. Changes can be made in the pacing of the phrases as well as the volume of your voices. All this repetition is necessary for students to obtain the language, but the method makes it fun! (See "Repetition," above.)

Examples, With Background, Per Grade Level

The following section provides specific examples of using poetry in the classroom. Simple translations of each poem will be included, just for reference in this unit; links to the original, French language version of the poems online are also included. Each section will contain a linguistic analysis of the poem, a brief background of the poet and the poetic movement most-associated with that poet, and a lesson plan to be used with that poem, showcasing a strategy particularly well-suited to that grade and content level.

Grades 5-6: Mon chapeau, Unknown

This poem will be used in my fifth grade class, during the second marking period. We will have addressed colors at the beginning of the second marking period, so students will be able to practice them and develop confidence in their abilities here. We will learn clothing in the third marking period, and they will be able to recall the word for "hat" (chapeau), which will start them off in a position of confidence. It could easily be used in sixth grade as well, with less time spent on it or more extension work. The French text can be found at this website: <http://larecup.e-monsite.com/rubrique,chansons-pour-enfants,1008723.html>. I have included my own translation of it below. ⁴

My Hat

1. When I wear my grey hat
2. It is to go out in the rain.
3. When I wear my green hat

4. It is that I am angry.
5. When I wear my blue hat
6. It is that things are getting better already.
7. When I wear my white hat
8. It is that I am very happy.

Linguistic Analysis

As indicated above, the timing of this poem is intentional, creating a high likelihood of success and language connection. When students feel like they are revisiting something they have learned, especially in the form of a poem or song, they become excited to learn more. The repetition of phrases is important here, as it gives students a crutch to lean on as they become familiar with French poetry and memorizing it. When they get stuck, they already know that the beginning of the line will either be "When I wear my" or "It is." Even if they forget that, all it will take is one syllable from the teacher to bring the whole phrase back.

The language is simple, the vocabulary concepts basic. Emphasizing the predictable rhyme-iness of the poem will help to get the poem stuck in students' heads. If you have any aspiring percussionists in your classroom (believe me, you will know soon enough, as they will not be able to control their desk drumming for long!) they will probably surface during choral repetition of this poem. Try letting them do their thing! Get the whole class in on it. My rule is that the poem comes first, if you can't sing or speak the poem while drumming, chair dancing, etc., then it's time to drop the rest and just sing. I of course give students a few chances to get that right, as they are not usually accustomed to being allowed to do such things! The kinesthetic learners appreciate it, and it's just a lot of fun! Which means of course that it is more likely to be remembered.

Easy-Spot Cognates: Bleu (blue), content. Vocabulary-Builder Cognates: Gris (grey). Spanish-French Cognates: Quand (cuando), gris, vert (verde), mieux (mejor), blanc (blanco). Bridges: En colère - color, like when you get angry you get all red or colored in the face -- angry; déjà - as in déjà vu (already seen) -- already; blanc - blank, like the color white -- white. New Vocabulary: Mettre (to put/put on/wear), mon (my-masculine singular), chapeau (hat), c'est que/ c'est pour (it is that/it is for), sous (under), la pluie (rain), mieux (better). Previously-Learned Vocabulary: Je, gris, c'est, vert, je suis, ça va, bleu, blanc, très.

The Importance of Nursery Rhymes, Poems, and Children's Songs

This poem has been circulating so long the author is unknown. This is true of many songs, poems, and rhymes that children learn as they grow up. The process of rhyming and remembering is crucial to child development. As students learn traditional rhymes from other countries, they begin to develop a sense of identification with a larger world.

Lesson Plan - Making Connections to New Poems

Preparation: On the same webpage where Mon Chapeau was located are two other poems incorporating colors; instead of a hat, their focus is a butterfly. One is called Vole joli papillon (Fly Pretty Butterfly) and the other, Les papillons (The Butterflies.) They are short with lots of repetition, which make them good avenues for making connections. Create a sheet with one poem on each side. Be sure to include visual images to help students activate understanding. In addition to butterflies of different colors, the first poem should have an image of flowers, flying, and an indication of pollen or gathering pollen. Teach students to use the "text

features" included on the page. The second should also have an image indicating trembling, moving, flying, settling, and sleeping, as well as an image of posing with an X through it, to show that se pose does NOT mean to pose. On these pages also include space and prompts for the responses required during the lesson. Other resources referred to below must be created as well. Note: In these lessons, students use both French and English. In the previous section I have provided many strategies for French language practice. However, some of our work is to teach students how to connect language-learning strategies to other content areas, and sometimes that is best done explicitly. I give the following as examples of ways I have found to bridge the gap between languages most effectively for ultimate student success.

Fly Pretty Butterfly

1. Fly pretty butterfly
2. Fly red butterfly
3. Fly blue butterfly
4. Fly blue and red butterfly
5. Gather pollen from flower to flower
6. Pretty butterflies of every color

The Butterflies

1. A blue butterfly
2. A red butterfly
3. A butterfly trembles
4. A butterfly moves
5. A pink butterfly
6. That flies and settles
7. A golden butterfly
8. That trembles and sleeps.

Lesson: Teacher gives students poem sheets and reads the first poem aloud. Students write what they think it is about. Students should be encouraged to take risks and make educated guesses. Teacher pairs students according to similar abilities and students share thoughts on poem meaning for 30 seconds each, taking notes if applicable. This writing and discussion will be in English, to practice and assess comprehension, and to allow students the opportunity to cite from the text reasons for their statements. Teacher puts the poem on an overhead, with blank spots for the unknown vocabulary and gives each pair an envelope with smaller versions of each image, cut out and laminated. (Be sure that they will fit in the poem as it appears on the page they have.) Teacher holds up 8"x10" pictures of the images used on the paper, one at a time, asking if each one makes sense in the blank. When the correct one is identified, teacher places it in the appropriate blank spot. Students use their own images as well. When an image is correctly identified, the teacher asks for the correct word, which students can infer from the images, and the class repeats the new poem. Then the teacher asks questions using the poem and previously-learned vocabulary. For example: Il y a combien de couleurs dans le poème? (How many colors are in the poem?) Est-ce qu'il y a un chapeau dans ce poème? (Is there a hat in this poem?) Est-ce qu'il y a un chapeau ou un papillon dans ce poème? (Is there a hat or a butterfly in this poem?) Est-ce que c'est le papillon ou la fleur qui vole? (Is it the flower or the butterfly that flies?) Tu préfères un papillon de quelle couleur? (What color butterfly do you prefer?)

The same process is used with the second poem, but this time students should meet in stronger-weaker pairs to discuss, again for 30 seconds each.

Next, have students substitute chapeau for "papillon" in the two poems. Ask which words need to be changed for it to make sense. Brainstorm possibilities. Prepare a list for the next class or homework with those possibilities in French and have students rewrite, and illustrate if desired. Note: Be sure to address adding an "x" to pluralize chapeau in the first poem.

Grade Seven: Conversation, by Jean Tardieu

This poem will be used in my seventh grade class, during the first marking period. The quarterly theme is Global Awareness/The Francophone World/Introductions. The French text can be found at this website: <http://ecprim.lefuiet.free.fr/t.htm#tardieuconversation>.

Conversation

1. How are things on earth?
2. - Things are well, things are well, things are going very well.
3. The little dogs, are they prosperous?
4. - My God yes thank you very much.
5. And the clouds?
6. - They float.
7. And the volcanoes?
8. - They simmer.
9. And the rivers?
10. - They flow.
11. And time?
12. - It passes.
13. And your soul?
14. - It is sick
15. Springtime was too green
16. It ate too much salad.

Linguistic Analysis

This poem is a great choice for the beginning of the year as it allows for revisiting greeting phrases (lines 1-2: Comment ça va? / Ça va bien.) The language is simple, with regular grammar patterns. Much of the vocabulary used here has been previously learned, so students are provided with an opportunity to recall and recombine it. Much of the new vocabulary has some sort of cognate function to help students remember it, and the distinct word sounds help in this way as well (lines 6 and 8, the "ote" sound in: Ça flotte, Ça mijote.) The repetition of the pattern "And...;" followed by a simple subject-verb response (lines 5-14) reinforces the pattern and gives students a structure around which to memorize the poem. The content is a little silly, which will help students remember it (lines 15-16: Le printemps était trop vert / Elle a mangé trop de salade.) Since the poem is written in a dialogue, students could memorize and perform it in pairs; even if the whole class doesn't do this, new and/or timid students could.

Easy-Spot Cognates: Petit (petite), le volcan (volcano). Vocabulary-Builder Cognates: La terre (terrestrial), prospère (prosperous), malade (malady), vert (verdant). Spanish-French Cognates: Bien, la terre (la tierra), prospère (próspero), Dieu (Dios), le nuage (la nube), flotter (flotar), s'écouler (escurrirse), le temps (el tiempo), l'âme (la alma), le printemps (el primavera), vert (verde). Bridges: Flotter - to float -- to drift; la salade - salad -- lettuce.

Jean Tardieu and the Theater of the Absurd

Jean Tardieu (1903-1995) was something of a consummate artist. ⁵ Although he is most known for his roles as both poet and playwright, he was also a musician (harpist), an artist (painting), literary translator, music and art critic. He earned a degree in literature and worked for well-known publishing house Hachette, as well as Radio-France.

His poetry is greatly influenced by the diversity of his artistic interests. He uses imagery and is known for his word-play and inventive use of language. In his biographical essay on Tardieu, director Claude Beauclair wrote the following: "In contrast to Tardieu's expressed mistrust of language is the love he holds for music: It dictates the words to him. Words, as sound rather than meaning, have little or no intrinsic value, but gain value from their position and harmony."

Tardieu was associated with the Theater of the Absurd, although he did not label himself or his work in such a way. These works were mostly written in France, in the 1940s and 50s, and usually employed "illogical situations, unconventional dialogue, and minimal plots to express the apparent absurdity of human existence." ⁶ The thinking went that there was no rational explanation for humanity, so whatever each of us did didn't really matter one way or another. Life and the world would still be cold and careless, so conventional logic and wisdom would hold no place in these works. There can be a tinge of the nonsensical here, though it may be more accurately referred to as a counter-sense. Rather than random, unlinked thoughts, Absurdist works start at the logical and reverse it, or branch off from it, or run perpendicular to it.

Lesson Plan: Using Technology

The simplicity of this poem lends itself well to incorporating technology so that students can interact with the poem. Most students should already have learned Powerpoint by seventh grade, but conduct an eyes-closed poll to see if anyone does not know the basics. If so, then pair that student with someone know to work proficiently enough to be able to tutor a student before starting his or her own project or, if it will require at-home work on the part of the tutoring student, award that student extra credit. ⁷

Preparation: Two nights before visiting the tech lab, students brainstorm lists of images that could illustrate each line or set of two lines of the poem well. Create a sectioned brainstorming sheet on which each line is written in a box with space for options, so that students clearly understand that they are to think of many images, not just one for the whole thing. It is assigned two days ahead so that students who don't complete it may be addressed on day one and given the opportunity to complete the assignment properly before getting to the tech lab. This makes for more efficiently-spent time. The day before the visit, proper tech lab etiquette and expected behavior should be discussed, including what consequences will be given for certain behaviors.

Day One: Students bring poem and brainstorm list to tech lab. Direct students to the Wordl website: <http://www.wordle.net/>. This site allows the user to input words which it then uses to create these really cool "word clouds." At the home site, click "Create." Students either type the poem in or copy and paste it from the link given above, according to teacher preference. When poem text is in that box, the student clicks "Go." The application will randomly generate a graphic word poster of all the vocabulary inserted. Words that are repeated in the text will appear larger in the word cloud. Click on "Open in Window" and expand to see image full-size and edit it. At the top of the image will appear categories which may be clicked for editing options (Edit, Language, Font, Layout, Color.)

Under "Language." I prefer to have students click "Do Not Remove Common Words" and uncheck "Remove Numbers" (although there aren't any here, I want them to get in this habit.) You may choose to allow them to

check either "Leave Words as Spelled," "make all words lower-case," or "MAKE ALL WORDS UPPER-CASE." "Show Word Counts" gives a list of how many times each word appears in the selection.

Students can select from many options under the "Font" button. Encourage students to consider the tone of the poem when selecting fonts. This will take some time as you can't get a feel for each font from the menu, so students will click each one to see the total effect. I think this is time well-spent, as each time they are looking at the French vocabulary from the poem pulled out of context. Also, it's just plain fun!

Under the "Layout" button, students may "Re-layout with current settings," change the "Maximum words allowed" (though I wouldn't), check a box to "Prefer Alphabetical Order," change the edges from "Rounder" to "Straighter," and change the image orientation to one of the following choices: "Any Which Way," "Horizontal," "Mostly Horizontal," "Half and Half," "Mostly Vertical," or "Vertical."

Under the "Color" button, students may choose to either randomly "Recolor," to change the colors to a specific pre-established color palette, or to create a custom color palette. At the bottom, students may choose to use the "Exact Palette Colors," or else to choose from the following variance options: "A little," "Some," "Lots," or "Wild."

At any time students may click "Randomize" at the bottom to get a totally new combination. The teacher should print each student a copy of their creation, which may be done by clicking "Print." I will not have my students save to the "Public Gallery" as the site is not monitored or censored and I do not want them stumbling across something inappropriate. Ideally students will be able to begin or end the PowerPoint presentation they will make with this Wordl. There seem to be a couple options for that. If you have access to a scanner you can scan the printed image in and insert it like a normal image. The Wordl FAQ section discusses taking a "screenshot" and saving that, as well as using a third-party software like Adobe Acrobat to create a printable PDF file of the image.

This Wordl image can be used as a memory tool for students, since vocabulary is not in the right order, students would have to show comprehension in choosing the correct word. It can be a mid-step presentation aid (be sure to deduct points for using it, but finding it oneself could be useful from a learning standpoint.) If students finish before class is over, they can search for images from their brainstorming sheet, to use in the Power Point they will create tomorrow.

Day Two: Students create a Powerpoint with images to convey the feeling and tone in the poem. Remember to have student tutors for any students identified as not being familiar with Powerpoint. I like to play French music in the background while students work.

While students work, check in with them individually, asking questions about the work, in French, to keep them engaged and focused. If you have the resources to allow students to record audio, you could offer them the opportunity to do so after the presentation is complete. Depending on time, you may let students know that on Day One, so they can work on it at home if they want to be ready for audio.

Days Two and Three: Students continue to create and fine-tune their presentations today. When they feel they are done they should ask for the teacher to view it. At this stage, make suggestions in terms of spelling and punctuation, pronunciation, and clarity of content based on images. If students do not include audio, they will be required to accompany the presentation by reading the poem aloud. If they do use audio, they will not be required to do so. When pairs of students finish, they may peer review their presentations for more feedback. Students may work on projects at home if they have a computer, and if not they may supplement their

Powerpoint with collages.

Days Three and Four: Students present their products when finished, depending on timing that may be during the end of day three, but most likely will be during a day four, which may not be the very next day, to allow for teacher feedback and opportunity for editing before presenting. Audience members (and the teacher) will rate each presentation in terms of accuracy (perfect -5, very accurate - 4, pretty accurate - 3, and not very accurate -2); relevance of images (all images very relevant - 5, most images relevant - 4, some images pretty relevant -3, most images not very relevant - 2), and impact of presentation (WOW! - 5, That presentation was very good. - 4, That was a pretty good presentation. - 3, Hmm, that presentation got the job done. - 2) Multiply each score by 5, and that gives you a possibility of 75 points. The other 25 points, should be awarded by the teacher based on daily behavior and time-on-task. This exercise is great to provide kinesthetic students with the opportunity to create something, and visual learners with the opportunity to conceive of the poem in a new way.

Grade 8: Chanson d'automne, by Paul Verlaine

During the fourth marking period of seventh grade, my students learn weather expressions, time, and seasons. When they come back as eighth graders, our first marking period poem will be "Chanson d'automne" by Paul Verlaine. The French can be found at the following website:
http://www.rosings.com/paul_verlaine.html.

Chanson d'automne

1. The long sobs
2. Of the violins
3. Of autumn
4. Wound my heart
5. With a monotonous
6. Languor.
7. All suffocating
8. And pale, when
9. The hour strikes.
10. I remember
11. The old days
12. And I cry...;
13. And I'm off
14. In the rough wind
15. That carries me
16. Here and there
17. Like a
18. Dead leaf...;

Linguistic Analysis

This poem is a great choice for the transition between seventh and eighth grade as it allows us to revisit season and weather vocabulary such as *automne*, *le vent*, *mauvais*, and *l'heure* (lines 3, 9, 14), which will activate their prior knowledge and give them a way into the more complex meaning of this new poem. Although the poem is short it has that dual nature of simplicity with some complex meaning that will suit eighth grade well. Also, it has some really nice sound elements that can help draw reluctant students in (*les songlots longs des violons de l'automne*.) There are definite rhymes in the poem, but they do not follow a familiar pattern. AAABBA / CCB(C+)(C+)B / DDEFEE. I refer to (C+) here because the rhyme is not solid, but it is similar enough to note. These elements may be difficult for students, but they are just the kind of challenge that eighth graders need. Those students more at ease with the language and irregular rhyming pattern can address the concept of enjambment, when the thought of a line continues and completes itself partway through the next line, irrespective of conventional line breaks. What effect this has on the reader is a more complex concept that will serve as a nice challenge to some students. They could rewrite the poem conventionally and see the effect.

There is a podcast in which the poem is read and analyzed, at: http://french.about.com/od/listening/a/poetrypodcast_4.htm . It includes a vocabulary list and a discussion of the work as well as of the poet. Since it discusses details of Verlaine's personal life that I will not bring into my middle school classroom, I will not use the podcast in its entirety in the classroom. I might play only the part where the poem is read, or her discussion of the poem's meaning, or I might just use it for my own information. As always, these decisions are yours to make as well.

The combination of simple and more complex vocabulary will also provide challenge for students who need it. There are fewer cognates, more bridge words, and a "False Friend," or word that looks similar to English but is not; these elements add to the complexity of this seemingly simple poem.

Easy-Spot Cognates: Long (long), le violon (violin), monotone (monotonous), suffocant (suffocating). Vocabulary-Builder Cognates: Languueur (languor). Spanish-French Cognates: Bénir (benedicir), le coeur (el corazón), tout (todo). Bridges: Le coeur - coronary -- heart; sonner - to sound -- to strike; Je me souviens - souvenir, which you get to remember a trip -- I remember; ancient - ancient -- old; pleure - similar to il pleut (it is raining) -- when it rains from your eyes, you are crying; emporter - portable, able to be carried -- to carry; de ça de là - ici and là-bas -- here and there; pareil - parallel -- similar; mort - mortuary, place where you bring dead people - mortal, able to die -- dead. New Vocabulary: Le sanglot, blême. Previously-learned Vocabulary: L'automne, quand, l'heure, le jour, je m'en vais, le vent, mauvais, la feuille. False Friend: Blessier = to wound, NOT to bless (bénir).

In 1944, the first and second lines of the poem were used by the Allies as a coded message for the French Resistance, in preparation for D-Day. The lines were repeated several times, broadcast over Radio Londres/BBC; it signaled that the invasion at Normandy would come in 24 hours. Its code name was "Operation Overlord" ⁸

Paul Verlaine and the Symbolist Movement

Paul Verlaine (1844-1896) was a leader of the Symbolist movement in France. ⁹ He was an alcoholic and often in trouble because of his drinking. He worked unsuccessfully in insurance, as a hotel clerk, and at farming. He was a member of the National Guard. He also taught English in France, and French in England. Verlaine served a two-year prison term for shooting and wounding friend, travel partner, and fellow poet Arthur Rimbaud during a quarrel in 1873. ¹⁰

The Symbolist movement, during the late 19th century, centered around expressing thoughts, ideas, and feelings through symbols and suggestions rather than direct statements. ¹¹ Here imagination was king, and reality was what the imagination determined it to be. Poetic rules were loosened and the mood created by the language and the musicality of the language was elevated. Symbolist poets sought to "convey individual emotional experience through the subtle, suggestive use of highly metaphorical language." ¹²

The tone of this poem is very sad and melancholic. It embodies a lyricism borne from Romanticism, but the focus on word sounds and atmosphere evoked makes it a clear work of Symbolism.

Lesson Plan: Listening

The musicality of this poem lends itself to practicing and playing with tone and mood through actual musical interpretations. As entering eighth graders, my students can discriminate between appropriateness of tone and can interpret the poem in their own manner. As arts magnet students, using music in a lesson like this is a great fit, though all students will enjoy the concept and appreciate the use of technology in the classroom.

Preparation: Secure a reliable method of playing audio and or video for your class, whether you have internet access and speakers or if you need to burn or record it and play it on a machine. Create response sheets as described below.

Lesson: With the advent of online video/audio sharing, there are many options from which to choose, both for types of media as well as for versions of the poem. I will play three versions put to music. First, popular French singer Charles Trenet sings a version called "Verlaine." It is very old-timey and kind of cheerful in a slightly sad way. I find it to be an odd fit for the poem. The tune has a "Heart and Soul" children's piano song sound to it. A simple online search for "Charles Trenet Verlaine" will uncover many options for his version. Fun Fact: This recording was used in the 1995 film French Kiss. Next I will play a recording in which Canadian artist Jean-François LaPointe sings an operatic version. This one is closer to what I would expect from the tone of the poem. A link to it is:

<http://www.analekta.com/en/album/Verlaine-Symbolist-Poets-And-The-French-Melodie.445.html>. Finally, a slightly more modern approach by American songstress of Danish and Tibetan descent Kesang Marstrand. Her version can be linked to from her website, <http://kesangmarstrand.com/home.html>; I found it on YouTube.

Make sure students have a version of the poem to look at. Play one song, then have students write a quick response, in English, to the following questions: How did this song make you feel? Does this song remind you of anything - another song, a movie, or something else? Name one thing you liked about this song. Name one thing you did not like about this song. Next have students write down any and all words or lines from the poem that seem well suited to the music. This can all be done by putting the prompts on an overhead projector; however, I recommend creating a worksheet with the information from each version, an image, and space to reply to each prompt. The poem can be printed on each section, and students can underline or highlight the words that fit. They can also be asked to note any words/phrases that they think did NOT work well with the music. The first two questions are perfect to use as practice for open-ended responses found on state high-stakes tests. In class, students can give notes and ideas and answer the questions quickly, and for homework they can use their papers to craft a fuller response, as practice. Alternately, students can complete full responses right away. In that case, I would play the music softly while students are working, so that those who finish before the rest of the class can be prompted to do another activity, like brainstorming images or musical styles that could be used to convey the mood of the poem.

After students answer the questions, have them pair and share their initial reactions so that they get a chance to process what they are taking in. Repeat that process with the other two songs, and finish with a homework prompt like the following: Which song do you think was most successful in terms of conveying the mood of the poem? Why? Which song was least successful and why? What would you do differently? Give details.

Selected Resources: Bibliography for Poetry

Appelbaum, Stanley. *Introduction to French Poetry: A Dual-Language Book*. Dover Publications, 1991. This is a good resource for French poetry, with the English translation on the facing page, and a short biography of each featured poet.

Caws, Mary Ann, ed. *The Yale Anthology of Twentieth-Century French Poetry*. Yale University Press, 2004. This is a wonderful resource for brief information on poets, with a great breadth of poets included, and solid information on poetry movements.

Hollier, Denis, ed. *A New History of French Literature*. Harvard University Press: 1989. This expansive book is a good resource to learn about poetry movements and poets.

Selected Resources: Bibliography for Teaching Strategies

Blaz, Deborah. *Differentiated Instruction: A Guide for Foreign Language Teachers*. Eye on Education, 2006. This book has a wealth of strategies for differentiating instruction in the world languages classroom, as well as a thorough explanation of different methods of differentiation.

Boyles, Nancy. *Constructing Meaning through Kid-Friendly Comprehension Strategy Instruction*. Maupin House, 2004. If you choose to do any reading comprehension activities with your students, this resource is invaluable.

Curtain, Helena and Dahlberg, Carol Ann. *Languages and Children, Making the Match: New Languages for Young Learners, Grades K-8*. Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 2003. One of the seminal works for K-8 language teachers, in its third edition. I always refer to this and the Omaggio text when I have questions of a theoretic or strategic nature. In particular I consulted this work for Krashen's discussion of Comprehensible Input.

Marzano, Robert J., Pickering, Debra J., and Pollock, Jane E. *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*. ASCD, 2001. This is one of the educator's bibles for quality instructional strategies.

Omaggio Hadley, Alice. *Teaching Language in Context*. Cengage Learning, 2000. The other seminal work for language instructors!

Selected Resources: Websites

Encarta Online. <http://encarta.msn.com>. This resource was used for factual information about poets and poetry movements.

Espace Poemes: <http://www.espace-poemes.com/poesies-celebres-themes>. This site has well-known French poetry on it, separated by theme. You may also submit your own poems, which are also separated by theme. It is a great example of the modern technology that poets may use to share their work without being traditionally published. It also has some basic poetry terms that may prove useful.

France Web: <http://www.franceweb.fr/poesie/enfants/poeme.htm#>. On this site, there are poems written by young French children, accompanied by illustrations and sometimes even by animations. Poems and illustrations are hyperlinked by keywords on the homepage. I am excited to include poetry from young French children and I think my students will be excited as well. It will help springboard us into writing some formulaic but fun poetry.

Into the Book! Wisconsin Educational Communications Board. http://reading.ecb.org/downloads/itb_GradualRelease.pdf. Great visual aid for understanding Gradual Release of Responsibility.

Karfis, Camille Chevalier. Podcast: Easy French Poetry Podcast - Chanson d'automne by Paul Verlaine. http://french.about.com/od/listening/a/poetrypodcast_4.htm. This was explained in the section on Verlaine.

Mama Lisa's World: <http://www.mamalisa.com>. This site has lots of children's songs and poems from around the world, including France, French-speaking Africa, and Francophone Canada. When we go to the Rhyme Celebration, I usually get our rhyme here (including tongue twisters!) Some items have music files and sheet music as well.

La Recup. <http://larecup.e-monsite.com/rubrique,chansons-pour-enfants,1008723.html> This is a Belgian woman's personal website on DIY activities, especially those to do with children. She has a list of French-language poems, including Mon Chapeau.

Poesie Francophone: http://www.poesiefrancophone.com/conseils_prosodie.htm. Information in French about poetry basics.

Tete a modeler: <http://www.teteamodeler.com/dossier/expression/poesie.asp>. This site is geared towards French parents, to "occupy their children intelligently." It has some printable sheets with poems that children can color in, geared towards themes (Mother's Day and Autumn mostly, at least right now.) Good models for younger students.

Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_poetry. A discussion of French poetry phonetics basics, to use as a starting point if interested.

Poésies.biz: <http://www.poesies.biz/index.php>. This site is geared towards children, and has poems separated by theme.

Poésie française: <http://poesie.webnet.fr/home/index.html>. "1er site française de poésie." Links to classic poems and those written by modern community contributors.

Appendix A: Implementing District Standards

New Haven follows the Connecticut World Language Curriculum Framework, which is in turn based on the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, as well as recent research findings in world language education. The framework is composed of six domains: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons among Languages, Comparisons among Cultures, and Communities. Although this unit will touch on all domains, the linguistic analysis of, listening to, and recitation of poetry in the unit most clearly address the following domains, answering the associated overarching questions:

1. Communication (Interpretive Mode): How do I understand what others are trying to communicate in another language?
2. Communication (Presentational Mode): How do I present information, concepts and ideas in another language in a way that is understood?
Connections (Intradisciplinary Mode): How do I use my understanding of another language and culture to broaden and deepen my understanding of that language and culture and access and use information that would otherwise be unavailable to me?
3. Comparisons among Languages: How do I demonstrate an understanding of the similarities, differences and interactions across languages?
- 4.

Endnotes

¹ Although I don't recall when or where I first learned about this model, I found a great resource for it at the following website: http://reading.ecb.org/downloads/itb_GradualRelease.pdf.

² A note on pronunciation: Some language teachers do not stress the importance of pronunciation. I do. I believe that learning and practicing proper pronunciation helps students to recognize word components and to infer and apply linguistic words and codes as they progress in their language development. I also believe that a good part of the fun in language learning is in the particular sounds of that language. And hearing proper pronunciation reinforced allows the student to self-correct, which contributes to deeper language learning. So pronunciation is not stressed here for perfectionist reasons, but for the language learning benefits it holds.

³ In my sixth grade class (the one in which half the class were in their second year, half in their first) the pairings were indeed obvious and acknowledged, because I wanted students to know that sometimes we were working as two year-two students while others we were working as one year-one and one year-two. It was obvious anyway, so I decided it better to acknowledge and explain the reasoning. Students respected it and honored each role.

⁴ A note on my translations: When a word can be translated as a cognate, I use that so students can immediately connect to it. I then explain how that word association can be a "bridge" to the other, less-similar but related meaning, as detailed in the previous section. This serves as a vocabulary-building exercise in both English and French, and the strategy helps my students decode words for state high-stakes test in reading comprehension and degrees of reading power.

⁵ All information about Jean Tardieu found in Caws, as well as the following two websites:

<http://web.whittier.edu/mmchirol/JT-EssayUS.html>, <http://www.answers.com/topic/jean-tardieu>. Beauclair's quote in the next paragraph comes from the Whittier site.

⁶ This quote, as well as the information on the Theater of the Absurd, found at:
(http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761585154/Theater_of_the_Absurd.html)

⁷ My school has a technology lab. I recognize that every school does not. This lesson may be modified to allow for individual students using computers while the rest of the class does another activity.

⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chanson_d'automne,
<http://www.slideshare.net/cjacomino/chanson-dautomne-de-p-verlaine-presentation>

⁹ All information on Verlaine found in the following websites:
http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761575984/Paul_Verlaine.html,
<http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/255>, <http://www.answers.com/topic/paul-verlaine>.

¹⁰ Be advised that this friendship was actually much more than a friendship, a fact we will not be discussing in my middle school classroom unless a student brings it up.

¹¹ http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761555417/Symbolist_Movement.html

¹² <http://www.answers.com/topic/symbolist-movement>

<https://teachersinstitute.yale.edu>

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