

# H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences



*Africa Inspirer 4.0.1.* Tom Snyder Productions.

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## ***Africa Inspirer* Reviewed**

*African Inspirer* is a CD-ROM program that can be used both on the Macintosh and in Windows. An interactive way of stimulating students to acquire geographical and other useful social skills, *African Inspirer* is divided into four parts: "Getting Started," "Maps and Lesson Plans," "Reference" (including an extensive overview of the programs content), and "Troubleshooting." The program entails students traveling to various parts of Africa, collecting various resources that are specific to the countries in question or other areas of the continent. By so doing, they become exposed to the diversity of the content's resources. Through a range of varied activities, students are able to learn about the locations of the various countries and resources in Africa, acquire knowledge about the various geographic characteristics, learn good map reading skills, acquire a good body of research and learn how to organize and use the information. Students engage in these activities in various modes. "Whole Class" allows the teacher to demonstrate the program to the entire class; "Multi-Team Rotation" allows students to work together in a maximum number of seven teams, made up of three or four student; or "Single Team" allows the students to work alone at a computer or in laboratory setting. Instructions for setting up the different modes are provided. Students are then able to work on three difficult levels: The first, recommended for grade five, allows the students to search for one resource during the trip. The second level, appropriate for grades five and

six, requires students looking for two resources at the same time, for example coffee and bauxite. The third level, recommended for grades six and up, obligates the students to search for two resources at the same time, as well as other geographic characteristics. The program also allows custom categories, such as country characteristics, to be used in the classroom activities. The benefit of this component is that students are able to research on a particular country, pull their data together, and then enter the information into the program, thus allowing themselves and other students to play *African Inspirer* based on the data collected. *African Inspirer* comes with a gold mine of accompanying materials: learning objectives, lesson plans, suggested activities, procedures for students working in the various modes, a travel log, and geography trivia cards. The thirteen reproducible maps encompass a vast array of themes and topics, and their reproducing capabilities are crystal clear. The treatment of Africa is very objective, with exciting activities to engage the students throughout the program. I was particularly impressed by the currency of the material, including the most up-to-date names of the countries in Africa, including the Democratic Republic of Congo. A list of fiction, non-fiction, media, and Internet materials provide the teacher with additional resources to resort to. This is, in short, a highly recommended learning program for children in primary through high school.

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