

formula, aimed at opening the cavern onto the treasures concealed inside a dictionary? One can count on the dictionary authors to offer us the caverns that are ever richer; they will know how to provide all the keys and the treasures. I am immensely grateful to *Kernerman Dictionary News* for offering us the opportunity to summon up the existence of these keys.

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Dictionnaire du français usuel: an innovative French learner's dictionary

Dictionnaire du français usuel (*Dictionary of Common French*, DFU) was designed as an aid to vocabulary-related tasks, to help learners of French familiarize themselves with new words within a well-structured context.

DFU contains 442 highly structured articles, which are built around extremely common entry words. Within the articles are described and explained some 15,000 non-specialized words, meant to enable users to express themselves with ease, both in speech and in writing. Thus, DFU may be classed as a dictionary for production.

Developing this unique lexicographical structure was motivated by two main objectives: first, to develop the learner's vocabulary through the use of semantic networks, moving from what is already known towards new material, from highly frequent words to moderately frequent ones; second, to encourage the search for the right word by making comparisons with near-synonyms, antonyms, and the like.

The dictionary allows for words and their meanings to be explored in three major ways:

- (1) through semantic networks;
- (2) through themes;
- (3) through the word index.

The words are shown in simple examples that illustrate their various usages, following an order and structure that highlight and clarify each meaning as well as the lexical relationships to the entry words and to other words in the dictionary's lexical network.

One of the innovations of DFU is that various entries include two or three "star" words, for example *SAVOIR* and *CONNAITRE* [*to know*] or *FILS*, *FILLE* and *GARÇON* [*a son, a daughter, a girl, a boy*].

The dictionary articles offer topics for writing assignments and their necessary vocabulary. The structure of the articles also helps learners to prepare for text analysis by having them start with a main idea, choose a theme and then read the related articles.

This unique concept gives teachers of French all the latitude they need to help their students expand their vocabulary within a useful and well-designed framework. While it is based on strong linguistic foundations, DFU avoids the use of complex terminology whenever possible and steers clear of any linguistic jargon in order to maximize its user-friendliness. The vocabulary targeted literally opens the door to nineteenth and twentieth century French literature. However, the words are presented in present-day, easy-to-understand examples.

The result is a uniquely conceived language learning tool, featuring a well-developed structure and innovative design. The dictionary is available both in print and in personal and network CD-ROM versions.

A sample entry-page of DFU – **CONSEIL** p.188 – is available online:

<http://kdictionaries.com/kdn/kdn12/kdn12-2dfu-conseil.fdp>

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