



LE RECYLAGE DES JEUX

Those of us who teach elementary and middle school language classes have to have a plethora of activities at our fingertips. The young student, by the nature of the beast, is a kinesthetic learner. Language teachers instinctively know they need to keep their students moving, interacting with the language in as many ways as possible. The rule of thumb suggests that no activity last longer than the number of minutes corresponding to the number of years of age of the student. Ten-year-olds, therefore, will need to change activities every ten minutes. The burden on the teacher is to have a healthy supply of quick drills disguised as games to reinforce the same material. Here are some “recycled” games that can be adapted to any age level to drill without the students being totally aware that it is work.

GPS

I was looking everywhere for a proper term for “GPS” (Global Positioning System) and my French friend laughed at me, assuring me that it was, in fact, “GPS” in French! This is a variation of a trust game played at retreats. This is the kind of game that can slip into a class where needed without any advance preparation. All you need is a kerchief for a blindfold. The vocabulary goals are numbers and direction terms: *à gauche, à droite, tout droit, tourner, continuer, un pas, un pas de bébé, un pas de géant*. One student leaves the room while the class hides the destination object. I use a small *Tour Eiffel*. We blindfold the student outside who returns to search for *la Tour Eiffel*. Here is a great place to reinforce manners when asking directions. It can be as simple as: “La Tour Eiffel, s’il vous plaît, monsieur?” Older students can be more elaborate: “Pardonnez-moi, monsieur, pouvez-vous me dire où se trouve la Tour Eiffel?” The rest of the class takes turns giving one direction each. “Tourne à droite. Va tout droit trois pas. Continue tout droit quatre pas.” Younger students can simply give the number of steps and the direction: “quatre pas à gauche.” It helps to assign one student as *un gendarme* to caution the blindfolded student as he approaches a chair or a wall to avoid injury. For older students, you can add a competitive element by dividing into teams and having two blindfolded tourists looking for the same object. Here *le gendarme* is essential!

TOUR DU MONDE ET CHAISES MUSICALES

This is a variation on simple vocabulary drill with index cards. If you can handle a little chaos, use just one chair. Divide into teams on either side of a chair. Show the vocabulary card, and the first two students vie for the seat. The student must be seated to say the word or phrase on the card. Teams can earn points for each correct answer, but ultimately, it’s just the fun of reaching the chair that counts! If you need a little more order in the class, place two chairs back to back for the same drill. Repetition is painless for the students with this 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: [rmmemiller@aol.com]; fax: 650-342-7623.

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