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FLARR Pages #31: Review Time

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FLARR PAGES #31

The Journal of the Foreign Language Association of the Red River

File under:
-Test Review
Tool for Beginning French
-Question/Answer Tool

“Review Time,” André Lebugle,
University of North Dakota.

In my first-year French classes, on the day before a test, I usually spend forty to fifty minutes reviewing. Since the students have learned a lot of new material over a period of perhaps two weeks, their knowledge may need refreshing. There are a number of exercises one can do, and it is advisable to review as much as possible and resort some of the time to questions similar to those in the upcoming tests. The quickest way to review effectively is through very simple translation into the target language. Here, we are speaking of translating a noun with its article, an adjective, a verb conjugated at a chosen person and tense, or a short sentence. This activity requires knowing rather than guessing. Translating into English at this level is not very beneficial, except if comprehension is being tested, and in this case,

sentences in the foreign language may be read by the teacher.

There is a particular exercise I have found very useful for reviewing. It has the advantage of involving all the students orally without the participation of the teacher, who is free to observe the performance of the class. It is very simple: The teacher types a list of perhaps twenty questions on the left side of a page and writes the answers on the right side. The two sentences should be placed sufficiently far apart so that one can fold the paper in the middle and see only one column. When the students have the list, they are divided in pairs. They fold the page lengthwise or hide the right side where the answers are. Then, they read the questions and provide the answers to one another alternately. After each exchange, they may check if their answers are correct. This exercise may look like this:

Space or Vertical Fold	
Type A: Veux-tu des fruits? (<i>Non</i>) Regardent-ils la télévision (<i>Oui</i>)	 Non, je n'en veux pas. Oui, ils la regardent.
Type B: Est-ce que vous sortez demain? (<i>samedi dernier</i>) Vont-ils au supermarché? (<i>demain</i>)	 Non, nous sommes sorti (-e-s) samedi dernier. Non, ils iront au supermarché demain.

Type A examples require the students to use pronouns, which are not easy to handle in French and many other languages. In type B the students answer the questions with a different tense, as indicated by the words in italics.

It is sometimes possible and more beneficial to have students also find

the questions. For example, if the questions are of the type, *A qui est...?* or *A qui sont...?*, the answers may require the use of articles. The teacher will therefore type two nouns on the left side of the page and provide the complete questions and the answers on the right.

Examples:

Space or Vertical Fold	
chemise / Jacques	A qui est la chemise? C'est la chemise de Jacques.
livres / etudiantes	A qui sont les livres? Ce sont les livres des étudiantes.

This simple exercise allows the students to review and test themselves orally as well as in writing. They can work with someone else or alone.

The members of my classes tell me that they find it very useful, and I can see that they also enjoy it, perhaps because it is somewhat like a game.