
Cusinato, Ashli, Ron Felsen, Sara Garnick, and Sylvia Goodman. *EXPRESS 11^e université*.

Thornhill, Ontario: RK Publishing, 2007. ISBN: 1-897295-07-3. Pp. 221, \$50.95 CAN. Includes: Cahier, Teacher Resource Guide, CDs (4 total). For orders, to request a free sample kit, or to request an in-service training workshop, contact: RK Publishing, 32 Limcombe Drive, Thornhill, ON, Canada L3T 2V5; phone: (866) 696-9549 (toll free); fax: (905) 889-5320; e-mail: ruby@rkpublishing.com; Website: www.rkpublishing.com.

Under the supervision of Ruby Kaplan, president and founder of RK Publishing, Inc., and Art Coulbeck, Chief Editor, the team of authors consisting of Ashli Cusinato, Ron Felsen, Sara Garnick and Sylvia Goodman has produced a glorious third-year high school textbook in *EXPRESS 11^e université* (in the title, “11^e” refers to the eleventh year of school and “université”-to-college preparatory program). This program is ideally suited for curricula geared toward Advanced Placement French Language or International Baccalaureate programs, but what truly distinguishes *EXPRESS 11^e université* from other level three textbooks is its foundation in literacy. That is to say, it is a literacy-based program aimed at successful independent student learning and supported by modeling and scaffolding. Independent student learning is further fostered by activities that address multiple intelligences.

EXPRESS 11^e université is composed of five units. With the exception of the first, each unit works towards a final culminating project, the “tâche finale.” At the outset of units one through five, students are aware of the “tâche finale” and prepare for it via three subtasks or “tâches riches.” The theme of each unit is authentic and, most importantly, relevant to the adolescent student. For example, students will be drawn to and inspired by the reading on Craig Kielburger, a Canadian youth who established Free the Children, the largest non-profit youth organization in the world that works towards helping disadvantaged youths in underdeveloped countries. Photographs of Kielburger with Mother Teresa and the Dalai Lama are just two of the textbook’s rich illustrations that will appeal to students and teachers alike. Indeed, students will be made to feel that they, too, can make a difference in today’s increasingly small and interdependent world.

Within each unit, the necessary grammatical structures are presented in color-coded graphic organizers and reviewed in thorough exercises in both the main textbook and the *Cahier*. As a visual aid, the edges of the pages of each unit are

color-coded as well. The pages of the first unit and appendices (*lexique* and verb charts) have sky blue edges, unit two pages have violet edges, unit three green edges, unit four orange edges, and unit five yellow edges.

“Unité 1: Voir du pays” has as its goal to familiarize students with the *EXPRESS* journey and, as such, helps to get the ball rolling. As foreign travel is no longer only for the elite and as more and more school programs are encouraging travel and study abroad, the introductory unit assists students in learning about other cultures by exploring them by themselves. As a professor who has worked with non-traditional language learners, I have always been a proponent of helping students comprehend that by exploring another culture, one is able to better understand one’s own culture. “Unité 1: Voir du pays” does this by launching a study of the Francophone world via the following topics: *Voyager ... c’est pour vous?*; *À organiser un voyage*; *Les Auberges de jeunesse*; *Chenonceaux, Le château des dames*; *La Tunisie*; *Carte d’identité*; *La Martinique et les îles de la Guadeloupe*. Grammatical structures covered in this first unit are: *le futur antérieur*; *les pronoms compléments avec l’impératif*; and *les expressions de quantité*. The “tâche finale” is a “jeu de rôle” on a “voyage idéal.”

To give the potential adopter of *EXPRESS 11^e université* a clear idea of how units two through five are uniformly arranged with three “tâches riches” and a “tâche finale,” I will detail “Unité 2: Les Coutumes et les traditions du monde francophone,” my favorite unit. It begins with an explanation of Acadian culture, followed by “Le journal de Cécile Murat,” a touching story of a young girl in Acadia. Her story begins in 1795, after Le Grand Dérangement, and continues until 1800. As the young girl was a transplant from Boston, included among her reflections are comments on the special customs of the Acadian people and words that are unique to Acadian culture. The other topics addressed in the second unit are: *La musique et les fêtes de la Louisiane*; *À apprécier la musique: le zydeco*; *Njacko Backo*; *L’origine du Roquefort*; *L’histoire du chocolat en Europe*. Guided by a provided model, “Tâche Riche 1” asks students to research a Francophone region and, as an ambassador, present findings to the class. Again with a model example, “Tâche Riche 2” directs students to research a Francophone musician and play one of his/her songs for the class. Still with a model example, “Tâche Riche 3” requires students to find a traditional recipe from a Francophone region and provide an explanation of how to follow it. A suggested follow-up class activity is to create a small class cookbook highlighting illustrated examples of recipes found by students. “Tâche finale: Présentation multimédia au conseil des Nations Unies” explains that the United Nations is organizing and financing a worldwide cultural celebration. There is one remaining spot available. To earn this spot, students must prepare a multimedia presentation to convince the United Nations Council that their Francophone country is a worthy choice. Grammatical structures emphasized in unit two are: *l’imparfait*, *le passé composé*, *le plus-que-parfait*; *les pronoms démonstratifs*; and *les pronoms relatifs* dont, ce dont et où.

Supported by a clearly written Teacher Resource Guide, *EXPRESS 11^e université* truly addresses the needs of students with different learning styles. A promotional brochure for the *EXPRESS* series states: “Content and concepts have been included to meet the needs of: the active student who learns by doing, and cre-

ating with his/her hands; the musical student who learns by patterning, and feeling the rhythm of the language; the logical student who identifies the logic in language and its patterns; the visual student who needs visual models and uses illustrations and creates materials to learn; the introspective student who likes to work alone and can adjust his/her learning based on models and examples; and, the extroverted student who learns from others and for whom group work is rewarding and enriching.” Individual instructors can allow students to progress at their own pace; for example, for some students completing the “tâche finale” may not be fully possible, but the appropriate modifications are easily made.

The *Cabier* does an excellent job not only of reinforcing grammatical structures and models presented in the main textbook but also of supporting, through a myriad of activities, student comprehension of the authentic texts. CD A contains stories read by a variety of French voices accompanied by appropriate music. CD B offers oral speaking exercises, oral comprehension activities, and additional vocabulary and language structure exercises.

For U.S. instructors, *EXPRESS 11^e université* is a level three program and can be purchased with a cover entitled *EXPRESS 3*. Not addressed in this review, but perhaps noteworthy for potential adopters who wish to have continuity among the levels of instruction in their French program, are the other textbooks in the *EXPRESS* series, all from R.K. Publishing: *EXPRESS Intro*; *EXPRESS 9^e, 1^e Édition*; *EXPRESS 9^e, 2^e Édition*; *Express 10^e Théorique*; and *EXPRESS 12^e université*.

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Publisher’s Response

We are extremely pleased with the glowing review of *EXPRESS 11^e université* written by Professor Angelini. The reviewer has indicated the strong points of the book, and has not omitted anything of importance.

The *Express* series has received ministry approval in the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Manitoba and has also been approved for use in the northeastern United States. It covers grades 9 through 12 and consists of *Express Intro* (designed for beginning students with little or no previous exposure to French), *Express 9* (for grade 9 students who have a background in French from elementary school), *Express 10*, *Express 11*, and *Express 12* for students bound for university. This *Express* series follows the same backward design concept with special attention to literacy and critical thinking.

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