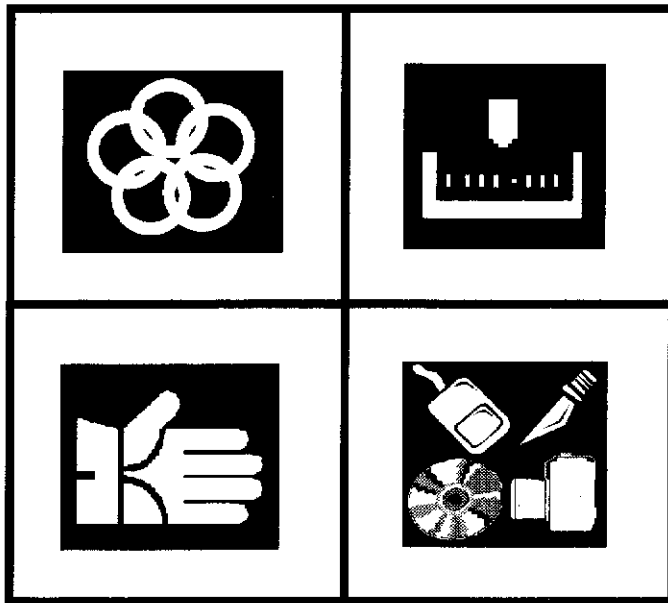


# MATERIALS

For Teaching French in Context

Grades 4-12



**A Product of the 1996 and 1997 SAM Institutes**

**Louisiana Department of Education**

**Louisiana State University**

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# Introduction

The materials found herein were initially created by more than 60 Louisiana teachers of French and Spanish who attended a three-week immersion institute either during the summer of 1996 or 1997 at Louisiana State University. The primary goal of the institute was to create sample classroom materials

- that are contextualized and reflect real-life situations within an identified theme;
- that reflect the Louisiana foreign language standards and assessment instruments;
- that include listening activities with many different accents;
- that are applicable to various levels of instruction.

In working on the initial versions of these materials, the participants followed a specific set of steps designed to ensure that the material was contextualized and real-life in nature. Most important among these was the creation of the student task which needed to be stated in terms of what the student must do within the specific situation.

A second very important goal was to improve both the language and cultural proficiency of the participants. This was accomplished by immersing the teachers in the cultural context for an important part of every day and by housing them in a sorority house where they pledged to use the target language exclusively.

It is important to note that, due to time and budget constraints, only a limited number of the thematic units initiated during the summer institutes could be finalized and included in this set of materials. Hopefully the future will permit the completion of the remaining units.

The funds for this three-year project were awarded to the Louisiana Department of Education from the U.S. Department of Education through the Foreign Language Assistance Program for the development of foreign language teaching and assessment materials. Margaret Keefe Singer served as Project Director throughout the duration of the grant while Robert C. Lafayette was director of the summer programs. In addition to the many individuals who played a specific role in the final production of this material, it is very important to give both thanks and credit to those people who taught and helped organize the two summer institutes. For each language, these are as follows:

## **French**

Michèle Grandvoinet, France  
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Parish

# Pedagogical Considerations

## For Teaching Language in Context

Margaret Keefe Singer  
Louisiana Department of Education  
and  
Robert C. Lafayette  
Louisiana State University

The purpose of these materials is to provide the French and Spanish teachers of Louisiana with examples of contextualized theme-based teaching and learning. They are first of all based on the premise that meaningful language is paramount in foreign language learning and teaching, and that context is the most helpful way to attain meaning. Secondly, they espouse the principle that people use language for a purpose as opposed to decoding language in order to discover how it works. A consequence of this principle is the attempt to place all student activities in real life situations and subsequently give each of them a purpose.

It should be noted that the thematic units found here are sample ones and do not constitute a sequenced curriculum. Although each of them were originally created for elementary, middle, or high school populations, various segments of each unit can be easily adapted to different levels of instruction. During the two summer institutes when the initial versions of these materials were produced, it became obvious that there was a significant need for listening activities. First, Louisiana teachers needed more listening material available to them on tape. Second, they wanted to expose foreign language students to the variety of French and Spanish accents available to Louisiana teachers. In French, students will hear accents from France, Quebec, Cajun Louisiana, Belgium, the Maritime Provinces, and even from Americans learning French. In Spanish, accents will emanate from numerous hispanic countries including Guatemala, Mexico, Venezuela, Honduras, as well as Americans speaking Spanish.

The French materials include five units of sample activities centered around two broad themes: Carnival and the Tour de France. The Carnival theme includes three separate units representing different cultural interpretations. The unit designed for fourth and fifth grade French programs is based on the rural Louisiana version of Carnival known as Le Courir du Mardi Gras. The middle school unit is unique in that it features the Carnival celebration called Les Gilles de Binche celebrated in the small town of Binche in the French Community of

Belgium. The high school unit is primarily based on the New Orleans Mardi Gras celebration, but it includes therein a comparison of New Orleans with Le Carnaval de Nice. The second broad theme treated is the Tour de France, the third largest attended sporting event in the world after the Olympics and the World Cup. Two separate units are based on this theme, one designed for elementary or middle school entitled *Le Maillot Jaune*, and another created for advanced high school use entitled *Le Tour de France*.

The Spanish materials include six thematic units each based on different cultural themes. They include a unit designed for elementary school Spanish programs entitled *El Fútbol*, two units designed for middle schools (*Vamos a la playa*; *La Quinceañera*), and the other three for high school (*La Boda*, *La Herencia Hispana en Luisiana*, *El Día de la Independencia*).

## **Design and Content of Each Thematic Unit**

**Background Information.** Each thematic unit begins with several pages of background information on the theme itself. It is written in the target language and designed to give the teacher some basic information. It is not meant for student use and goes beyond the scope of information presented in the material designed for student use. The background information also includes several suggested WEB addresses which might be useful in seeking additional information on the theme or in locating internet-based activities to supplement the activities included in the unit.

**Situation Summary Sheet.** The Situation Summary Sheet serves as a table of contents for the entire thematic unit. It contains all situations and the task(s) related to each one. A closer look at the summary sheet clearly demonstrates the contextualization of the material. There is an actual storyline on the particular theme and each situation illustrates an episode taking place before, during, or after the main event. For example, in the Spanish soccer unit, one of the situations deals with buying the tickets before the game, another cheering during the game, and a third interviewing some of the players after the game.

As in most material designed for the American market, the pedagogical information addressed to the teacher and sometimes to the student is in English. This in no way implies that English should be used as the vehicle of instruction. Both research and experience have shown that instruction in the foreign language classroom should be conducted as exclusively as possible in the target language.

**Situation Profile.** The Situation Profile provides an overview of each individual situation. In addition to repeating the situation and the student task, the profile delineates the standards and benchmarks treated in the situation and lists the materials available to the teacher and student for completing the student task. The standards and benchmarks used in this document are taken from the Louisiana Foreign Language Content Standards which were approved by the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in May of 1997.

These content standards very closely reflect the national ones entitled Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (1996). The one obvious difference is what are called “benchmarks” in the Louisiana document are called “progress indicators” in the national document.

The benchmarks referred to in these thematic units are coded according to the system used in the Louisiana content standards. Each benchmark is preceded by a code such as the following: CM-2-D2.

The first two letters of the code represent the five major goals or strands under which the twelve Louisiana standards are subsumed. CM = Communication; CL = Cultures; CN = Connections; CP = Comparisons; CT = Communities. The number following these first two letters refers to the number of the standard that belongs to that goal or strand. For example, CL-1 refers to the first standard under cultures, namely practices. The last two symbols in the code are a letter followed by a number. The letter (B, D, E) stands for the three grade levels identified within Louisiana foreign language programs:

- Beginning - grades 4-5
- Developing - grades 6-8
- Extending - grades 9-12

The number following the last letter simply refers to the number of the particular benchmark. Some standards will have six or seven benchmarks while others will only have two or three.

Examples: CM-2-D2 = Communications - 2<sup>nd</sup> standard (interpersonal) - Developing (grades 6-8) and it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> benchmark in that group.  
CT-1-B1 = Connections - 1<sup>st</sup> standard (reinforcing knowledge of other disciplines) - Beginning (grades 4-5) and it is the first of two benchmarks.

The last segment of the Situation Profile is a list of the various items designed to help the student complete the task at hand. Included among these items are a variety of student worksheets and transparency masters for use by the teacher.

**Classroom Procedure.** The major segment of each situation is entitled Classroom Procedure, and is designed to give the teacher some ideas on how to help the students complete the task at hand. In this section, the suggestions are directed specifically to the teacher and not to the student. It is important to emphasize the fact that these are indeed suggestions and that the teacher is expected to change them and add to them as is appropriate to meet local and individual needs. We have divided these suggestions into the classic four segments of any lesson: (1) *activation* is our synonym for anticipatory set; (2) *information* includes what the teacher needs to teach in order to give the student that which is necessary for him/her to complete the task; (3) *student task* is a restatement of what is expected of the student and is included here to make sure that the teacher does not stop after the *information* segment of the situation; (4) *feedback* is designed to help the student decide if and how well he/she has accomplished the *task*. What follows is a more in-depth discussion of the four lesson segments.

**Activation.** The primary purpose of activation is to set the stage for the theme/situation and to motivate the students to want to learn what follows. The first steps in accomplishing this involve tapping into students' prior knowledge of the theme, and creating meaningful bridges from old material to new material. Suggested techniques include (1) exposure to visual depictions of the theme on bulletin boards and classroom walls, (2) access to related music, (3) brainstorming students' prior knowledge of theme/situation as it relates to their experience, and (4) sensitizing students to certain vocabulary/expressions in real situations prior to the presentation of the new theme/situation.

**Information.** In this segment, the teacher provides opportunities for the student to acquire the cultural information, the lexical items (vocabulary, expressions, etc.), and the grammar necessary to complete the student task. It is important to note that the information segment of each situation is not all inclusive. The teacher is expected to add his/her ideas and to supplement the information when needed. Included among the techniques suggested are (1) giving meaning to new vocabulary/phrases through physical actions, (2) giving meaning to new vocabulary/phrases by association of pictures and contextualized oral utterances, (3) leading students to research cultural information using various databases, (4) presenting information using a variety of visual depictions from the WEB and other sources, (5) leading students to discover necessary grammatical concepts through induction and deduction.

**Task.** This is the opportunity for the teacher to make sure that the students understand precisely the task that needs to be accomplished. The teacher clearly explains the task and clarifies any questions that the students may have concerning it.

**Feedback.** The purpose of this segment is to verify the accuracy and performance level of the student task and to permit the students to self-evaluate and improve their performance on the task. In order for feedback to be effective, the teacher must verify that the students understand the feedback obtained and act on that information. Suggestions for feedback activities include (1) students working in pairs or small groups to compare their performance, (2) use of a rubric designed to evaluate oral performance, and (3) group and individual consultation with the teacher, (4) individual student consultation of an answer key.