



OÙ EST LE TRÉSOR?

Comment déguiser la répétition? If a teacher wants to insure retention of material, vocabulary and sentence patterns must be repeated over eighty times--orally, written, kinesthetically. The biggest mistake we have all made at one time or another is to assume that a student has actually absorbed the material simply because we have presented it (usually brilliantly!) in class. Language acquisition doesn't really take place until the student has used the material himself many times over. To avoid the student tuning off or worse, burn out on the part of the teacher, we need multiple ways to keep the student working over and over with the same vocabulary. For those young language learners who have been formally introduced to conjugating verbs (often before they are aware of conjugating verbs in their mother language), here is one game that requires rewriting of verb forms and student don't mind one bit!

The game is simply a variation of "Battleship" that we all played as youngsters with two pieces of graph paper and a big book standing on edge as a partition between the opponents. As a "retired hippie," I'm not good with battles as such, so I prefer to transform the board into a treasure hunt. I make standard paper sized copies of the grid on page 16 for each student. I also have the same picture on a poster to play with the whole class first, but it is not necessary, or it can be projected through a computer or overhead projector.

The first time through, we play as a class with me "burying" the treasure, which means I write on a hidden piece of paper the square or squares where the treasure will be "buried." I choose the verbs we are working on to write down the left-hand column, keeping a few easier verbs for review mixed in. To guess the space of the "treasure," students take turns giving a verb form, going across the top for the pronoun subject, and down to the verb of choice. At first everyone writes in the square the verb form chosen. Not until everyone has written the verb do I answer: "Ce n'est pas là." The teacher can walk around to verify that the students are writing the verbs correctly. When the treasure is "found" by giving the verb form of the space I have chosen, I answer "Voilà le trésor!" and the winner receives *un peu de chocolat, bien sûr!*

Once we have played as a class, students can pair up and play one on one, with a book between each opponent so there is no way to see the individual boards. Now each student chooses a square (or two to four adjacent squares, whatever is decided at the beginning) for his "trésor" by placing an X in it. Only the student guessing writes the verb form in the chosen box. The opponent must answer "Ce n'est pas là." Students alternate their guesses until one chooses the square of his opponent's treasure. Once a student has found the treasure, the pairs of students can check each other's verb forms. It is amazing how much repetition they will tolerate in the guise of a game!

We invite FLES* and middle school teachers to share ideas, classroom gimmicks, games for oral interaction, National French Week activities, and successful lessons with other AATF members. Join the teacher network! Send your ideas to Elizabeth Miller, 74 Tuscaloosa Avenue, Atherton, CA 94027; e-mail: [mmemiller@aol.com]; fax: 650-342-7623.

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