

A TEACHER'S JOURNAL:
AN ACCOUNT OF MY CHOICE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF TOTAL
PHYSICAL RESPONSE STORYTELLING AS AN APPROACH TO
TEACHING BEGINNING LEVEL FRENCH

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ABSTRACT

This paper is about choosing an approach to teaching a foreign language that is appropriate for me in my teaching context – public high school French classes – and my attempts to become as proficient as possible in the approach I chose called Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPRS). For eighteen weeks I taught French I grades nine through twelve and kept a detailed teacher’s journal of the experience.

ERIC Descriptors: 1. Classroom Techniques
2. Foreign Language Instruction
3. French
4. Lesson Plans

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CHAPTER 1

THE NEED TO CHANGE

The fourth year into the change from a seven period day to the four-by-four block schedule at Fall Mountain Regional High School, I began to notice two disturbing trends: fewer students were enrolling in intermediate level French courses (level III and IV); and those who enrolled in levels II, III and IV had less retention of the French studied in the previous course than students did under the seven period day. In addition to these two trends, I observed that my students struggled to have a spontaneous conversation, and I grew dissatisfied with the text-based approach to teaching I had been using. My students could reproduce and to a limited extent use French, but only a small percentage were making the transition from beginning level language to intermediate level language. This problem became more and more evident in block scheduling. Students in the seven period day schedule that we had before switching to block scheduling had the two months of summer vacation between French courses. However, students in the block schedule had an average of eight to twelve months between French courses. Because of this larger period of time between courses, the students in the block schedule needed an accelerated French I review course at the beginning of French II because they forgot a lot of the French they had learned in French I. (See sample student schedule Appendix 3, page 50).

I followed through on these discoveries by administering entrance and exit surveys to my French I and II students. In the entrance surveys I asked them what their

motivations were in taking French and what they hoped to accomplish by the end of the course. Approximately ninety percent listed speaking and holding a simple conversation in French as their main expectation of what they would like to get out of French I and II. In the exit surveys I asked them if they had achieved their goals and what activities helped or hindered them in each of the four skill areas. Approximately twenty percent of my French I and II students wrote that they felt at least moderately successful in their goals. Factors that contribute to that feeling of achievement are the learner himself/herself, the class community, and the teaching approach. However, based on conversations I had with parents and students, I believe that even those students who felt successful in their goals at the end of French I felt less successful eight to twelve months later at the beginning of French II. I focused on teaching approaches as the area I could most influence and change in response to this feedback.

Last year during the first semester, I experimented with a variety of approaches to teaching a foreign language. In the exit surveys at the end of all of my courses in January of 2003, the majority of my students chose the storytelling, physical movement and culture activities as being the most helpful to their learning. All of my students, including those who failed the final exam, achieved a ninety percent or better on the sections of the final exam that I covered using storytelling and physical movement (Total Physical Response).

Using this evidence, I decided to switch teaching approaches from text-based to Total Physical Response Storytelling in the spring of 2003.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS TPRS?

Essential History

TPRS stands for Total Physical Response Storytelling, an approach to teaching a foreign language that was created by Blaine Ray. He based TPRS on three elements: his 25 years of practical experience as a Spanish Teacher in public school; his use and experimentation with Total Physical Response (Asher 1996); and The Language Acquisition Theory of Dr. Stephen Krashen (Krashen 2003).

There is not enough time in the language classroom to learn language in context the way small children do. Therefore using a variety of techniques to increase **comprehensible input** (All of these terms are defined in Appendix 1, pages 43-48) and interaction with the language is the best use of that class time. Input that is not comprehensible is not effective because most students get tired and give up. A few persevere and succeed, but those students would probably succeed no matter what the approach. Output in the form of speaking and writing happens because of the **comprehensible input** in the form of listening and reading, however the focus of TPRS is **not** output. The focus is on input. Students don't learn by speaking, they learn by understanding what they hear and read and by **internalizing** the language through experimentation and interaction. What this means is that when I, as a TPRS teacher, plan a lesson for beginning level students, I plan a listening and/or reading type lesson with

room for speaking and writing. The focus is on student comprehension of the listening and the reading. In the first month of class the focus is more on listening and active participation than on reading, but the focus gradually shifts to include more and more reading. Practical skills such as understanding, reading, speaking and writing are prioritized over drills and conjugating.

An important aspect of TPRS is the focus on long-term memory rather than short-term memory. The system of working with six new phrases/words a day by continuously using the words separately and together in a variety of questions, commands and contexts enables the students to **internalize** the language as they try out new terms with what they already know and experiment with how the new terms can be used. The students have numerous correct examples to refer to and to process from the listening and reading activities. Because of this goal, developing long-term memory, quizzes are unannounced. If students need time to study right before a quiz; then they haven't learned the new vocabulary and functions and there needs to be more practice and recycling.

Class Routine

If you walked into my TPRS class, you would see high-energy output from the teacher with a lot of interaction between the teacher and the students in the target language. You would see movement in the form of **gestures**, students acting and role playing and dancing cultural dances from Francophone countries. You would see students reading silently to themselves, aloud in English translation either with a partner or for the whole class, or doing **Free Voluntary Reading** with notes in a reading journal. You would also see students reading illustrated stories in French written and illustrated by their peers and edited by the teacher. Visual stimuli such as props, artwork and

grammar charts would be displayed on the walls. You would hear students telling original stories to the rest of the class using actors and/or props. You would also hear Francophone music that the teacher and students are singing. Finally, you would see review games such as charades, Pictionary, Scrabble, around the world, memory and Simon says.

In a ninety-minute block, I start the class with a tie-in to language skills and vocabulary the students are in the process of acquiring. This tie-in can be: a command or a series of commands that the students respond to either as a class or individually; a reading of the story the class created together the previous day; some **personalized questions and answers**; charades with the **gestures** from the new vocabulary; or a combination of any two of the above. An example of a combination is students reading the story from the previous lesson and me as the teacher asking questions first about the reading and then moving into **personalized questions** based on the content of the reading. Another example would be me as the teacher using the **gestures** from both new and older vocabulary with the students saying the words or phrases followed by a series of **personalized questions** that the students respond to either in oral or written form.

After the opening tie-in, I then move into *The New 7 Steps of TPR Storytelling*. Because TPRS is still a relatively new approach to teaching, the process is still evolving. In a workshop I attended in Albany in September 2003, Blaine Ray explained that the ‘new’ 7 steps were developed to add in more reading to the cycle.

The first step is called *Gesture*. In this step I introduce new language – three to six new expressions. I have the new words on an overhead and I translate them for my students and give them an association. An example of an association I give my students

is that you shiver in the winter. *En hiver* is in the winter in French and this helps some of my students remember the expression. Then I do **TPR** with action words and/or **gestures** for more abstract expressions. I assess my students' understanding and level of retention by using **chain commands** or by asking a **barometer student** for a translation. This step lasts for two to three minutes. Sometimes, later in the semester, I challenge my students to come up with **gestures** and **associations** for the new expressions.

The second step is called *Personalize*. My favorite part of working with the new expressions is the **PQA** session. I find that asking my students a lot of questions using the new expressions is an interesting way of providing **comprehensible input** to my students with a lot of repetition of the new expressions. This session also gives me input on how to personalize the **mini-stories** later on. One important benefit of this step is that it builds class community. After I ask one student a question, I often ask another student to give a reaction or comment on the first student's answer. Several of my students have told me that French is the only class where they know everybody's names and interests. Sometimes I ask for writing samples here at the sentence level as a form of assessment that I can take my time reading and interpreting.

I usually do one or two passive **PMS**'s after the **PQA** session. I tell the class bizarre situations involving myself, a member of the class, or a celebrity. No one is acting during this section and situations are normally around three sentences long. I have found that it is very important never to use a student character in a **mini-situation** that is negative. So if something bad happens in the **mini-situation** I use a famous person or myself as the main character. In longer stories I can use a student character for something bad only if I fix the problem in the story and make it better. Even then it is

important to know my students. I had one class that wanted all of the characters to be fictitious so we created people and animals to be the characters in our stories.

The third step is called *Mini-Situation*. The first time I tell a story I do so with one or more student actors. It is important that the actor know exactly what he/she needs to do all of the time. I often choose students I know are comfortable in front of the class and who are able to bring their personalities to the stories. It is a process of trial and error for me to find these students, but as I get to know my students I get to know who the best actors are. Sometimes the students who fidget and need to physically stand up make good actors.

One part of TPRS that I am still trying to get better at is telling the story. It is an interactive story and not just me talking and the class listening. I **ask the story**. I have details prepared in an outline before the lesson, but if my students give really interesting or bizarre answers I modify the stories on the spot. Usually the final story we created together as a class is very different from the one I had prepared beforehand.

The fourth step is called *Retell*. I do several retells of the class created story. I ask for more details the second time through. Sometimes I intentionally make errors in the story line, and the students have to yell “no” when they hear them. Sometimes I tell the story and the entire class acts it out. The last retell is a student retell. With beginners, I often ask individual students to tell part of the story – one action per student. When students are more comfortable, I ask for one student to retell the whole story and for another to add any details that were left out. Follow-up activities include drawing the story and writing the story.

The fifth step is called *Reading*. I usually do two **mini-situations** per block; so I do the second one as a reading with discussion questions and retells. After I hand out the reading, I ask one student to translate the story. Sometimes they do this step with partners or in groups. I use **pop-up grammar** during the reading step to be sure students understand what they are seeing. With beginners, I often have to point out the similarities between words they are reading and words they learned as vocabulary because they are not able to recognize different forms of the same word. Once students get stronger and more confident, they are better able to recognize different forms of the same word. For instance, a beginner may not be able to recognize that *nageons* and *nage* are different forms of the verb *nager* (to swim).

The sixth step is called *Discuss*. In this step I ask questions about the reading and add discussion questions. The discussion questions are drawn from events or activities that happen in the story. For example, if the people in the story are hang gliding, I ask my students “who has been hang gliding? Where did you go hang gliding? Would you like to try this sport?” I also try to point out any cultural information contained in the reading. For instance, if there is a reference to Zouk in the reading, I ask my students if they have ever heard of it. Then I play a song in the Zouk style for them to hear. I also discuss where Zouk came from. All of the discussion takes place in French with pop-up translations when necessary.

The reading and discussion steps are repeated for as many readings as I have. During the second half of the semester, I use extended readings that are one page long so this step takes longer.

The seventh step is called *Assess*. Assessment in TPRS actually happens throughout the 7 step cycle and not just here at the end. I am continually assessing the level of my students' comprehension through **TPR**, through translation, through **PQA**, through student retells, through writing samples, through reading questions and through student feedback. I hold my top students to a high standard by asking them for more details in **PQA** sessions and in story retells.

I can do a lot in a 90-minute class, but the more complex the stories become, the longer it takes to do all of these steps. Therefore, during the second half of the semester, I often start the class by finishing the cycle I started the previous day. So the class may start with a reading and then move into the new cycle.

CHAPTER 3

MY INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION OF THREE TPRS PRINCIPLES

Teach to the Eyes

During a training workshop on TPRS that I attended in Albany in September 2003, Blaine Ray emphasized some important aspects of TPRS. They are *Teach to the Eyes*, *Love Your Students* and *Teach for Success*. *Teach to the Eyes* means two things to me. The first is the need to check constantly for comprehension. If a student does not understand, I can see it in his or her eyes. I can then ask questions to see where the student needs help so the student is not lost and frustrated. Also, if a student is bored or not interested in the story, I can see that in his or her eyes and add an element of difficulty by increasing the complexity of the sentence structure. I can modify the lesson to add humor into the story or an element of personalization to add interest. My task as the teacher is to modify and adapt the lesson I'm teaching to both challenge and interest my students without losing them. One way that I know if I'm succeeding in this task is by watching the body language of my students – particularly their eyes.

The second meaning of *Teach to the Eyes* is that every class and every student is different. Different sets of external and internal events create times when learning happens and when it doesn't happen. Those external and internal events also vary the rate the learning happens – rapidly one day and moderately or slowly another day. Some days are steps backward where the knowledge of language the students had is just not

reachable to them. I call this phenomenon life interference. Sometimes a student is not feeling well, had a fight with a friend, or is worried about his or her math test. An example from my teacher's journal is from the day after the Boston Red Sox lost their playoff round in baseball. I remarked that over half of my students were sullen, unresponsive or angry. I could tell from their eyes that something was wrong, so I called a feedback session where I asked each student to comment on why the class was not responding to questions like normal. The reason for their anger came out as they shared their disappointment in the Red Sox for losing. I modified that lesson by giving them more reading than active storytelling and by the next day they were back to normal.

I can remember something one of our exchange students said to me. She said that there were days when she could only access her fallback phrases like "I'm fine thank you" and "I'm going home now". I realize that my students also have these days, and I have learned to accept and not push on these days. Rather I push when their eyes tell me it's time.

Love Your Students

A second important aspect of TPRS emphasized by Blaine Ray is to *Love Your Students*. Create an atmosphere of acceptance and safety in the classroom. I greet my students as they come in every day and ask how they are. I also make an effort to smile and feel happy that those students are there. I have seen students visibly relax and respond with smiles or greetings of their own. Not everyone responds the same way, but as the teacher I have a lot of control over the mood and tone of the class. Creating an atmosphere where students are welcomed helps them take risks and experiment with the language they are learning.

I personally hear the expression “love your students” as see them as individuals who are full of potential and who mean well. Instead of reacting to a student with a negative feeling, I try to listen to what the student is saying and find the root cause of the student’s action or statement. This is a more long-term, pro-active point of view. I am not saying that inappropriate behavior be accepted – discipline must be enforced to maintain a healthy class atmosphere. An example from my journal that I wrote about several times is when a student says, “Miss Heins, I don’t have the work done.” Instead of yelling or saying something derogatory as other teachers sometimes do, I say “What are you proposing to do about it?” or “How can you fix this so it doesn’t happen again?” I have found that with most students, they respond better to this than the yelling or the “How do you expect to pass” comments. Also, I’ve noticed that my students have been more responsible about their work this semester after I adopted this policy. I’m looking for solutions and teaching problem-solving skills, I’m not looking for excuses or to assign blame.

Teach for Success

Teaching for Success means teaching so that all of my students both make progress and are aware of the progress that they make. My students should be able to say what they learned or accomplished every day after class. Teaching for success for all of my students means that I don’t teach a lesson so that two to three students understand. I teach a lesson so that the majority of the class understands. My goal is for one hundred percent student comprehension, but that goal is not always realistic.

In TPRS, if students show up to class, focus and participate, they will make progress in all of the four skill areas. TPRS lessons lead to successful foreign language

teaching because of the focus on high frequency words that are useable in real situations and that are recycled all year. Another reason why TPRS lessons lead to successful foreign language teaching is because of the integration of teaching techniques that use all eight of Howard Gardner's intelligences (Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Spatial, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Musical, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, and Naturalist) (Gardner 1993, 1999, Armstrong 1999).

Students are aware of the progress they make in French when they understand what I'm saying in questions, in commands or in stories. Also, the students know they have made progress when they can read a story on their own or with a partner. They are aware of their progress when they see samples of their essays from each week and see the increased amount and detail they are able to write.

Finally, teaching for success also means assessing for success. I test to find out what the students have learned, not what they have not learned. Instead of more traditional multiple-choice questions with all of the exceptions to the grammar rules, I create tests with short answer questions, translation sections and creative writing sections. I also use oral conversations and skits as tests.

CHAPTER 4

SAMPLES AND ANALYSES OF TWO TPRS LESSONS

A Lesson That Worked Well

As a teacher, there are some lessons that stand out for me as exceptional – exceptionally good and exceptionally bad. I have looked through my journal and chosen two lessons to present and analyze. The first lesson is a lesson that went well, that contained that feeling of blinking my eyes and ninety minutes are gone. The joy of seeing students pick up and use new vocabulary and structures along with the spontaneous comments such as “Miss Heins, I get it” or “I’m going to try this with my grandma” provides fulfilling moments in my career as a teacher. By analyzing these two 90-minute lessons I hope to discover what elements contributed to the success or failure of the lessons and what I can do to ensure future lessons are more successful.

Here is the lesson from Tuesday, October 28th:

Goals: student comprehension; review and reinforce vocabulary and question words.

Guide words: allume la télé = turns on the television

éteint = turns off

sort = goes out

la voiture = the car

tourne la clé = turns the key

pousse = pushes

voit un beau cheval = sees a handsome horse

embrasse = hugs

I reviewed the **guide words** for comprehension by asking one or more **barometer students** to translate the guide words for the class. I then asked some of my gifted students to use them in a sentence as a model. I supported these gifted students when needed by asking questions in French for them to answer and by providing them with my own sample sentences. I then moved on to the story.

PMS: The first time I told the story to the class I used an actress, props (a key, a car, a horse and a sun) and the questions as scripted below. The underlined words indicate places in the story where I asked the class to add details to the story.

Une fille est à la maison.

- Qui est à la maison? Où est la fille? La fille est à la maison ou au café? Où est la maison? à Walpole

Elle allume la télé et elle regarde la télé pendant quatre heures

- Est-ce qu'elle regarde la télé? Qui regarde la télé? Qu'est-ce que la fille regarde? Où est-ce qu'elle regarde la télé? Quels programmes est-ce qu'elle regarde? Law and Order et Friends

Elle éteint la télé et elle sort de la maison. Elle va à la voiture.

- Est-ce qu'elle allume où éteint la télé? Est-ce qu'elle sort de la maison? Comment? Par la porte Est-ce qu'elle va à l'avion? Est-ce qu'elle va à la voiture? De quel couleur est sa voiture? Rose

Elle tourne la clé, mais la voiture ne marche pas. C'est un problème.

- Est-ce qu'elle va à la voiture rose? Est-ce qu'elle ouvre la porte de la voiture?
Est-ce qu'elle frappe la chaise de la voiture rose? Est-ce que la voiture
marche?

Elle pousse la voiture. C'est difficile.

- Est-ce qu'elle mange la voiture? est-ce que la voiture commence à marcher?
est-ce qu'elle pousse la voiture? Est-ce que c'est facile où difficile?

Elle voit un beau cheval dans le soleil et elle dit, "le cheval est bon parce qu'il marche."

- Qu'est-ce qu'elle voit? Est-ce que le cheval est beau ou laid? bon ou
mauvais? grand ou petit? Est-ce que le cheval marche? Est-ce qu'il marche
vite ou lentement?

Elle va au beau cheval et elle l'embrasse. Elle est très contente et elle va à Québec à
cheval.

- Est-ce que la fille frappe le nez du cheval? Est-ce qu'elle est contente ou
triste? Où va-t-elle à cheval? Est-ce que le cheval est triste ou content?

Second retell of story: I told the story with blanks that the students filled in orally.

Student retells of the story to the whole class: I picked three very good students. Each
student did their own retell.

Writing: Students wrote the story on their own. I collected their stories. The next day I
gave an edited, typed version of each story to the class as a reading review.

Reading: As the students were writing, I wrote the modified version of the story (with
the extra details) on an overhead transparency. After collecting the students' written
stories, I showed them the overhead transparency version of the story that the students
read to a partner. When the first partner finished, the other partner then read the story.

Homework: Word search. (see below) This word search format is pre-set by the computer program so I can't use spaces or accents.

list b all search

E N P F N B O U X L X T E S M L H X X P A Y M E A
 E R J O C P N I E A E M O E G B E G G D V X W R Z
 G S E N U V N N D L I Y H V K Y J S E D N A M E D
 I B J P E S O W L A T R F E I J U D D T V W Y M O
 E C M R N M S I H N R I O L U O C E L E U R S A U
 N M R E B O U E L E V A V E J V F T A A N N E M K
 L E T R T J M A L A B J L S H N P E B Z F T K J G
 I A I J J U C S J E L K E E M Y A I E S T C S A E
 J L O U Y L N I T A T R G L T L H N W E I F U N N
 M N X P E R Y E V R T H Z S L U R T I E H C A F A
 L A P O U P E E C N O Q E U A N O V P S R H R P T
 A O T X X L H S E R Z S M O W L R C L A V I O N H
 Q R N L D C Y R I M A E W T E E I K E W Y I Q U T
 K Y N U E N U R W O H V Y M S S T B T W L R V Z H
 X F U L E K O G I W F S A A S C F I Z I F Z E S I
 E D A L A M W P C L B Q L T C I A J X Y W A S I V
 B N B H A T E N E O J S N F E S T D G R Q L S V G
 S O U R I T E E G R J A G I K E I U U B Q N A M K
 S O T O H P S E D D N E R P C A G N A C V V R Y D
 I L F A I T C H A U D Z S J B U U P E F K J B V P
 K D N Z Z K Y C W O M T H H I X E E L N K X M T O
 P V W Q G H L N Z C B N S E N H D U T L Z T E B G

aime
 allume
 cinqfois
 demande
 ecoutelaradio
 embrasse
 est
 eteint
 fache
 fatigue

ilfaitchaud
 ilneige
 juillet
 lacle
 lapoupee
 laserviette
 lavion
 leau
 lecheval
 lecouloir

lenombril
 lesciseaux
 lesdents
 lethe
 malade
 mamere
 met
 monpere
 pousse
 prenddesphotos

rentre
 repond
 sort
 sourit
 tousleseleves
 unecravate
 unpeu
 unverre



Why did this lesson work well? There are many factors that affect how well a lesson flows and how well the students learn the material in the lesson. Here is my analysis of why this particular lesson worked so well.

In the beginning of the class, I started by going over the **guide words** of the **PMS** to refresh student memory and to allow the students to start predicting the content of the story. This step brought the class into the feeling of French class and helped them put away the Math or History class they just left. It also assured that the whole class understood the language we were focusing on which helps prevent certain discipline problems later on in the class. There was one student who had been absent the day before this lesson; and by starting with the **guide words**, she was not lost, as she might have been if we had not started with the guide words. She is very shy about speaking, so rather than asking her to go through the meanings of all of the words, I checked her comprehension by unobtrusively reading her notebook while she was writing down the vocabulary phrases and their meanings.

The second stage of the lesson was the **PMS**. One of the keys of TPR Storytelling is the teacher's ability to **ask the story** instead of just telling the story to the class. Another key is choosing or creating a story that is interesting to the students, that is neither too long nor too short according to the abilities of the class and that uses a combination of recycled vocabulary and structure, recently acquired vocabulary and structure, and new vocabulary and structure that is introduced in the story. With this lesson I feel that I was able to **ask the story** well. I feel this way because of how interactive the story became. I had a lot of student input and response to the questions, and I could see some of my students taking pride in their contributions to the story. By

taking pride I mean that they were excited when I used their ideas and they smiled when we were asking questions or doing retells about details they had added.

In the section with student retells, I could see and hear that the students had **acquired** the language and were using it rather than just reciting it. The three students who retold the story for the class did so very well and all three retells were slightly different. For instance one of them said, “Elle voyage à cheval à Québec.” Clearly using the previously learned *voyage*, which indicates that he processed the story instead of just memorizing it.

The two times I told the story and the three students retells built up to the students writing the story. When I asked them to write it, they had enough practice and examples to be successful. Also, by writing it myself on the overhead, I provided the students with immediate feedback on how they had done. I also believe that this strategy created a stronger incentive for the students to want to read the class created version of the story that was on the overhead and not be bored with it.

Collecting the students’ written stories held all of the students accountable. It also provided me with another means of assessing how successful the lesson was and where the students needed more practice. For instance, I noticed that several of my students were having word order problems with the possessive. They wrote *La fille maison* instead of *La maison de la fille*. (The girl’s house instead of the house of the girl.)

Finally, the lesson was successful because it covered all four skills. Listening to the story with student actors and with questions. Speaking while answering questions and with story retells. Writing with the story rewrites. And reading with the overhead reading activity.

A Lesson That did not Work Well

In addition to a lesson that worked well, I wanted to analyze a lesson that did not work well. As a teacher I find that I can learn a lot about how to improve by looking closely at lessons and classes that I didn't feel went well. Here is the lesson for one of those classes.

Monday, December 1st, 2003

Goals: To regroup after vacation, review and reinforce vocabulary from before vacation.

Flashcards and Student **Mini-Stories**: Students worked in groups of 3 (randomly created). Each group got 15 cards and used the words on their cards to create a story. Each group presented their story to the class with visuals (which can be actors). During the presentation, each group had to first go over their 15 flashcards with the class, then present the story they created, and then ask for a summary of their story in English from the audience. After all of the presentations, I asked each student to say what helped make the stories easier or harder to understand.

Mini-Story: (story concept from "ACCELERATED Mini-stories for Look, I Can Talk!" by Blaine Ray, Von Ray and Michael Thompson, pp. 17-18, 2002) This was a review story so none of the **guidewords** were new.

Guidewords: I chose a weaker student to translate the guidewords and I did **PQA** for any words that gave him/her trouble. Then I went over the **guidewords** again to make sure everyone understood them.

La vache riche = the rich cow, le singe pauvre = the poor monkey, la rue = the road, l'amène = brings him or her, Je suis = I am

Story with Questions:

Il y a une rue. Il y a une grande rue.

Y a-t-il une rue? Y a-t-il une grande rue ou une petite rue? Où est la rue? (Write student answer here to remember for later.)

Il y a une vache et un singe dans la rue.

Y a-t-il une vache dans la rue? Y a-t-il un singe dans la rue? Y a-t-il un tigre dans la rue? Qui est dans la rue? La rue est-elle grande où petite?

La vache est pauvre. Le singe est pauvre. La vache et le singe n'ont pas d'argent.

La vache est-elle riche? Le singe est-il riche ou pauvre? Qui est riche? Pourquoi sont-ils pauvre? Qui n'a pas d'argent?

Ils n'ont pas de lit et ils n'ont pas de maison. Ils dorment dans la rue.

Ont-ils un lit? Ont-ils une voiture de sport? Ont-ils une maison? Où est la rue?

Il y a un élève. C'est (student) de la classe de français!

Y a-t-il un élève? Qui est-ce?

Il voit la vache et le singe. Il les amène à (Acworth, dans le New Hampshire).

Est-ce que (student) voit une vache? Est-ce que (student) voit un tigre?

Comment vont-ils aux Etats-Unis? (à pied, à cheval, en avion, en bateau?)

Il leur donne du lait et un sandwich. La vache est contente, mais le singe est triste. Il pleure.

Qui est contente? Qui est triste? Pourquoi est-ce que le singe pleure? (detail)

Student retell challenge: After doing the story twice with more detail the second time, I asked one or two good students to retell the story in their own words in French. (By in

their own words I mean not memorized exactly like I said it. I expected variations as well as errors in their language as part of this process.)

Homework: Draw the story in scenes.

Why didn't this lesson work well? One of the problems that stands out to me in hindsight is the whole structure of the class. I had stories, stories and more stories so students lost focus. All of the stories were very different and although they contained recycled vocabulary and structure, they did not build on each other and they did not relate to each other. Also, after the end of the discussion about what helped or hindered the classes' understanding of the meaning of the stories, the students were ready to pack up and leave because it felt like the lesson had ended. It felt that way to me too, but I couldn't think of a way to fix it at that point so I carried on with what I had planned.

The story that I told during the second half of class was not well taught. I didn't spend as much time on the **guide words** as I usually do. When I told the story with a student actor I didn't do a good job of **asking the story**, which would have personalized it more and perhaps pulled in more of the students. I told the story like I had prepared it and asked the questions to see if the students understood rather than to encourage student input. The combination of leaving this story until the end of the class and not personalizing it very well resulted in the class not being committed to the story. They didn't all respond to the questions and about a third of the class was not focusing on the story. I know they were not focused from their facial expressions and because they couldn't retell it.

One final reason why the lesson did not go well may be from what I omitted. Normally I make space in the lessons after a weekend or after a break for students to

share what they did and how they were doing. Each time I make this space I add a few expressions for them to use based on their interests so they can talk about their weekends or vacations in French. I didn't do this in this lesson. I really didn't do anything that would have pulled the class together as a group in the beginning of the lesson. Instead, I immediately separated them into small groups and kept them in the same small groups for over half of the class.

CHAPTER 5

LESSON PLANS AND EXCERPTS FROM MY TEACHER'S JOURNAL

The First Two Days of Class

Here are the first two lessons for French I with excerpts from my reflections in my teacher's journal. The first lesson was a 20-minute class for freshmen only where I had 9 freshmen. The second lesson was an 80-minute class with all 19 of my students together for the first time. The class was a mixture of 9 freshmen, 8 sophomores, and 2 seniors.

Freshman Orientation lesson: 20 minutes. Tuesday, August 26th 2003

Goals: To make students feel welcome, to give students something new, to review/introduce greetings

Greet each student at the door as they enter: I stood at the classroom door and made an effort to smile and say *bonjour* to each student.

Script: I started the lesson with a greeting dialogue that I went through step-by-step with my students. First, I asked a question. Then, I modeled and repeated the expected student responses at least three times. After the students responded correctly, I went back to the question or statement that elicited the expected response. I modeled both the plural and singular forms of the questions correctly when addressing the students as a whole or as individuals. Also, correct questions directed at the teacher to the formal form. I then gave a quick pop-up explanation in English before continuing. I did a lot of practice with

the students for success and made sure to ask every student his/her name and how they were doing. Then, I wrote the questions on the board before asking the students to go around and ask each other the questions in a round robin.

- a. Teacher: <<Bonjour Tout le monde. >>
- b. Students: <<Bonjour Mademoiselle. >>
- c. Teacher: <<Je m'appelle Mademoiselle Heins. Et vous? Vous vous appelez comment? / Et toi? Tu t'appelles comment? >>
 - i. I ask every student his/her name using the 'Tu' form.
 - ii. After every student has responded correctly, I demonstrate the polite 'Vous' form by having them ask me and various adult people (i.e. President Bush) whose names are on the board.
 - iii. I then ask in English for explanations about 'Tu' and 'Vous'.
- d. Student: <<Je m'appelle _____. >>
- e. Teacher: <<Comment allez-vous? / Comment ça va? >>
 - i. I review the formal/informal 'Vous' and 'Tu'.
 - ii. Then I add the plural use of 'Vous'.
 - iii. Then I ask for a student to explain the differences between both forms of you in English and define the words on the board. Tu = you, singular and informal. Vous = you, singular formal or plural informal or plural formal.
- f. Student: <<Ça va bien. Et vous? >>

- g. Teacher: <<Ça va très bien! >>
- h. Teacher: <<Merci, au revoir. >>
- i. Student: <<Merci, au revoir. >>

Mini-dialogue. I put the students in groups of two and had them perform the following mini-dialogue, which was also written on the board.

- j. Bonjour Monsieur / Mademoiselle.
- k. Bonjour Monsieur / Mademoiselle.
- l. Je m'appelle _____. Et toi?
- m. Je m'appelle _____.
- n. Comment ça va?
- o. Ça va bien. Et toi?
- p. Ça va bien.
- q. Merci, au revoir.
- r. au revoir.

Here are the excerpts from my teacher journal on the freshmen orientation lesson.

“I had 8 freshmen show up and one that didn't show up today. They looked so scared and unsure of themselves. I forced myself to smile and look positive, supportive (not scared myself as I really was). By the end of the 20 minutes my students' body postures were more relaxed – less tension in the shoulders, less stiffness in how they were sitting, fewer bulging eyes. I made an effort to learn, remember and use all of their names.

I believe that changing the seating arrangement to a large horseshoe was a good idea and I'll continue with this setup for now. I could see all of the students clearly and they could all see each other and me. Also, there wasn't anywhere for them to hide.

I feel that I have a better understanding of the Silent Period in language learning and realize that I didn't allow for it in my planning of this lesson. I adapted the lesson by taking on both roles of the sample mini-dialogue. One positive side effect of my lesson-adaptation was that one of my students burst into uncontrollable laughter and the other students relaxed and smiled naturally. I'm not sure if they reacted this way because I was really that funny, that unexpected, or because I didn't push them too far out of their comfort zones and they were relieved. They did well doing the mini-dialogue with their partners after I modeled it.

Tomorrow I'll be repeating this lesson as the first part of class because I have 10 more students who are not freshmen starting tomorrow. I'll be interested to see if today's work with the freshmen helps give them the confidence to begin a behavioral pattern of participation and success in French."

This lesson was for the first day of class with all of my students. 80 minutes.
Wednesday, August 27th, 2003.

Goals: To begin building community and to review/introduce greetings and basic commands.

Greet every student at the door: I stood at the door of the classroom, smiled and said *bonjour* to each student as they entered.

Greeting dialogue lesson from yesterday: I initiated conversations with individual students, then group practice, then volunteers only to reenact for the whole class.

- a. Bonjour, Tout le monde
- b. Bonjour, Mademoiselle
- c. Je m'appelle Mademoiselle Heins. Et vous? Vous vous appelez comment? / Et toi? Tu t'appelles comment?
 - i. I asked every student his or her name.
 - ii. I gave a brief explanation about vous and tu/toi.
 - iii. I did a comprehension check activity with name cards and asked the class if it's 'et vous' or 'et toi'. (Names: Celine Dion, M. Ferenc – the principal, plural people, and a student.)
- d. Comment ça va? / Comment allez-vous?
- e. Ça va _____merci. Et toi? / Et vous? (Poster of options with Super!, Très Bien, Bien, Pas Mal, Mal, and Horrible!)
- f. Merci, au revoir.

TPR commands: After the greetings dialogue, I started TPR commands using words from list A in *MINI-STORIES for LOOK, I CAN TALK!* (Blaine Ray & Joe Neilson, 1999)

Vocabulary: Levez-vous! Asseyez-vous! Marchez! Vite! Lentement!

Commands: Levez-vous vite/lentement! Asseyez-vous vite/lentement! Marchez vite/lentement! (Name) lève-toi! (Name) assieds-toi! (Name) marche vite!

Questions: Est-ce qu'il se lève? Est-ce qu'elle se lève? Qui se lève? Est-ce qu'il se lève vite ou lentement? C'est vite? C'est lent? Pourquoi est-ce qu'il se lève? Y a-t-il un serpent?

Mini-situation with student actors: I say the stage directions aloud to the class as the student actors perform the actions.

- Un acteur entre.
 - Quel acteur? (Use student answer, if no answers then use Mel Gibson.)
- La classe lui dit << Bonjour Monsieur. Comment allez-vous? >>
- Mel Gibson répond << Très bien, merci. >>
- (Name of student actor) demande son autographe. (Passes autograph book to student playing Mel Gibson.)
- Mel Gibson signe.
- (Name of student actor) lui dit <<Merci, au revoir. >>
- Mel Gibson répond << au revoir>>.

Stop at noon with 5 minutes left and hand out parent letter.

Here are some excerpts from my teacher's journal on the first day of class with all of my students.

“Having the whole class together for the first time was very high energy. My freshmen were able and willing to produce language that surprised me because yesterday they were not ready to speak yet. Maybe seeing the upperclassmen try and make mistakes and then try again until they had it helped them feel more confident. Also, today was the second exposure to the same base language terms and functions so they may have needed overnight to process.

I asked the class about their previous second language learning. The freshmen had French and Spanish in the Middle School, the sophomores had some Japanese in Middle School and the juniors and seniors had German in the Middle School. The

variety of languages is because we've had a lot of trouble finding and keeping a foreign language teacher in the Middle School and there has been a different teacher each year.

I was very conscious of the amount of repetition of the new words I was able to get using commands. For example, with the word stand, I said, "Stand up!" "He/She is standing." "Is he standing?" "Who is standing?" I was really doing more work with fewer phrases in ways that were not rote drills. Maybe I can really improve my technique here with personalized questions and answers. I picked a big football player for the part of the lesson where I asked if he is standing because of the snake and he acted the role beautifully with a good sense of humor.

Having the physical autograph paper for the skit was very helpful. My students understood the skit well and learned the cognate 'autographe' because they could see the word written on the paper. Also, the class was able to follow the action of the actors to understand the meaning. I asked a couple of students some key words to translate to see if they really understood and they did. I don't ask them to reproduce words like autograph that I introduce in skits or questions as cognates, but using these words enables me to increase the comprehensible input I expose my students to."

A Lesson From the Middle of the Semester

Here is a 90-minute lesson plan and an excerpt from my teacher journal from the 12th of November, 2003. This lesson was approximately halfway through the semester and is an example of how the pace of the class changed from mostly **TPR** to mostly storytelling and reading. Most of the TPRS classes I teach have this format.

Goals: To assess retention of yesterday's vocabulary through questions, to introduce and practice 5 new vocabulary words and an irregular adjective, to have students play with the new language through stories.

Greeting questions: *Bonjour. Comment ça va? Quel temps fait-il?*

Collect homework. (Students had to draw out the scenes from the reading we did yesterday.)

Review questions: Pour déjeuner à la cafeteria, on a besoin de combien de dollars? Pour aller au cinéma à Keene, on a besoin de combien de dollars? De quoi est-ce qu'on a besoin pour couper le papier? Pour manger de la soupe? Qui sait la date aujourd'hui? Qui sait combien font vingt plus treize? Qui connaît Charlestown? Qui connaît Geneviève?

New words: gros/grosse = fat, la vache = the cow, riche = rich, pauvre = poor, porte = wears, is wearing

Gestures: gros – hold arms out around body, riche – rub fingers with thumb, la vache – curve horns in front of head and say “meuh”, pauvre – turn out pockets to show them empty, porte – tweek shirt.

- i. I demonstrated the gestures.
- ii. Students did the gesture after I said a word.
- iii. Students did the gestures of three words in a row after I said all three words.
- iv. I did the gestures and the students said the words.

PQA (Personalized Questions and Answers): Est-ce que Garfield est gros? Est-ce que Martina McBride est grosse? Est-ce que ce stylo est gros? Qui a un gros chat ou un gros

chien? Est-ce que Celine Dion est une chanteuse riche ou une chanteuse pauvre? Est-ce que M. Lloyd est un professeur riche ou un professeur pauvre? Qui connaît Daisy la vache? De quels couleurs sont les vaches? Sont-elles roses? Qui a des vaches? Qui peut dessiner une vache? Est-ce que les vaches parlent français? Est-ce que (student) porte un pull-over? Est-ce que (student) porte des sandales?

Mini-story: I drew this story on the board with colored chalk as I told it to make it comprehensible to the students and to make it interesting. I also asked the questions that follow as a second retell to add details and input from the students.

- Un éléphant va à l'école. Il n'est pas gros. A la cafeteria, il mange 17 pizzas et il boit 5 bouteilles de lait. L'éléphant rentre à la maison et mange une salade. Maintenant l'éléphant est gros. C'est une grosse salade.
- Questions: Comment s'appelle l'éléphant? De quel couleur est l'éléphant? Où se trouve l'école? Est-ce qu'il est mince? Quelles sortes de pizzas est-ce qu'il mange? Est-ce qu'il boit du lait normal ou du lait rose ou du lait au chocolat? Où est-ce qu'il habite? Comment est-ce qu'il rentre chez lui?
Pourquoi est la salade une grosse salade?
- Students retold the mini-story as a class. (One student started and then about 5 students contributed to retell the story.)

Student created stories: Students worked in groups of two or three to create mini-stories to tell to the class using illustrations to help the rest of the class understand.

- Groups presented their stories to the class.

Grammar review: If time, go over the forms of the verb porter using the wall chart.

Here are some excerpts from my teacher's journal about this lesson.

“Most of the students did well responding to the review questions at the beginning of class, but four students are still having trouble. I think that for tomorrow I’ll add in the questions as a worksheet for them to read and respond to individually to see if the format makes a difference. It will reinforce the structure and words for everyone and hopefully help the students who are struggling.

I was pleased with how focused the class was during the story while I was drawing it out. There were many answers to choose from for the questions that added detail to the story and someone wanted to put ants on the pizzas so I wrote the word for ants on the board and added it to the story.

The stories that the students wrote in their groups were funny and several of them surprised me because they integrated structures and words from previous chapters and ended up with stories that were more complex than the one I told them.

When I was helping the groups, two of the groups told me that they were glad that they could use drawings to retell the story and that they didn’t have to act it out. They were willing to act, but they just don’t enjoy it and find drawing a lot more interesting and secure option. I’ll have to remember to offer a variety of retell options next time to see which ones the class chose.”

A Lesson From the End of the Semester

Here is a 90-minute lesson plan and an excerpt from my teacher’s journal from Thursday, January 8th, 2004. This class was two weeks before final exams so we were already reviewing a little bit every day.

Goals: To review activity, food, and profession vocabulary, to introduce and reinforce new words and structures through guided conversations and reading, to collect a writing sample demonstrating use of negation.

Greeting conversation in French asking how the students are and if they have any news to share.

15-minute game: Around the World with review vocabulary. We started anywhere in the room and I asked one student to stand behind the student to his/her left. Then I held up the French flashcard word and said the word in French. The student who said the correct English translation won and moved on to the next person. If the person standing loses, that person sits in the seat of the person who beats him/her. The winner of the game was the student who went all the way around the class and returned to his/her original seat.

New vocabulary: sort = goes out or takes out; ne...ni...ni = either...or...; donc = so or therefore; pendant que = while; devient sale = becomes dirty or is becoming dirty; veut se laver = wants to wash. (Translation given and students wrote the words in the dictionary section of their notebooks)

PQA: I asked these questions to the class:

- Qui est sorti ce week-end? Avec qui? Qu'est-ce qu'on dit quand (student) sort de la salle de classe? Qui voudrait sortir d'ici maintenant? Qui est grand? Qui est petit? Qui n'est ni grand ni petit? Pourquoi est-ce que (student) ne frappe ni (second student) ni (third student)? Qu'est-ce que vous faites pendant que je parle? Comment est-ce qu'un enfant devient sale? Pourquoi est-ce qu'on devient fatigué? Quand je deviens sale, je veux me laver. Est-ce que

vous voulez vous laver quand vous devenez sale? Qui a faim? Est-ce que tu veux manger quelque chose?

PMS (Hand these out as readings to translate and discuss) The ideas for most of these Mini-Situations are from *TPRS GESTURES and Mini-Situations* by Blaine Ray and Susan Gross, 1999.

- Le poisson Gigi joue au rugby avec ses amis. Elle devient sale donc elle veut se laver. Elle entre dans la salle de bains à Fall Mountain Regional High School, mais elle ne trouve ni du savon ni du shampoing. C'est un problème sérieux!
 - a. After one student reads this situation to us all in English, I ask discussion questions such as: Qui peut suggérer une solution? Est-ce que c'est une bonne idée de se laver à Fall Mountain? Comment sont les salles de bains?
- (Student) et ses amis sont chez (student). Ils veulent de la glace, mais il n'y en a pas dans le réfrigérateur donc ils sortent. Ils vont à la plage et y mangent de la glace.
 - b. Discussion questions: Qui aime la glace? Quel saveur? Y a-t-il une plage près d'ici? Qui peut la décrire?
- Un jour Monique lave la voiture. Elle devient fatiguée et elle a faim. Donc, elle ouvre le réfrigérateur et elle mange six sandwiches au jambon. Comme dessert elle mange un bol de la glace verte.
 - c. Discussion questions: Pourquoi est-ce que Monique est devenue fatiguée en lavant une voiture? Est-ce que la voiture était très sale?

Très grande? Est-ce c'est normal de manger six sandwiches? Qu'est-ce que vous mangez quand vous avez faim?

- Anne embrasse Leonardo DeCaprio. Pendant qu'ils s'embrassent, vingt cinq gens prennent des photos d'eux. Une de ces photos est dans Newsweek.

Anne est heureuse.

- d. Discussion questions: Pourquoi est-ce qu'Anne embrasse Leonardo DeCaprio? Qui voudrait l'embrasser? Pourquoi est-ce qu'Anne est heureuse?

- David frappe à la porte des toilettes chez lui. Son chat est dedans. Le chat reste aux toilettes pour six heures donc David conduit à Wal-Mart pour y aller aux toilettes.

- e. For the last reading, I asked the students to each come up with one question related to the reading to ask another student in class. It didn't matter if there were repetitions of the same question because the students were able to ask a different person to answer.

Writing samples. I asked the students to each write a 4-5-sentence mini-situation using at least one negative expression and at least one new vocabulary word. They finished it as homework.

Here are some excerpts from my teacher's journal about this lesson. "The students were very quiet when they came in and looked tired and/or sick. Starting out with Around the World woke them up and put them in the mental frame of French class. They tried to extend the game longer than the 15 minutes I allotted for it, but I've been

doing a different 15-20 minute review activity with them every day, so I told them we could play again on a different day before Final Exams.

The **PQA** section of the lesson took longer than I had predicted because all of my students wanted to respond today (instead of a few for each question). I was happy to take the time here because the result was similar to a real conversation in French. Two of my students looked at each other and said, “wow” after a discussion about why people get tired. I asked them what they meant and one of my freshmen girls responded that there was a lot of French being spoken there and she understood all of it and could join in a little. I was really excited to hear her say that because it meant she could see and feel the progress she was making. Sometimes grades on quizzes or papers aren’t real enough for students to believe that they were learning. Those grades are a little abstract. What that student had was a positive experience in the classroom with conversation in French.”

CHAPTER 6

CONCERNS ABOUT TPRS

There are two areas of concern that other French teachers I have spoken with who do not use TPRS frequently express to me. They ask me how I teach grammar and how I teach culture using TPRS.

I teach grammar by modeling proper structure in the French the students see and hear, and by using grammatical structures repeatedly in stories, readings and questions. Therefore the students learn grammar in context and can use it spontaneously while talking or writing. This practice gives the students a foundation of French to use as a resource for what sounds right, similar to their knowledge of their native languages. When students ask “why”, I do short explanations that do not go beyond their question. For example, when a student asks why the verb has an ‘nt’ on the end of it such as ‘sautent’, I explain that when the subject changes from singular ‘he’ to plural ‘they’, the verb has to change too. I also post wall charts of verbs as reference guides for my students. I do not go into an explanation of all of the different types of verbs using language such as ‘third person singular’. Giving a student a long complicated explanation can confuse him or her. I have also noticed from my observations that giving a student a long complicated explanation can prevent them from asking questions in the future.

I teach culture by setting stories in different francophone countries where the characters in the stories are involved in culturally appropriate activities. When the story is set in Quebec, the characters want to play hockey. When the story is set in Senegal, the characters go watch a wrestling match. When one of the characters is from Niger, he or she stands very close to the people he or she is talking to.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Through my research and through my reflections in my teacher's journal this school year, I have found sufficient evidence to convince myself, my colleagues and my students that TPRS is an excellent methodological choice for me in my teaching context.

I am still learning to adapt the methods and principles of TPRS to fit my personality and my teaching context and this develops my unique style as a TPRS teacher. Trying to go into the classroom and teach like Blaine Ray was frustrating for me until I realized that the experienced TPRS teachers I observed all had their own individual styles. Unless someone's personality and context are like Blaine Ray's, the personality and atmosphere a person brings into the classroom will be different. For example, Blaine Ray is very good at making exaggerated facial expressions and exaggerated vocal sounds. He fills the center of the classroom and tends to use a lot of exaggerated stories. I am quieter. I tend to use drawings and visuals more than actors when I tell a story. Also, I do most of my interaction and discussion with students in the **PQA** section of the lesson rather than during the story itself. The best ways for me to continue developing and improving my TPRS teaching skills and style are: to continue to use TPRS: to continue email conversations with other TPRS teachers: to seek out advanced workshops and training videos: and to continue keeping a teacher's journal.

I have already seen improvement in my students since I started using TPRS. The areas where I see the most improvements are in listening comprehension, reading comprehension and student self-confidence. Before TPRS, I mainly used listening activities on cassettes and only my best students were successful. The majority of the class had a lot of difficulty determining who was saying what. Some of my students wrote in their year-end surveys that those listening activities were the worst part of class. Now that I use TPRS, listening activities are alive and interactive. The activities consist of storytelling, commands, questions, or songs. The feedback from my students is very positive and the students are highly successful in listening tasks. I had four students tell me after a month of class that they liked the listening activities because these activities really helped them learn French.

In reading activities, I have seen a lot of success because not only could my students read without looking up more than one or two words in the dictionary, but also my students told me that they felt successful in reading tasks. One fifteen year old male student wrote on his weekly grade sheet that he felt good about how much he's learned in French because he could read a whole book in French (*Pauvre Anne*), and it was not just a book meant for young children.

Public speaking is a part of French class that many of my students have always been afraid of. That is why I was so pleased to see students volunteer to answer questions and do story retells in French by the end of the second month. At the beginning of the semester, several of those students had begged me just to give them a zero instead of doing anything that put them in front of the class. Volunteering to speak in front of class when a student is afraid shows an improvement in student self-

confidence. In addition, those students confided in me that French class was the first time they felt like they did well on the oral activities. Another example of improved student self-confidence is from a fourteen year old female student who told me she must be good at French. When I asked her why, she replied that she did well on her vocabulary tests in French. She added that she had a lot more words to learn each week for French than for English, but that she had to study her English words a lot harder and she didn't do very good on her English vocabulary tests.

Two additional areas where I am seeing more success with my students are their **internalization** of French and their enthusiasm. About a fourth of my students are showing evidence of **internalization**, a key to accessing long-term memory. During student retells of the stories, these students are telling the stories in their own words instead of in my words by substituting words or structures they have learned earlier in the year for the newer words and structures in the story. Sometimes these substitutions are correct and sometimes they are not correct. They are experimenting with the rules of French.

In terms of enthusiasm, I have a large group of students who volunteer to be actors in our stories. What amazed me was when three otherwise average fifteen-year-old female students asked me if I would read the stories that they were writing in French just for fun. They did not want extra points, just some feedback on their stories. Before TPRS, I never had students tell me they were writing extra stories just for fun. I switched to TPRS to have successful students. I can see the success my students are achieving, and I feel excited and justified to continue teaching with TPRS.

APPENDIX 1

Glossary of Essential Terms, Principles and Practices

I have put together an alphabetical glossary of terms, principles and practices that are commonly used in TPRS.

Ask the story

In traditional story telling, the teacher reads or tells the story to the class and the students listen. In TPRS the teacher tells one action of the story, the student actor then performs the action and the teacher then asks a series of questions about what has happened in the story so far. The questions are a combination of yes/no questions, who/what/where/when/why questions and questions that have no answer yet. The questions that have no answer yet are where the students make up an answer that is **BEP – Bizarre, Exaggerated and Personalized** (see below). The teacher then adds that answer to the story, modifying the story.

Barometer student

A student in the class who struggles and is not one of the stronger students is a **barometer student**. The teacher uses this type of student to determine if the whole class understands the language and what is happening in the story. If a **barometer student** does not understand, then the teacher responds by backing up and translating or giving a quick grammar explanation, followed by more practice on the lesson for the entire class. The teacher does not go on until the **barometer student** demonstrates comprehension through translation, correctly doing a **gesture** or responding appropriately to a question.

BEP

Bizarre, Exaggerated and Personalized. These are characteristics that the teacher aims for in TPRS. Bizarre adds the unexpected to a story. Exaggeration adds humor to the story. Personalization of the story to the students in the class gives ownership of the story to the class and helps the students predict the story. The combination of all three of these characteristics helps create and maintain student interest in a mini-story.

Chain commands

A **chain command** is when the teacher gives more than one command before the students respond. The students have to listen to and retain more information before they can act on it. **Chain commands** are often given as an assessment of how well the class or the individual student has acquired the lesson's expressions.

Classical TPR

Classical Total Physical Response refers to the system of teaching foreign languages that was developed by James Asher in the seventies. (1996). In a **Classical TPR** lesson, the language is made comprehensible to the students through commands from the teacher that the students perform. The student action responses take the form of whole-body responses and not just gestures.

Comprehensible input

Comprehensible input is the idea that all of the language students hear and read is understandable to them.

Free Voluntary Reading

Once a week, for fifteen to twenty minutes, all the students in the class choose a book or magazine from the selection I have provided. Each student has his/her own book or magazine. The students all read silently for the time I set aside. If a student does not like what they have chosen to read or finds it too difficult, he/she may go back up to the bookshelf and choose another book/magazine. Students read at their own pace and the accountability in my classroom is a reading journal they keep in their notebooks with the title of the book/magazine, the amount of time they read it for and a comment on how they liked or didn't like their selection.

Gesture

A TPRS **gesture** is a hand signal that represents the vocabulary word or phrase.

A **gesture** is not total body and is therefore different than **Classical TPR**. Some teachers refer to the American Sign Language dictionary to come up with appropriate **gestures**.

Guide word

A **guide word** is a vocabulary word or phrase in the story that helps the students both predict the story and remember the story when retelling it. By going over the **guide words** before the story, the teacher reinforces the key terms and structures in the story and improves student comprehension of the story.

Internalization

Internalization is the process of practicing and experimenting with the vocabulary and structure of the language until the student can produce the language spontaneously in speech and in writing.

The Language Acquisition Theory

In this theory, Dr. Krashen hypothesized that **language acquisition** and **language learning** are two separate processes. According to Dr. Krashen, **language learning** without **language acquisition** results in situations where the students know the rules, but can't apply them in spontaneous conversation or in timed writings.

Language acquisition

According to Dr. Krashen, **language acquisition** happens when the students interact with the language in meaningful situations and develop the new language using similar strategies as when they learned their first language. Students **internalize** the language and its rules and experiment with it on a trial and error basis to create new sentences they have not yet heard. This type of **language acquisition** happens best when the meaningful situations the students are interacting with are both comprehensible and one step above their current level of acquisition.

Language Learning

According to Dr. Krashen, **language learning** happens in classrooms where the students gain knowledge about the language: linguistic rules such as verb tense names.

Novel command

A **novel command** is a command that is not normally given in English and that uses specific new vocabulary items. An example would be: “Put the cup on your head!” In this example, the verb “put” is new and the other words are old.

PQA

Personalized questions and answers is the practice where the teacher asks the students questions in French about themselves and their lives. New vocabulary is used repetitively in **PQA** sessions. For example, if the new phrase being taught is “rides a horse”, the questions I might use include: Who rides horses? Who would like to learn to ride a horse? Where can/do you ride a horse around here? What kind of horses do people ride? Who has ever ridden an elephant? Is riding an elephant the same as riding a horse?

Pop-up grammar

Pop-up grammar is when the teacher asks a specific question about the language being used in the lesson. It does not go beyond the language in the lesson. I use **Pop-up grammar** to highlight grammatical points that the students are already using or receiving in listening or reading activities. An example would be for me to ask what the ‘ent’ means on the end of ‘marchent’. The answer is that the verb is third person plural or that it is plural and has to agree with the subject ‘elles’. The whole aside takes about one minute.

Story

There are three types of stories in TPRS: The **Personalized Mini-Situation (PMS)**, The **Mini-story** and the **Chapter story**. The **Personalized Mini-**

Situation is a short story (usually shorter than a **mini-story**) that uses new vocabulary and that is personalized to our students' interests with names and activities. A **mini-story** is a short story that is longer than a **PMS**, but shorter than a **chapter story**. A **mini-story** is used to recycle the words taught during the week. A **chapter story** is a longer story that uses the vocabulary and grammar in the chapter in a **Bizarre, Exaggerated and Personalized way**. **Chapter stories** are a mastery exercise and help the teacher determine if the class is ready to move on or if the class needs more practice. The job of the TPRS teacher is to provide students with stories that are meaningful and **Bizarre, Exaggerated and Personalized**. A good story has a memorable character and a problem or desire that sets the story and language into the students' memories.

Word association

When I introduce new vocabulary, I sometimes give an **association** rather than a **gesture**. An **association** can be a sound or an analogy with an English word to help students remember the new vocabulary. An example of a **word association** is when I have my students make the sound of a monkey-call for the vocabulary 'in the middle of the jungle.' When I did the monkey-call the students had to say 'au centre de la jungle.'

APPENDIX 2

TPR-Storytelling Organizational Flow Chart for a 90 minute Class

Daily (One Week) (PMS = Personalized Mini-Situation)

Day 1 90-minutes
1st PMS
3 WORDS/PHRASES

2nd PMS
3 WORDS/PHRASES

Day 2 90-minutes
1 PMS
3 WORDS/PHRASES

1 Mini-story
RECYCLED WORDS

Day 3 90-minutes
1 Mini-story
RECYCLED WORDS

1 PMS
3 WORDS/PHRASES

Day 4 90-minutes
1st PMS
3 WORDS/PHRASES

2nd PMS
3 WORDS/PHRASES

Day 5 90-minutes
1 Mini-story
RECYCLED WORDS

ASSESSMENT
QUIZ/ESSAY/SKIT

Every Two Weeks

CHAPTER STORY
27 WORDS/PHRASES
90-minute class

APPENDIX 3

Sample of a Two Year Student Schedule

Student A

Fall Semester Freshman Year		Spring Semester Freshman Year	
Block I	Math I	Block I	Health
Block II	Government and Economics	Block II	9 th Grade English
Block III	<i>French I</i>	Block III	Art I
Block IV	Earth Science	Block IV	P.E.
Fall Semester Sophomore Year		Spring Semester Sophomore Year	
Block I	Chemistry	Block I	10 th Grade English
Block II	United States History	Block II	P.E
Block III	Math II	Block III	Woods I
Block IV	Floriculture	Block IV	<i>French II</i>

This appendix shows a two year student schedule where the student had a full 12 months between French I and French II. This type of scheduling gap is common and is one of the reasons why some of my students were not retaining what they learned in French I.

APPENDIX 4

Teacher-Edited Student Writing Samples

This appendix contains samples of teacher-edited student writing from those students who gave me permission to use their work in this paper. I have removed their names for their privacy. The samples start from the beginning of the semester and are dated sequentially until the end of the semester.

From September 3rd, 2003

1. Le garçon touche la porte.
2. Pierre marche à la fenêtre.
3. Il tourne dans un cercle.
4. Jean frappe Luc.
5. Il s'assied.
6. La fille marche vite en avant.
7. Antoine mange le grand poisson.
8. J'ai quatorze ans.
9. Le poisson est petit.
10. Le garçon touche le genou gauche.
11. Mange le poisson lentement!
12. La jeune fille mange le poisson pendant le déjeuner.
13. Trois grands poissons marchent dans un triangle.
14. La fille saute en arrière à la porte.
15. La fille saute et rit.

From October 14th, 2003

1. Un jour il y a une jeune fille qui s'appelle Jessica. Jessica se promène au parc. Jessica voit un chat. Le chat se sauve. La jeune fille pleure. Le chat arrête et court vers Jessica. Jessica retourne à la maison avec le chat. Jessica et le chat sont contents.
2. Il y a un garçon. Le garçon a une balle. La balle est rouge. Le garçon lance la balle à un autre garçon. L'autre garçon attrappe la balle. L'autre garçon prend la balle. Il se sauve en riant. Le garçon est très triste. Il pleure et pleure.

From November 4th, 2003

1. Il y a un cheval sur la table.
2. Le chat se sauve de la jeune fille.
3. Qui lance le ballon?
4. Anne court vers le garçon.
5. Elle caresse le cheval.
6. Qui est bon et qui est mauvais?
7. L'autre garçon est fâché.

From November 24th, 2003

1. Le clown conduit une voiture. La vache marche lentement dans la rue. Le clown voit la vache. Le clown conduit trop vite! Le clown frappe fort la vache avec la voiture. La vache pleure. Le clown rit! La vache téléphone à la police.
2. Il y a une vache. Il y a un singe. Le singe a un boucle de nombril. La vache aime les chaussures. Il y a un problème! La vache a besoin de treize chaussures! Il y a un autre problème! Le singe a besoin de trois boucles de nombrils! Le singe

court vers la porte. Le singe monte dans un taxi. La vache court vers la porte. La vache monte dans un taxi. Le singe est maintenant au magasin. La vache est maintenant au magasin aussi. Le singe voit la vache. La vache et le singe sont amis. La vache achète treize nouvelles chaussures et le singe achète trois boucles de nombrils. Le singe dit <<Salut! La vache!>>. La vache dit <<Salut! Le singe!>>. La vache rentre à la maison. La vache est contente. Le singe rentre à la maison. Le singe est content.

3. Le garçon s'appelle Figo. Figo a seize ans. Figo vit au Sénégal. Figo aime dessiner. Figo achète un crayon. La jeune fille, Chantal, rit au dessin de Figo. Figo pleure. Figo pleure et crie fort. Figo jette le crayon. Figo court vers la police.
4. Il y a une jeune fille qui dort dans la grande maison. La fille se réveille et frappe la tête contre le plafond. Elle regarde par la fenêtre. Il pleut. Maintenant, il neige aussi! La fille sort de la maison et elle entre la voiture. Mais, la voiture ne marche pas. Un avion frappe la maison de la fille. Après tout cela, la fille est contente.
5. Un jour il y a un jeune canard. Il s'appelle Derek. Il voudrait trouver son couleur favori. Il marche autour de la maison. Bleue? Rouge? Marron? Verte? Orange? Jaune? A la fin du jour Derek aime ... rouge.
6. Un jour il y a une jument. La jument s'appelle Star. Elle est très triste parce que personne aime elle. Star se sauve pour trouver un ami. Star trouve une jeune fille. La fille est excitée. Elle monte à cheval tous les jours. Star est très

contente. La fille pense que Star est belle. Star aime la fille. Enfin Star a une amie.

7. Un jour il y a un chat. Elle s'appelle Chubby. Chubby est grise et blanche. Elle se promène autour de la maison. Elle voit sept oiseaux. Chubby est excitée. Elle aime les oiseaux. Chubby est fatiguée. Elle dort sur le lit? Non. Chubby dort sur le sofa. Elle est contente.

From December 5th, 2003

1. Il y a un garçon. Le garçon s'appelle Travis. Travis n'a pas beaucoup d'amis. Travis n'est pas beau.

Il y a un problème. Travis n'est pas beau et il n'a pas beaucoup d'amis.

Pauvre Travis!

Un jour, le garçon se promène à l'école. Le garçon court vers Travis.

<<Pourquoi est-ce que ton visage n'est pas beau?>> demande le garçon qui s'appelle Jay.

<<Je ne sais pas.>> dit Travis.

<<Va à la maison et achète un singe.>> Jay dit.

<<Pourquoi?>> demande Travis.

<<Tu vas voir.>> dit Jay et il court vers sa petite école.

Travis se promène et rentre à la maison. Il prend vingt dollars et cherche à Los Angeles pour un singe.

Voilà! Il trouve un singe! Il rentre à la maison avec le singe. Le singe ressemble à Travis et le singe n'est pas méchant. Maintenant Travis a un nouvel ami! Travis est content, il n'est plus triste. Travis sourit.

From January 20th, 2004

1. J'aime jouer au volley à la plage. Pendant que je joue je deviens sale. Donc, Je veux me laver. Je nage dans l'océan pour me laver. Après, je sors pour le dîner mais je n'aime ni les escargots ni le poisson.
2. Dikembe marche sur la plage pendant la nuit. Il ne mange ni danse. Il dort dans le sable et devient sale. Dikembe veut se laver donc il se lave dans la mer.
3. Pink va se marier. Avec qui? Avec Mamadou. Ils vont se marier à Walpole Mercredi soir à huit heures.

Pink se prépare pour le mariage. Elle prend une douche et elle se rase les jambes, mais elle ne se rase ni sous les bras ni la poitrine. Elle ne se brosse pas les dents, mais elle prend un tic-tac. Ensuite, elle met du déodorant.

Y a-t-il un problème? Non. Pendant la cérémonie Pink et Mamadou se regardent avec des gros souris plein d'amour.

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