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**Meyer, Hedwige. *Rond-Point: Une perspective actionnelle*. North American Edition.**

**Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007. Pp. iv + 364. \$86.67. Includes Audio CDs to accompany Text. ISBN-10: 0132386518; ISBN-13: 978-0132386517.**

*Rond-Point* is a unique text that seeks to develop students' French language skills by way of a wide variety of task-based activities within a functional goal-based context. The text uses real-life situations that encourage meaningful interaction among learners in the classroom, and it can be used at the college level, either in an accelerated elementary one-semester course or spread over a full year. The ancillary components of the North American edition of the student text, adapted by Hedwige Meyer (originally written by Catherine Flumian, Josiane

Labascoule, Christian Lause, and Corinne Royer), include audio CDs for in-class listening activities and a Website with further practice activities.

The textbook is divided into 18 units called *unités*, each of which sets a realistic functional goal such as planning a vacation, shopping, writing e-mails, or telling a story. For each unit the listening activities are provided on the audio CDs and the Website, where students can also find practice activities, further readings, and resources matched to the topics covered in the unit. The listening activities in each *unité* begin with a focus on words and sounds, and gradually increase to extended discourse. The real-life situations presented in the listening activities and passages in this textbook make it valuable for first-time learners but also for the proverbial *faux-débutants* (false-beginners, i.e., students who already have had one, two, or more years of French). The table of contents on the first page of each unit provides a list of objectives and a preview of the grammar and vocabulary to be covered throughout the task-based lessons. As for the grammar and vocabulary lists, they provide a well-organized scope and sequence for each unit that facilitate student comprehension and make it easier for teachers to organize the units according to their syllabus.

Each unit of *Rond-Point* contains 11 task-based activities that are both communicative and student-centered, encouraging learners to use the new vocabulary and grammatical concepts with their classmates in a meaningful way. One example of such a task is planning a vacation with other students while describing one's own likes and dislikes (*unité 3*). Although the tasks might be daunting at first to some learners, the textbook allows students to start off with simple phrases and then encourages development of their speech into longer connected discourse throughout the text. The text also promotes interaction through meaningful output activities, such as charts and forms, which are completed using the responses of other students. As the level of students' French increases, the complexity level of task-based activities also increases. An example of this is evident in *unité 13*, where, after the students learn about French products and inventions, they are required to make a presentation about an invention of their own. The program succeeds at creating activities that greatly enhance the classroom atmosphere.

One refreshing and enjoyable aspect of the textbook is the abundance of cultural sections in each unit. These sections provide interesting information about the culture and community of the Francophone world and allow students to compare it to their own. Topics include the Créole language, cartoons/comic books, unusual art, and police novels. *Rond-Point* offers a fresh perspective on even the most common topics; for instance, the *familles* section in *unité 12* discusses traditional nuclear families, as well as single-parent, divorced, same-sex, and recomposed families. The contemporary issues addressed in this text may need to be handled with some discretion; nevertheless, this way of approaching the diverse Francophone world is implemented well in these culture sections and is a good example of an innovative direction for pedagogical resources.

*Rond-Point* contains many valuable listening and reading excerpts throughout the textbook, as well on the audio CDs and Website. These excerpts mimic written and oral input that a student would encounter in an immersion setting, such as newspapers, radio clips, social-networking Websites, and short stories. Also

included are authentic songs by French musical artists. These listening activities align well with the image-rich text, which contains photos of people and events that a student would actually encounter in real life. Although this program was adapted to a North American audience, a European teaching philosophy shines through. The contemporary and real-life issues and photos in this text distinguish this program from most of its American counterparts. The young and slightly edgy perspective appeals to the younger world of students who will be able to connect to the diverse multitude of role models in this text.

*Rond-Point* is a welcome new program because it addresses many of today's students' needs. The title *Rond-Point* ("traffic circle") is suitable, since it places students right in the middle of the bustling Francophone world. The communicative-based approach of the text implicitly teaches grammar and vocabulary, as if the student were in an immersion setting. *Rond-Point* would be an excellent resource for a classroom in which the teacher seeks to act as a facilitator of learning, since its engaging functional format and task-based activities encourage students to explore the language on their own and with one another.

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