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Review of the CD *Rencontres Interculturelles*

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Digital resource: Tomasini, L. & Flores, O. (2010). *Rencontres Interculturelles*, CD. México, D.F.: UAM-Azcapotzalco, CONAYCT.

Rencontres Interculturelles is a program that aims to develop intercultural communicative competence in learners of French as a foreign language. It is an excellent material that allows teachers to provide students with a linguistic and cultural approach to francophone environments. The CD consists of a set of 75 activities that complements the institutional programs of the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Azcapotzalco.

By looking at the student's language skills and practices to support analytical comparison of the native language-culture to the Francophone language-culture, "*Rencontres Interculturelles* allows the learner to explore, know, learn, and discover the French language through Internet sites, a vast range of ***Intercultural Encounters***" (Guide explicative. *Rencontres Interculturelles*, p.3.) This interactive program is designed for advanced levels to learn French in semi-autonomous mode.

Let's us now look at the way it turns out to be a different material, original and favorable in the process of teaching and learning French. From the very beginning, the program invites us to approach different cultures as it begins with a cover page with pictures of different civilizations. This is a permanent idea throughout the CD. The

material is arranged in such a way that it is very attractive, easy and convenient to use. On the welcome screen the following icons are located:

A. **Introduction text:** *Rencontres Interculturelles pourquoi?* This section gives an explanation of the objectives of the program.

B. **Activités:** In this section there are seventy-five activities grouped in three different colors: blue, mauve and yellow, with twenty-five cards each. This way one can select an activity with its number, color and title which permits to distinguish it from any other and thus facilitating its use. The duration for the proposed activities, the objective to be achieved, and the skills that are worked with are listed on each card and are appropriate for lesson planning. These features allow teachers and students to make a better selection, according to their purpose. Moreover, the reference of the original source is found on each one of the index cards.

Additionally there are elements that facilitate the use of the program, like the buttons that allow us to move from one tab to another, either the previous or the preceding one, or find others related to the same topic. In this way the learner can learn further about the same topic with a simple "click". It even offers the option of downloading the contents in a PDF file. There is also a popup screen with information about the topic covered by the index card, so one can have interesting and entertaining information about the content of the index card.

C. **Lieux d'échange** (sharing sites): In this section, a list of **blogs** and **forums** for the communication with real people is provided. These blogs and forums are often searched by students, wishing to contact persons from the francophone world.

In **vers d'autres sites** (to other places) there are also Internet sites related to French learning - teaching provided. They are very useful when one wants to remember, or complement some linguistic aspect; for example, grammar, phonetics or any other.

D. **Credits:** Institutional credits of authors and participants are presented.

The affordances of this material lie on its format which is highly accepted among learners of French as a foreign language, as well as on the variety and diversity of the presented topics: food, sports, ecology, gastronomy, music and songs, tattoos, water,

means of transport, and much more. The selection of the topics of the worksheets is very sensible and it is attractive for all tastes and interests. The usefulness of this digital resource in CD is based in the development of the different skills in each activity.

The use and employment of one, two or more language skills that can be developed make it appropriate for French language courses. It favors learning autonomy because of the vast range of proposed sites; students investigate constantly and can go from one place to the other, wherever his curiosity brings him. Nevertheless, it permits the teacher to guide him through this cultural encounter.

One of the aspects that makes this material a novel and useful tool and is the fact that it makes the approach to the francophone language-culture interesting and fun. That way it allows fulfilling the teacher's goal to sensitize the students to the francophone language-culture approach in order to develop their communicative intercultural competence. We highly recommend ***Rencontres Interculturelles*** to those French teachers who are looking for material that is original, varied, well structured and fruitful.