

FRENCH IN ACTION

"ORIENTATION"

The video component of *French in Action* is available in the Modern Languages Media Center as well as on-line at www.learner.org. You set up your password just once and you can then access the assigned videos for various lessons. In addition, the French pages of the Media Center contain the **audio files** for *French in Action*. As the semester goes on, you will receive xeroxes of various listening exercises for the audio segment to reinforce the material in the videos. The material is coordinated as much as possible with our work with *Allons-y!* Each video segment is about 30 minutes long.

As your first exercise, to introduce you to the manipulation of the *French in Action* materials, and, most important of all, to get you to **think about learning French** and **how to learn French**, you have the following assignment (check your homework pages on the web for the due date):

--Watch the first video segment for the "Orientation" on the www.learner.org website.

--Take notes as you watch the video in order to answer the following questions. Write up (i.e. **type up!**) the answers on a separate sheet of paper. One-word answers or "it was good," "it was helpful," etc., are **not adequate** answers. Give as much detail and **reaction** as possible. Yes, English counts in this exercise.

1. What are some of the problems encountered when students try to translate each and every word from French into English? or English into French? **Explain some specific examples** from the video or from the vocabulary you already know to prove your point.

2. What are the important "learning strategies" presented in these two lessons? Why are they important? What does it mean to try to get the "gist" of what someone is saying when you have a limited vocabulary? What is the importance of "global understanding?"

3. Did the students who were interviewed reflect some of your fears about learning a foreign language? What is meant by the "immersion" method? Did you find the interviews with students in the course surprising when they discussed their reaction to the "immersion" method? Did they reflect any of your own fears or apprehensions about learning a foreign language?

4. Part of the immersion method is to try to avoid systematic translation. Why do you think that this approach is important when learning a new language?

5. In the interviews with "people on the street," did you notice that many of them had different sorts of accents? What about the students in the class? Did you notice that many of them did not speak with "perfect French accents?" Did you also notice that Professor Capretz did not get upset?! Why do you think it was important to show people who did not speak French

"perfectly"?

6. What is the importance of gestures when speaking? What does Professor Laurence Wylie (one of the people interviewed in the segment) tell us about "French" and "American" gestures? Can you act out the different body language used to say "no" or "no way" in English and French? What body language/gesture is used to express "I don't know" in French?

7. One of the most important pieces of advice given at the end of the Orientation lesson is to "**practice**." Why is that so important? What did some of the students say they did to increase their practice time? Why is cramming not a good idea?

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