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Masters Thesis

Arbol de la Vida
Multimedia Adaptation
Carisa J. Cannan

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts

MFA Imaging Arts
College of Imaging Arts & Sciences
Rochester Institute of Technology
February 1995

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5/8/95

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3/6/95

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Permission granted:

Arbol de la Vida
Multimedia Adaptation

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Carisa J. Cannan

Date

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Beginnings

This thesis began as a result of my interest in learning Spanish. My original goal was to create a more visual way of learning and remembering various verb conjugations. Creating an interactive piece that would use animation in partnership with the grammar and conjugations of the language seemed fitting. As my research introduced me to what was already available in CD-ROM format it became obvious to me that interactive grammar drills are already widely available. Some software seemed to have succeeded in their attempt to adapt language learning to this new technology, while others had not. It was clear to me that my research had only just begun, and that I needed to rethink what it was that I wanted to achieve in adapting animation and multimedia to language learning.

Research

My research introduced me to various types of software being used by instructors and others who had created academic tools for language learning. One tool that stood apart from the others was *El Avión Hispano*. It encouraged the learner to creatively write in Spanish. The emphasis was the contextual understanding of video scenes on board an airplane, where the user is asked to write about his fellow passengers.

I researched literature and its use in multimedia. What I came away with was a special understanding -- that one's empathy with a story's narrative can become a way to enter another's culture.

I also researched story structure and its influence on language learning. My conclusion was that the more the story followed a linear structure, the easier it was to comprehend and memorize the language.

Therefore I wanted to create an academic tool for language learning that reflected these conclusions. I would create a tool that would enable the learner to absorb more from a short story by adapting it to multimedia.

More detailed abstracts of all the articles reviewed can be found in the research Appendix B.

Syracuse & Chicago

To see what exactly goes into the production of some of these titles, I visited Syracuse Language Systems, the creators of the *Playing with Language* series. What first amazed me about the company was how small it was. They employed about ten people, and yet they have received awards that companies ten times their size have not been able to achieve. What stuck out most in my mind was their title *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. It contained quite a bit of narration, yet there was no text on the screen allowing the learner to connect the narration with the written word. They also allowed me to view their initial work on speech recognition. At the time of this writing, they are about to release the software that uses their new tool.

I also attended the Midwest Association of Language Labs "Chicago Interacts" conference in April 1994 to see what role multimedia plays in the classroom. The focus of the conference was fittingly "The Language Teacher's Role in the Interactive Technology Future." The bulk of the conference was dedicated to software demonstrations that showcased the possibilities that multimedia could offer to foreign language instruction. I found it a sad commentary on the applications already available that instructors and graduate students of foreign language still find it necessary to produce software for themselves. The most impressive of the applications being presented was *Dr. Vox*, produced by a graduate student and utilized visual feedback to improve pronunciation. What was most lacking in these applications was information on the lifestyles, histories, and customs of the countries whose languages were being studied.

This led me to rethink the goal of my thesis. If what I learned at the conference was any indication, the market is already flooded with multimedia grammar products. Therefore, I decided to change my

focus and provide teachers and students with what they want -- an application that delivered the culture.

Getting Started

Through my research, it became obvious that by using a short story written by a foreign author one could learn both vocabulary and grammar. What makes the short story even more effective is that the learner can see how the vocabulary and grammar are being used in the literature of another country and get a feel not only for the culture but also for the underlying way in which they think and perceive the world. Computer animation fits this approach very nicely. It breaths life and vision into the written word, making memorization of vocabulary and grammar that much easier.

In Search of a Story

Now the only problem was to find the perfect short story for my thesis. Since this all started because of my interest in learning Spanish, I had at least narrowed down the language. For two months during the past summer, I voraciously read as many Spanish short stories as I possibly could. Although I found that all the stories had their own merits, what was lacking was a relation to the culture and countries of today.

I began to look for "my story" in a different way. I did this by reading periodicals relating to Latin America and Spain in search of reviews of recent books. It took about three weeks before I came across something that told me that this was to be where I would find my story. It was within the covers of the magazine *Américas*. The book reviewed was *Arbol de la vida. Historias de la guerra civil* [Tree of Life: Stories of the Civil War.], a collection of short stories written by Salvadoran author Mario Bencastro. What interested me most about the book were the stories that were hinted at within the article. At the core of his stories is the play of opposites, most commonly seen in Death leading to the creation of a new life

where the blood shed has made the land sacred. This is powerful imagery based in a mythology common to all cultures. This imagery was made even more powerful with the knowledge of the recent bloodshed in El Salvador, its civil war.

Contacting the Author

Since I had made a decision as to the collection of short stories, it was now important to get a hold of it. I started making calls to all the local bookstores, but none had it in stock. The review had also printed the publisher's name. I tried the Institute's library to see if they could help me locate a copy of the book. Through the library's broker, I was able to locate a book distributor in Washington state by the name of **Libros Sin Fronteras** [Books without Borders.] Not only did they have the book, but the representative I spoke to gave me the address of the publisher so that I could contact the author and let him know how I intended to use his work. Armed with this knowledge, I wrote my letter in broken Spanish to the publisher requesting information about the author. Two days later I got the book. I was so excited I reread the entire book at least three times that day. It was better than I expected. Shortly afterwards, the publisher sent me the author's address and phone number, informing me that he lived in the United States near Washington DC. I then wrote to Mario Bencastro, explaining to him my intentions towards the use of one of his short stories. Imagine my surprise when I received word back from the author, wishing me well with my project, as well as sending me an autographed copy of his book! Also included in his letter to me was the phone number of a professor, Susan Geirsbach-Rascón, who teaches at the University of Wisconsin at Lawrence. She uses his book in her college course "Realidad y responsabilidad social: La obra de Mario Bencastro" [Social Reality and Responsibility: The Work of Mario Bencastro.] Not only would I be able to base my thesis on a current piece of literature, it would seem that I had a ready made group of students

who would be able to use my work when it was completed.

Translations & More

I then contacted the professor, Susan Geirsbach-Rascón, by phone since the author did not provide me with her address. She told me that not only did she use the book and its stories as a basis for her class, but that she had written an English translation of all the stories that she and the author had attempted to publish. She offered to send me a copy of the translations and three new short stories not yet published by the author either in Spanish or English. She in turn most graciously accepted my offer to provide her and her students with my thesis as a supplement to her coursework. There was also preliminary talk of getting the author to narrate my work when it was completed.

I received her English translations and could not make up my mind as to which story to use. There were at least three stories that I had grown attached to, and with the newer additions the count was up to four. I finally decided to go with the title story, *Arbol de la Vida*.

Storyboards

What struck me most about this story was the immediacy of the visuals as I read the story, not only in Spanish, but in the English version as well.

The story begins several years ago, maybe even a millennia ago, on a stormy night. A husband comes home to find his wife and twin brother in bed together. Angered and upset, the husband fights with his brother, while his wife runs screaming from their home. The husband is killed by his brother, and the wife is struck down and killed by a bolt of lightning. The brother drags the husband's body to a pit beneath a tree and throws the wife's body in next to him. Within the pit, the roots of the tree envelop the two bodies and brings them back to life. The roots also

removed all trace of hatred and anger between the two, reuniting them within the tree.

Several years later, the tree is central to a small town. It blooms with red flowers, birds sing in its shade. Children are baptized, learn their catechisms, grow up and get married beneath the tree. Easter mass takes place beneath the tree, as well as gatherings and dances. Local carnivals set up under the tree, where young girls have their fortunes told by gypsies and crowds laugh at the jokes of clowns and the clumsiness of dancers. As the sunset draws near, petals from the flowers create a red carpet beneath the tree where young and old alike dance until the coming of night.

Civil war grips the country, and the army enters the square of the tree, killing townspeople and destroying the village. Those villagers that survive return from the mountains to bury their dead beneath the tree. Within the tree, all are reunited: soldier and rebel, friend and enemy, young and old, families and friends. All are happy and one within the tree.

With a story like that, it almost seemed like cheating to draw up the storyboards. In fact, after at least four thorough readings, I was able to sit down and produce all the storyboards on one Saturday afternoon. I went with a Mayan look for the first section of the story, keeping the colors to a bare minimum -- soft beiges and browns accented by the red of the blood. The second section definitely needed to be in full color. While the last would be in stark black and white, only accented by the red of the blood. I realize that this was calling for three distinct drawing styles, but that was really how it came out that afternoon without too much forethought on my part. In simple terms, I would be able to tie the three sections together with the visual continuity of the tree, and the red of either the blood or the blooms in the tree of the second section.

Screen Design & Layout

Now that I had the story and the storyboards, it was time to visualize how I wanted the page layout portrayed on the computer screen. I had been exposed to a style of art that originated in El Salvador. It was a school of art called La Palma, and what made it unique was its childlike quality and simplicity. I think that I was able to evoke some of that simplicity in my storyboards. It was now very important to follow through with that theme in the design of the page layout.

Since I was adapting a book to the computer screen, I wanted to keep the basics in mind. A phrase from my studies as an industrial designer came to mind -- form follows function -- and I decided that would be my focus in the design of the work. Both English and Spanish readers read from left to right. So to emphasize that visual path, I provided the reader with the body of the text on the left-hand side of the screen. To the right, I provided the animations. Navigation buttons were needed but did not have to be the focus of the screen. I placed them at the bottom of the screen where they would be easier to access.

I had become particularly fond of the cover art from the book and decided to animate it on the opening of the application. The only thing was -- what to do for the background behind it? Since books are made of paper, it seemed obvious to evoke the feel of paper on the screen. Yet this is not often done. In this particular case, I felt that if an older looking, more textural paper was used it would give a softer, more human touch to the entire piece. I had a journal that was made of a combination of three different textured papers both on the inside and outside of the book. I scanned in all three and experimented in PhotoShop to see which one would give the right effect. The buttons had to be slightly three dimensional to emphasize the texture of the interactive piece as a whole. This too was done by scanning in real textures and applying them to on-screen buttons. When depressed, they would give a visual cue that one had done just that. This was created by making two sets of shadows for

each button: highlights for when the button is not depressed, and shadows when it is. To keep with the left to right theme in the layout, these shadows would fall on the right and bottom of each button. The texture chosen for the buttons was a soft marble, done in a similar shade of beige as the background.

Content

Since the story came from El Salvador, I felt that it was important to provide the reader with some background on the country. There are four basic categories: the country, the culture, the war, and the peace. I feel that this is integral in bringing a fuller understanding of this particular story. For most people the words, El Salvador, evoke images of bloody civil war, the stiff bodies of four nuns being removed from their hastily made grave, and the face of an archbishop by the name of Oscar Romero who was gunned down in the middle of saying mass. If that is all the reader takes into the reading of this story, a lot will be missed, for there is a culture, a hidden side to El Salvador, that not many Americans are aware of or even care to know.

Interactivity

The interactivity involved in this thesis will enable the reader to page through the story. Each page will offer an animation of the written word with sound playing over it. There will also be highlighted words that, if clicked on, reveal English translations. Narration will also be available, so that the reader will be able to associate the spoken word and its pronunciation with that of the written word. There will also be four buttons that will provide access to annotated pages on the culture and country of El Salvador.

Proposal

With the proposal, also came the decision as to who would chair my committee. I chose Marla Schweppe

for my chair. It was her input that had pushed me to the conference in Chicago. She supported my decision to stick to my original idea of a multimedia language program when others told me that I should come up with something else. I also chose Evelyn Rozanski, for I felt her opinion might be helpful on the more technical end of things, as well as the fact that she was chair of a project looking into the future of electronic books. The final member of my committee Maria Hogan, a teacher of Spanish and Portuguese at Nazareth College.

What I proposed to them was an interactive short story in Spanish that provided the reader with animations, narrations, translations, and annotated pages on the culture and country of El Salvador. At this first meeting, I had intended for more English to be used in the entirety of the interactive piece, but through discussion with all three advisors it was decided that it should be kept as completely in Spanish as possible. It was also felt that the scope of the project needed to be pulled back to ensure its completion. So my proposed narration was put aside, but otherwise what I originally proposed stayed intact.

Pre-Production

The core and highlight of the entire piece would be the animations. To prepare and register the paper for the many drawings essential to the production of any animation project, I came up with a solution of my own design.

Since my analog images would not be much larger than a 3X5 card, I was able to find small notebooks and fill them with tracing paper I had cut to size, put holes in, and outlined borders on. To produce these images, I made the drawings from the back to the front. This allowed me to see the motion as I drew it. The best part, is that if I made a mistake, all I had to do was tear out the page and start again on an already registered piece of paper.

When it came down to doing the actual drawings, it took time, patience, and perseverance. I like to draw,

but at times it became very tedious and I would have to force myself to do it.

Animations

Once the drawings were done, I scanned them in. I used two scanners in the process of making this thesis, and two scanning applications. Because the final scans would appear on the screen, I made them in greyscale at 72 dpi and then saved them as PICT files. Once the images were scanned in, I imported them into MacroMedia Director 4.0 and created pencil test animations. The navigation portion of the entire work was already created in Director and had two computer "pages" created for every single page in the story. One page holds the beginning frame of the animation, and the other holds the end frame of the animation. This was needed because I had planned for each animation to be kept in its own Director movie; which would in turn be linked to and called from the central navigation movie. Each page for the central navigation movie needs to be exported as a PICT to serve as a background for its associated pencil test movie.

These pencil tests were shown for critique and review before they were colorized. Once approved, I would call up the folders where I had kept the original scans, open and colorize each image in PhotoShop 2.5 and resave it. Once this was done, I would reimport the now colorized scans over their original greyscale scans already in the cast of the pencil test movie. The reason this was done is that since the size and names of the PICT files never changed, the original placement of the PICT file on the stage never had to be readjusted.

The only problem was that the tempo in most of these pencil tests left a lot to be desired, and as a result, I was forced to look into how accelerating a Director movie had changed in version 4.0.

... To QuickTime

The problem of tempo was solved in this newer version of Director by exporting the entire animation

as a QuickTime video. To do this, I had to select all frames of the movie in the Score. Then I pulled down the File menu and chose Export. This would bring up a panel that numbered the frames I had selected. Near the bottom of that panel, I had to choose what I wanted to export the chosen frames as. To accelerate, I would choose QuickTime movie. Underneath the pulldown menu of export options, there is a button labeled QuickTime Options. This would bring up yet another panel. What I needed to make sure of was that 'save at Tempo Settings' was selected in this panel and that the number of colors matched my settings. There is the option of compression, but for what I had done I kept it at the default settings. I then OK'd the export and let the computer do its stuff. When I found I was having difficulties in exporting, I would quit out of Director and Get Info on the application to bump up the allocated memory to the program, that would often allow the export.

Once the animation was exported, I needed to create a new Director movie. I renamed the movie just exported and always kept it around, for the adjusting of the tempo never seemed to be done. I always had to reexport the entire movie at a different tempo. I also needed to grab the first frame of the original movie and export it as a PICT file to be used as a background in the new movie I would be creating. Once the PICT and QuickTime movie was imported I needed to pull up the information on the digital movie cast member (QuickTime). In the information window, I needed to check the following things that are not yet checked: Preload each cast member into RAM, DirectToStage, and one of three other radio buttons (normal speed, as fast as possible, fixed rate (you need to specify the fps)). Once this was done, the only other thing I needed to specify was the Tempo, found at the top of the Score. I double-clicked on the frame to bring up the panel to select -- Wait for QuickTime movie to end in channel (x). If there was a problem with the tempo, I could often adjust it just by specifying the fps (frames per second). When I completed all these procedures I had three movies for each animation: the original movie, the QuickTime

movie, and the new movie containing the QuickTime video. Of these three, I only needed to keep the final two: the QuickTime movie and the new movie containing that QuickTime video. The reason for this was that even though I imported the QuickTime into the Director movie it did not really exist within that movie. What was provided was a pointer to the QuickTime movie, which should always be kept in the same folder as the new Director movie that calls it.

Content Research

Most of the research on the country of El Salvador, textual research, had been done early on before I had even started this thesis project. I had read several newspaper articles, books, even airline magazines and some newspaper articles from Salvadoran newspapers. At this point in production, I was focusing on the actual graphics to accompany the text. To do this, I looked at every book the library owned on El Salvador to gather photographs, as well as the airline magazines and newspapers I had accumulated before. Some images were scanned in, while others were photocopied and then colorized in PhotoShop. To give an overall look to these graphics that tied them all together, I played with them a little. I bumped up the intensity of the hues in most of the images. Through various experimentation and varied approaches to it, I would eventually Facet all the images, either after giving the image a final Sharpen or Add Noise (at 16 Gaussian) before the Facet.

These touched-up images also served as colored textures that I used in colorizing the second section of the animations. Basically, I would choose a color and texture from the touched up images and copy it. Then I would return to the animation PICT file and select an area I wanted that color and texture in. From the edit menu, I would choose Paste Into until the area was eventually filled. By doing this, I was also able to connect the animation to the annotated pages and their graphics, as well as the border that was used on both the animations and annotated graphics.

Translating the Text

The text on these annotated pages of information on the country of El Salvador was written in English originally. I then imported the text files, mainly done in Microsoft Word, into Spanish Assistant (a powerful translator). I would translate the text interactively through the application. Once the text was translated, I would go over it by hand and check for any obvious errors. This was done at least a couple of days after the original translation so that it would look fresh to me. Once this was done, I provided Maria Hogan and Susan Geirsbach-Rascón both with the original English and translated Spanish for all corrections. It would prove to be a harder task than I had anticipated. The translations arrived on the twelfth hour through the help of Susan, her hard work, and a quick lesson as to how to send a fax by computer.

Changes & Corrections

The only major change was made one week before the showing of the thesis. I had been promised over and over that the author would narrate the work for me, but a week before my showing the tape had not yet arrived in the mail. So through a fellow classmate, I was able to find Roberto Acosta, from Venezuela, to narrate it for me at the last minute. I still intend to get the author's narration onto this thesis, and if that is not until months after I graduate -- so be it. I intend to be persistent.

Adding the Narration & Sounds

All sounds were brought into either SoundEdit 16 or SoundEdit Pro. The sounds that play over the animations were acquired from the Institute's sound effects CD library, and the music from a native Salvadoran group by the name of Yolocamba I Ta. These files were all saved as AIFF files at a 3:1 MACE compression ratio. Those sounds were all imported as Sound with a link to file. Again like the QuickTime

movies these AIFF files need to be kept in the same folder as the Director movie that calls to it. Those sounds activated by a button are designated as puppetSounds, while those sounds that play over the animation are placed in the sound channel in the score. The more difficult of the two is by far the sound that plays over the animation, for that needs to be timed to the animation. As a result, these sound files were constantly being imported over and over again until those changes in tempo and duration actually worked.

Feedback

Two weeks before the final showing I made video tapes of the piece, so that Mario Bencastro, Susan Geirsbach-Rascón, and Maria Hogan would be able to see my progress. Mario Bencastro was impressed with my opening animation of the cover art of the book and is trying to get a hold of the cover artist, Carlos Mejía, so that he too can see what I've done with his work. Susan was even more impressed and showed the video to her class as a teaser for when they actually get to play with the application in their language lab. She liked my drawings so much, as did Mario, that it was revealed to me that he was going to make a second publication of the book in Spanish with the additional stories he had included in the English translation. She felt it would be a welcome addition if I could illustrate this second publication. I took it as a very nice complement of my work, and if they are really serious in their offer, I will gladly illustrate the second publication.

Off to the Classroom

Once all the sounds were in, the only step left was to make the piece into a projector file. This is a fairly straightforward procedure and allows for anyone to be able to play the application without having to have MacroMedia Director to run it. After the projector was made, I would burn the thesis to CD-ROM. There will be four original CDs burned one for the Media Resource Center, one for myself, and one to be sent off

to the University of Wisconsin at Lawrence, and one for the author. I plan on keeping in touch with Susan Geirsbach-Rascón and her students to see how, if at all, my thesis has effected the discussion and overall understanding of the story in her class.

Appendices

ARBOL DE LA VIDA

historias de la guerra civil

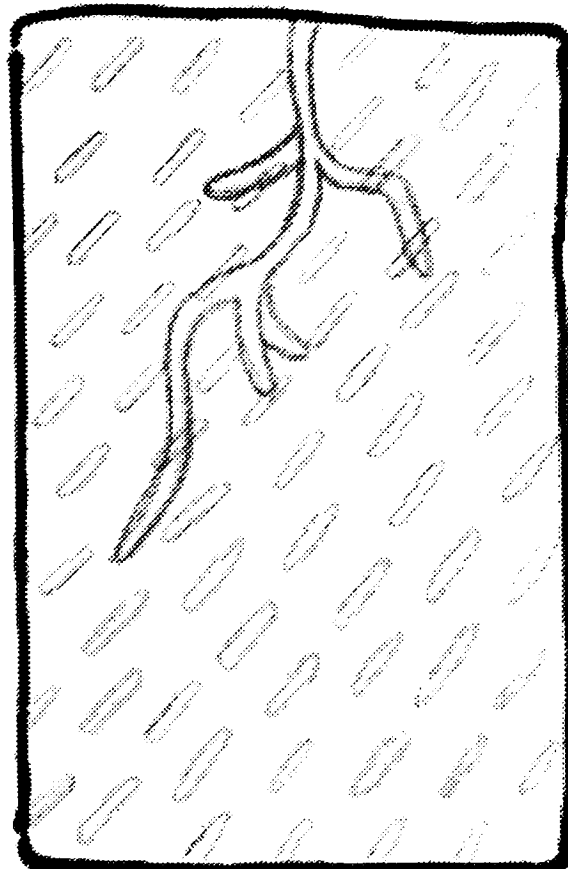


MARIO BENCASTRO

A Multimedia Adaptation by:

CARISA CANNAN

Storyboards



RAINY NIGHT - FLASH
OF LIGHTNING



CASIANO COMING HOME
IS STARTLED



HIS TWIN HERMOGENES
TURNS - CAUGHT WITH HIS
BROTHER'S WIFE



HERMOGENES SCREAMS
LIKE A WILD CAT



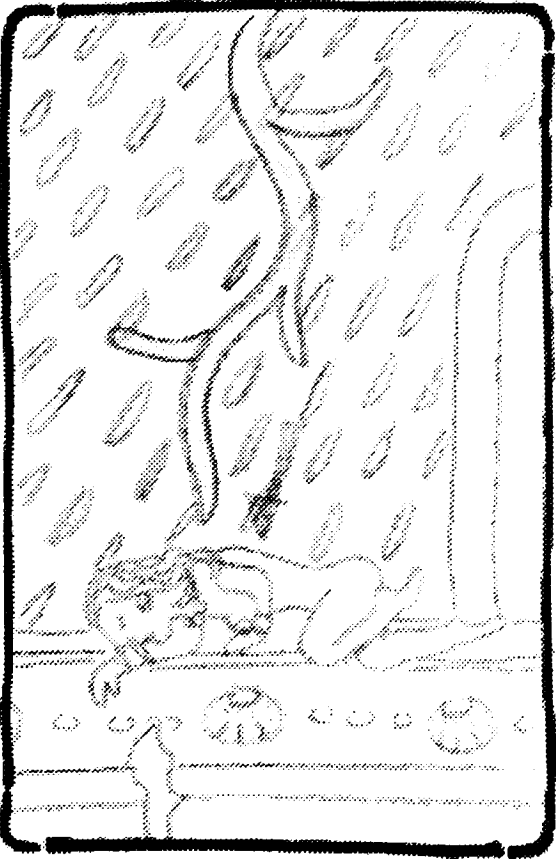
WITH MACHETE IN HAND
HE LUNGES AT HIS BROTHER.



A FURIOUS FIGHT WITH
CURSES AND BLOOD.



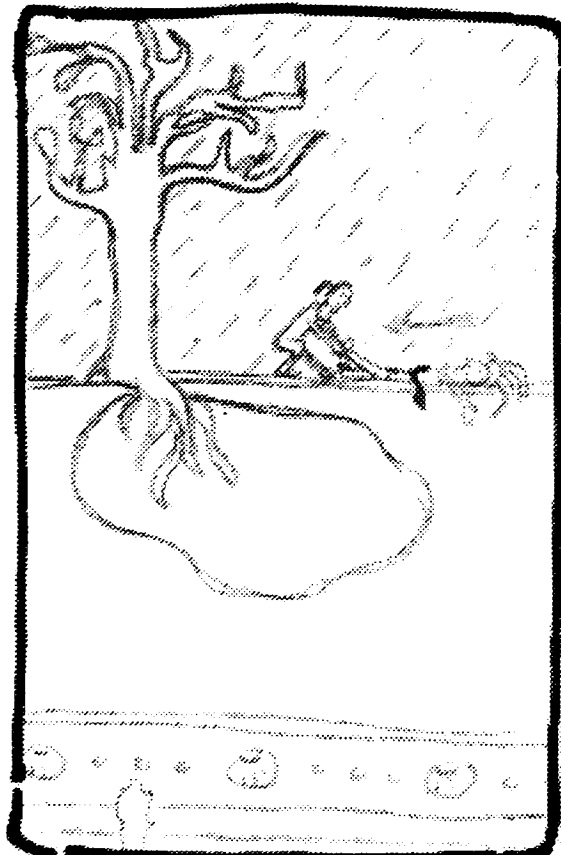
MATILDE, CASIANO'S WIFE
RUNS OUT OF THE HOUSE
HYSTERICAL



SHE IS INSTANTLY STRUCK
BY LIGHTNING AND LIES
DEAD AT THE ENTRANCE.



HERMÓGENES THRUSTS THE FATAL BLOW KILLING HIS TWIN BROTHER, CASIANO.



HERMÓGENES THEN DRAGS HIS BROTHER TO A PIT NEAR AN ENORMOUS TREE.



HE COMPLETES HIS MACABRE TASK BY THROWING HIS LOVER'S BODY INTO THE PIT WITH HER HUSBAND - HIS BROTHER.



THE ROOTS OF THE TREE WRAP AROUND THE TWO BODIES.



ENVELOPED BY THE ROOTS
HUSBAND AND WIFE ARE
UNITED AND HAPPY REVIVED
BY THE TREE



YEARS LATER, THE TREE IS IN
BLOOM, AND PART OF THE
TOWN'S SQUARE.



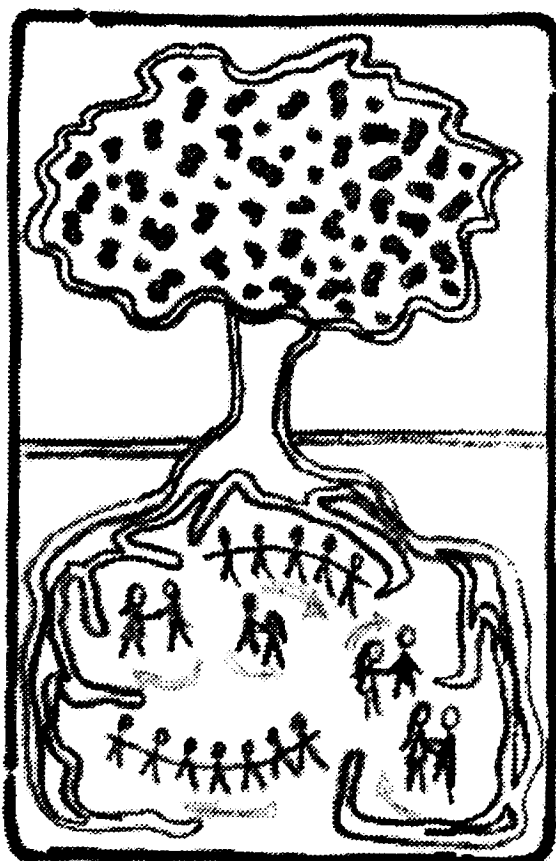
BIRDS FLY AND SING
UNDER THE TREE



CHILDREN ARE BAPTIZED
UNDER THE TREE ...



THE ROOTS OF THE TREE
WRAP AROUND THE
MANY BODIES.

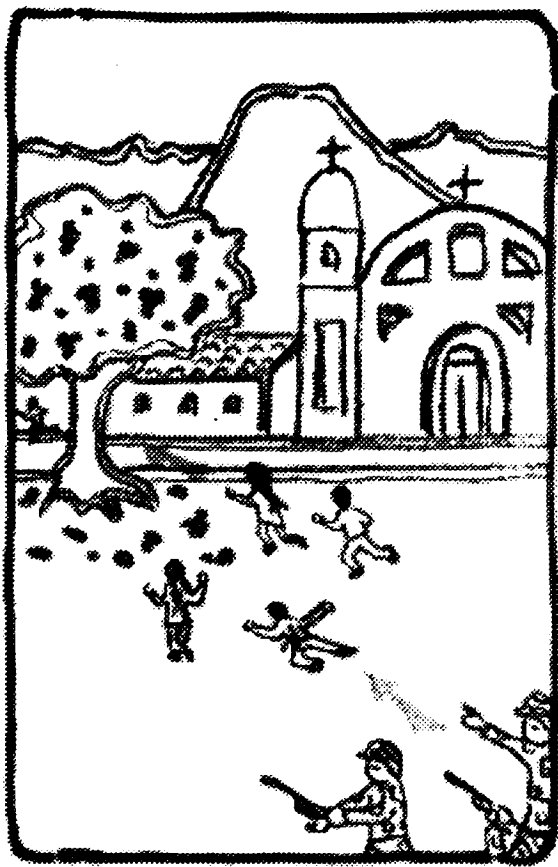


ENVELOPED BY THE TREE, NOW
IN BLOOM, YOUNG & OLD, FRIEND
& ENEMY, REBELS & SOLDIER ARE
UNITED REVIVED BY THE TREE.

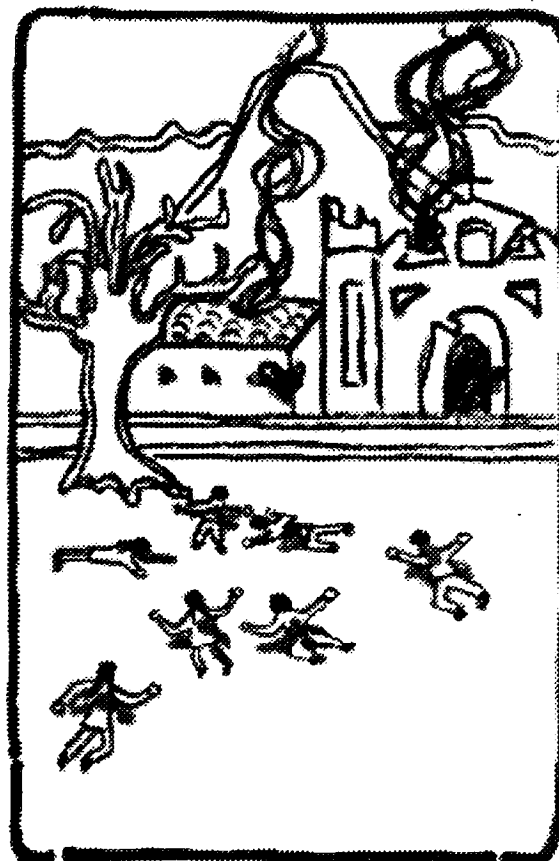
FIN



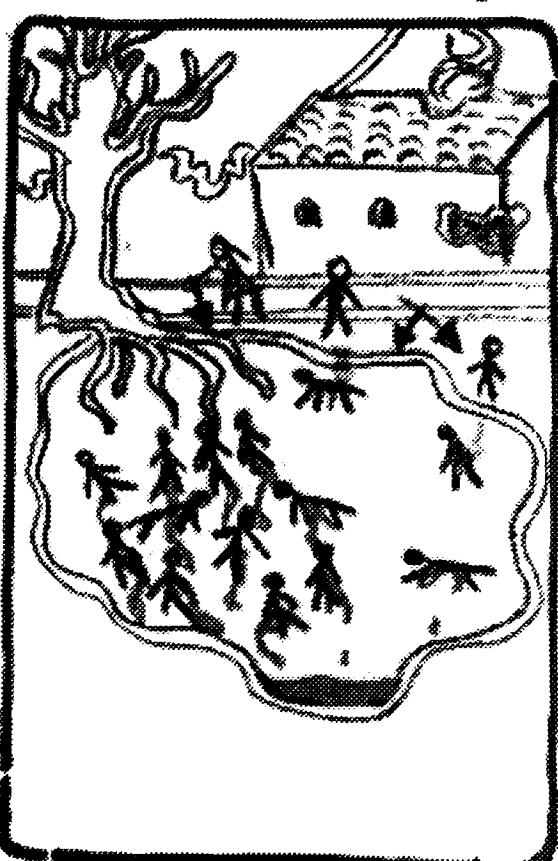
YOUNG AND OLD ALIVE
DANCE UNTIL NIGHTFALL.



TROOPS ARRIVE AND OPEN FIRE.
SOME INHABITANTS MANAGE TO
FLEE TO THE MOUNTAINS



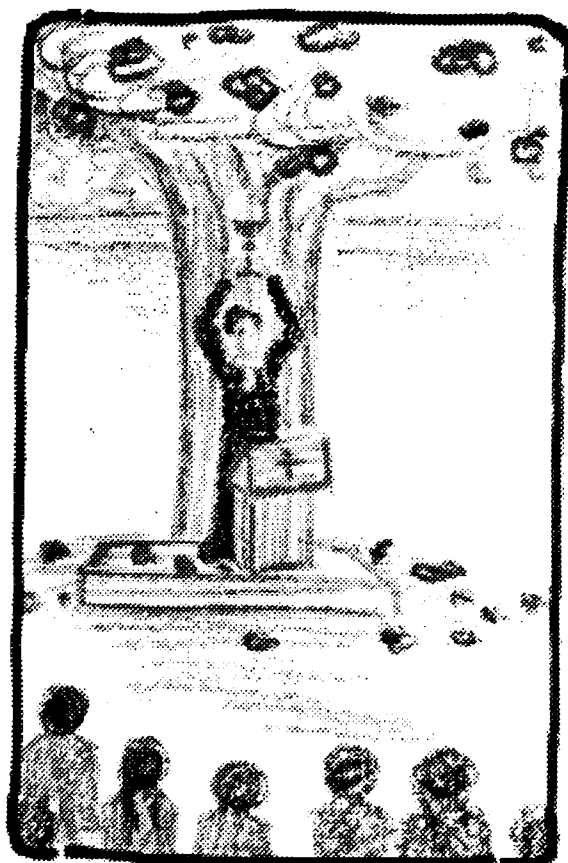
RUBBLE AND DESTRUCTION
GREET THEM WHEN THEY
RETURN TO THE SQUARE.



THE FEW THAT SURVIVE DIG
A PIT AND BURY THE DEAD.



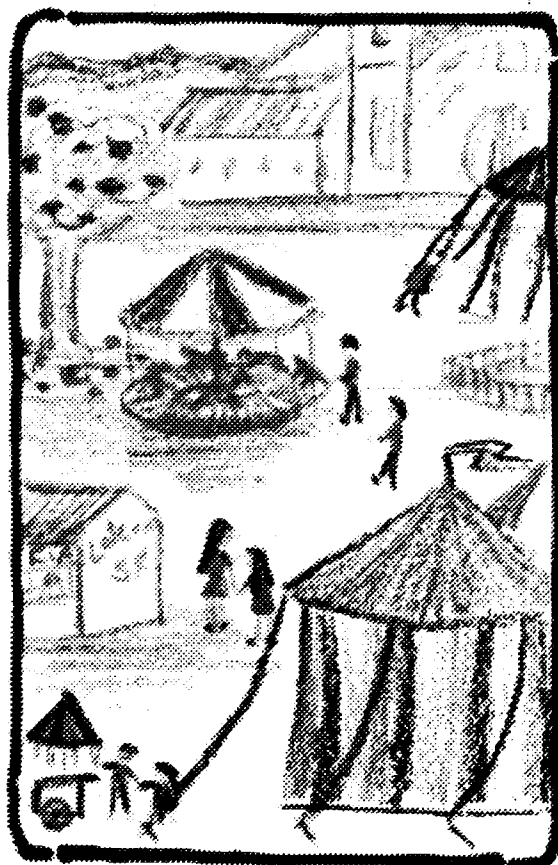
MAYORS ARE INAUGURATED...



EASTER MASS IS GIVEN...



MUSICIANS PLAY AS THE
PEOPLE JOIN IN SONG & DANCE...



STANDS APPEAR. CHILDREN RUN TO
THE 'MERRY GO ROUND' & 'FLYING SWINGS'
LOTTERY IS OFFERED AT ONLY 5 CENTS



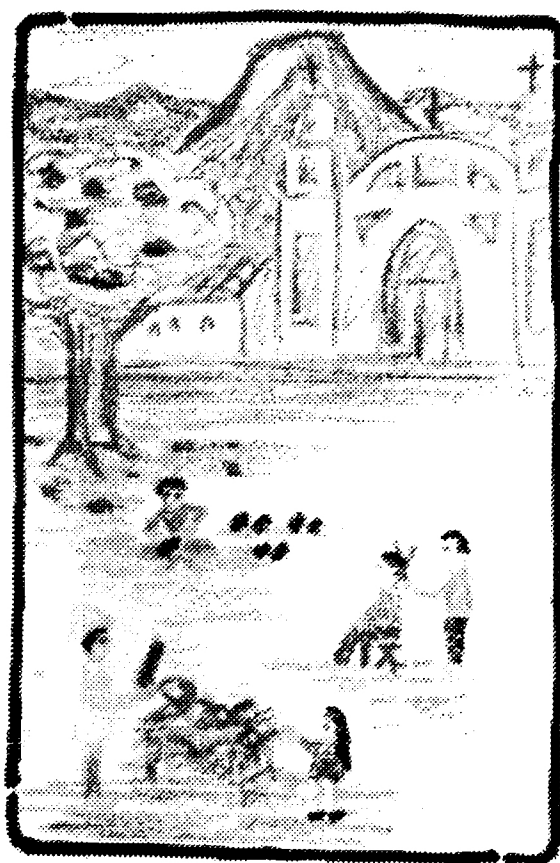
THEY LEARN THEIR
CATECHISMS...



MAKE THEIR FIRST COMMUNION...



COUPLES ARE JOINED IN
MATRIMONY...



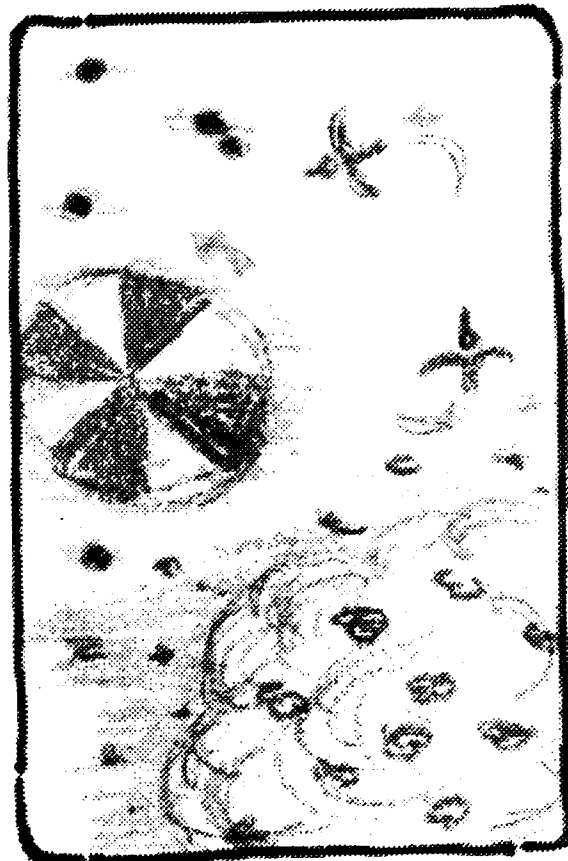
PEDDLERS, BARBERS, AND
SHOEMAKERS SET UP SHOP
ON THE WEEKENDS...



A TOOTHLESS GYPSY READS A GIRL'S FORTUNE. TO MARRY RICH. THE GIRL SIGNS AS THE DOLLAR IS TUCKED BETWEEN THE GYPSY'S BREASTS...



THE CROWD LAUGHS AS THE DRUNKEN DANCER TRIPS OVER THE "SNAKE WOMAN!"



BIRD'S EYE VIEW. WARBLING OF THE ORIOLES AND MUCK-ING AIRS TURNING THE PROPER



FLOWERS DESCEND TO THE GROUND CARPETING IT IN GREEN

Research

investigación de tesis

Lovill, Jeff. **Software Review.** Journal of Computer-Based Instruction.(Spring 1993, Vol. 20, No. 2, 63.)

Dasher:Foreign Language Authoring System for the Macintosh. James P. Pusack & Sue K. Otto. Iowa City: The University of Iowa - Oakdale Campus, CONDUIT Education Software, 1992. Basic package \$150(one author at a time, unlimited number of students, no network).

Allows for the creation of exercises with visual feedback using text, graphics, sound, and even videodiscs. It is inexpensive, compact, and user-friendly with student record keeping and networking capabilities. Exercises can be generated from a rich palette of types: transformations, substitutions, synthetic sentences, fill-in-the-blank, question/answer exchanges, mini-dialogues, dialogue-like transformations, personalized questions, true-false, multiple choice,vocabulary drill, translation, and dictation. It also offers multimedia options: image-based, audio-based, and videodisc exercises, yet there is no support for Quicktime or CD-ROM, and a second monitor is required as well as an overlay card essential to combine computer-generated text and graphic with videodisc imagery on a screen. The documentation is extensive, well-done and underscores the experience of the authors. The greatest frustration arises while generating exercises, which necessitate that teachers embed the predictable responses for proper reward and remediation within a linguistically natural situation. The problem is not with the software but rather with the paradox inherent in "predictable response" linked to "natural communication." Constructing exercises that resolve this dilemma is an art, whose practice is facilitated by DASHER's user friendliness.

Quinlan, Michael. **A Keystroke for Language.** Américas.

Transparent Language. A unique new kind of computer software from a leading foreign-language software company, Transparent Language, Inc. , Box 575, Hollis, NH 03049, USA or call (800) 752-1767. What if English-speakers in the United States, Canada and elsewhere could suddenly read Spanish language articles that they would not be able to understand on their own. That's the intriguing idea behind an innovative computer-based publishing program started this year by *Américas Magazine* in conjunction with Transparent Language, Inc. Though new, Transparent Language is already used by over 1,500 schools and by tens of thousands of independent learners. Its popularity is the ability to add the missing ingredient, enjoyable language use, to the grammar and vocabulary building that most students have already done. Six times per year, subscribers to *Américas in Transparent Language* receive the latest edition of *Américas* in Spanish, plus a computer disk with the ¡Ojo! section and a feature article in Transparent Language, as well as a reading of both selections on audio cassette by a native speaker. With Transparent Language, a reader sees the Spanish text in the Main Reading Window, and just reads along normally when help is not needed. The reader who needs help can stop on any word in the text and see five Help Windows arrayed around the Main Reading Window, showing the meaning of the word, the meaning of the sentence as a whole, grammar notes, help with idioms and more. *Américas in Transparent Language* is the newest and largest publishing project from Transparent Language, Inc., which now publishes material in Spanish, French, German, Latin, and Italian.

TRES UTILE! (2)

II. Learning how to narrate

To narrate a story, you must first set time and space. Next, you recount the various elements of the story in their chronological order. If you follow these rules, your narration will be clear and your style natural. Begin your work:

A. Locate your story.

Who?

- Chrystèle Bremard, la jeune lyonnaise française qui prépare son bac.
- Sa copine.

Where?

- Une ville en France; des rues.
- Un terrain de sport, un supermarché.
- Les appartements de Chrystèle et de sa copine.

When?

- Au mois de juin, la veille de l'examen.

B. Narrate the events of the story and link them with the appropriate connectors. Here are some of the connectors you can use:

To begin:

- D'abord, en premier lieu...
- (Tout) au début de la séquence...
- Juste quand la séquence s'ouvre...
- Au début de la séquence...
- La séquence s'ouvre avec quelques images sur...
- La séquence commence avec...

To briefly summarize what someone says:

- En bref...
- En gros...
- Grosso modo...
- En peu de mots...
- En quelques mots...

To continue:

- (Peu) après...
- Par la suite...
- Ensuite...
- Et puis ensuite...
- Tout de suite après...
- Alors...
- C'est alors que...
- Plus tard...
- En même temps...
- Juste à ce moment là...

To conclude:

- Finalement...
- Enfin...
- La séquence finit par...
- Le documentaire se termine par...
- En dernier...
- A la fin...

Previous

More

Borrás, Isabel. *Developing and Assessing Practicing Spoken French: A Multimedia Program for Improving Speaking Skills*. ETR & D (Vol.41, No.4, pp. 91-103.)

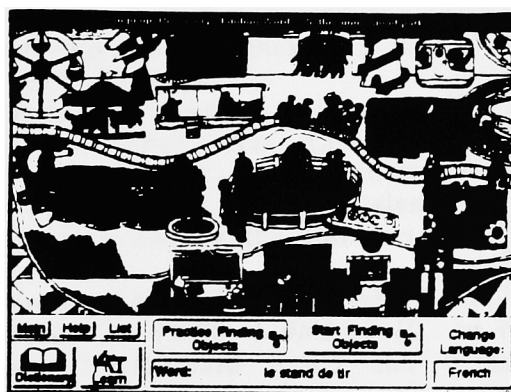
Practicing Spoken French was authored with HyperCard 2.1 and Voyager VideoStack 2.2. (CALL) specialists have suggested that computer programs have potential for stimulating conversation, which in turn may enhance the development of learner's competence in second language communication. However, initial research into the actual talk engendered by the computer has shown the discourse to be limited in amount and complexity. Two possible reasons for the lackluster results of the above studies might be the type of courseware (commercially available CALL programs) and the nature of the stimuli (text or still images) used to generate talk in such studies. An innovative solution would be to provide computerized oral practice based on purposely designed multimedia courseware. First, this would ensure the alignment of the learning practice with the learning objective. Second, authentic video would create better opportunities to understand and imitate the target language. Moreover, the adoption of a coding element, such as fully duplicating intralingual subtitles - on-screen verbatim translations of the language spoken would probably enhance oral output. Giving learners the possibility of seeing and 'controlling' the printed version of the video's narrative would increase learner's opportunities to model their oral productions meaningfully. New courseware should focus narrowly on the skill(s) to be taught and assessed; ensure that a sufficient amount of exposure to the experimental variable(s) is built into the research design in order to allow the detection of potential experimental effects; select appropriate learning tasks to engage students in contextualized, meaningful practice; and structure those tasks in ways that induce subjects to acquire a desired level of internal knowledge organization.

Reviews of Films, Software, and Videos.

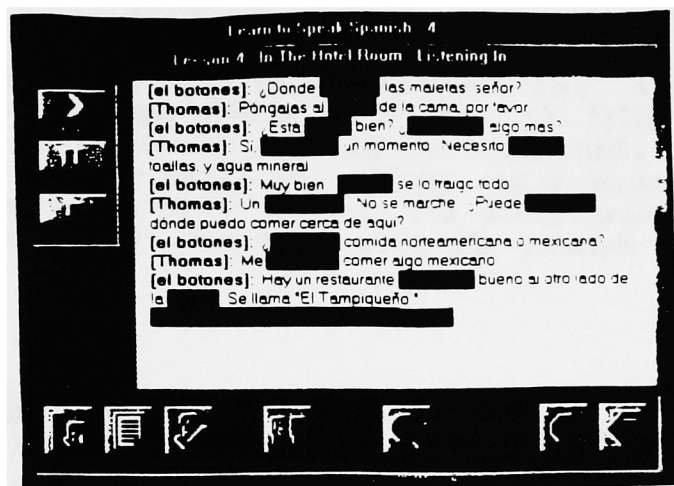
Medina, Cynthia B. *Así es*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. 6277 Sea Harbor Drive, Orlando, FL 32887; 800/433-0001; 2 VHS videocassettes 1992. Accompanies the college text of the same name providing professional presentations of the dialogs and of the *gacetas* (employing a television-magazine format). These *gacetas* offer a fascinating collection of filmed segments covering a variety of cultural themes such as music, food, and famous people, and are narrated in Spanish but with taped interviews in English and Spanish. The strengths of this video program are its integration with the textbook and its fascinating cultural *gacetas*.

Barrueta, Marilyn. *¡Adelante!* DC Health. 125 Spring St, Lexington, MA 02173; 2 binders, containing 4 VHS videocassettes, 4 audiotapes, 2 reference guides. 1989. Accompanies the ten units of the high school text *Spanish for Mastery I* by Valette and Valette, and was filmed on location in Spain, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Texas, and Miami. In all, it contains over 5 hours of recorded segments. Because of the video segments's format and length (8 min.) teachers have time for presentation, practice, and followup activities within a class period.

Inclendon, John. *El Espejo Enterrado/The Buried Mirror*. Films Incorporated Video. 5547 North Ravenswood Ave. Chicago, IL 60640-1199; VHS videocassette 1992. Written and presented by the renowned writer Carlos Fuentes, *El Espejo Enterrado/The Buried Mirror*, focuses on the broad panorama of Hispanic culture and civilization in Spain, Latin America, and the United States. Chosen by the Smithsonian Institute as its quincentennial project for television, this beautifully written, directed, and filmed series has appeared on PBS. Both English and Spanish versions are available. Exceptionally well written and filmed, this series is an important document on Hispanic culture and civilization that will, without a doubt, serve as a valuable reference work for many years.



Lindstrom, Bob. *Language Discovery*. (MPC) Applied Optical Media. 1450 Boot Rd., Bldg. 400, West Chester, PA 19380; 215/429-3701. Today's youngsters can point-and-click their way through delightful cartoon-style panels while learning nearly 1000 words in French, Spanish, German, and English. The multilingual style of this CD-ROM makes it a special delight. The content of *Language Discovery* is decidedly at the beginner level. It concentrates on noun and object identification, but never puts them into the context of a sentence.



Lindstrom, Bob. Learn to Speak Series.(Mac/MPC) HyperGlot Software,. 5108-D Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN 37919; 615/558-8270. Points to the future of CD-ROM self-help software by teaching beginning- to intermediate-level foreign words and phrases, about 1000 in each product. Currently there are discs available for French, Spanish, and English as a second language(German will be available shortly). The lessons reinforce your efforts with a number of tests and drills for listening, grammar, and pronunciation skills. The written tests are all evaluated by the computer; however, you alone can evaluate the success of your pronunciation through the record and compare feature. While strictly speaking, it is not a substitute for classroom training, any one of these CD-ROMs will develop a strong foundation for continued study of a language.

Gardos, Peter Sandor. Languages of the World for Windows.(MPC) NTC Publishing Group. 4255 W Touhy Ave, Lincolnwood, IL 60466-1975; 708/679-5500. A multilanguage translating program that translates words to or from any of twelve different languages. Incorporating the equivalent of 132 bilingual dictionaries, this disc also has the ability to display the full dictionary entry for each word along with definitions.

Hinkle, Delwin R. VocabuLearn/CE Spanish Level I.(MPC) Penton Overseas, Inc. 2470 Impala Dr, Carlsbad, CA 92008; 619/431-8110. An incomplete copy on a CD-ROM of a diskette-based system, flash-card based and focuses on learning vocabulary by memorization. Considering the potential this title is a disappointment.

First Impressions. EnglishInteractive.(CD-I) Andujar Communication Technologies Inc. 7946 Ivanhoe Ave. Suite 302, PO Box 2622, La Jolla, CA 92037; 619/459-6737. A 24-disc language course, available on the Philips CD-I platform. The first complete course in English as a second language in CD-I format. Offering over 120 hours of playback time with 96 interactive tests. A language game with each unit adds a lighter touch to the self-paced instruction. It is perfect for the international business community, according to ACT. The company chose the CD-I platform in the belief that it would reach a wider audience, including those that don't own a PC. ACT

Awards. Playing with Language Receives Two Awards.(MPC) Syracuse Language Systems. 719 East genesee St, Syracuse, NY 13210; 315/478-6729. *Playing with Language* has received two INVISION 1993 Multimedia Awards. A Bronze medal in the K - 12 education application category and a second Bronze medal in the children's enrichment consumer category. The series available in five languages, teaches naturally, without translations, using the principle of multimedia language immersion.



Cichowlas, Bruce. Goldilocks and the Three Bears in Spanish.(MPC) Syracuse Language Systems. 719 East genesee St, Syracuse, NY 13210; 315/478-6729. A solid foreign-language introduction designed to teach children basic Spanish words and phrases. The program is a good brush-up for adults, too, who will enjoy the entertaining tutorials. *Goldilocks* offers more than linear story telling. You can enjoy story-related games, which can be accessed by a screen icon. Overall, the Spanish speakers were quite good. The characters spoke distinctly but not slowly, tediously, or unnaturally. On the downside, the program's numerous touch points in the games make up to some degree for the story's shortcomings. Students might appreciate Spanish words in written form however. Without a written text, it's impossible to learn foreign-language spelling.

is working on complementary products: *Survival English*, *Say It Right!*, and *Business English*.

Flanagan, Patricia. *Brazil: An Exotic Journey.* (Mac) 3D-ROM Multimedia Inc. 37A Davis Square, Somerville, MA 02144; 800/483-3766. Designed for students, travelers, and the simply curious, *Brazil: An Exotic Journey*, explores the colorful and complex nation, from the lush rain forest to the 5000 mile sand-swept coastline. Along the way, this electronic tour guide reveals the face of Brazil, shaped by colonialism and waves of immigrants, a sub-equatorial climate, and its people's abiding passion for art, music, and dance. Your itinerary includes three maps: the country as a whole, for general information; the regional level, for history, geography, weather, fauna and flora, and ethnic makeup of Brazil's five regions; and the state level, which highlights accommodations and suggestions for entertainment and adventure. Its greatest accomplishments are the high quality of its graphics, animation, full-screen slideshows, and QuickTime movies. The sea of images does not always provide smooth sailing, for it's easy to get lost in *Brazil*, especially at the state level. Its most serious omission is its lack of printing capabilities.

Larsen, Mark D. *The Hispanic World in the Information Age.* ETR&D. (Vol.41, No.3, pp. 117-128.)

The current state of technology among Spanish-speaking countries reveals a paradox of both good news and bad. Hispanic nations generally lack the resources, training, and industries to produce electronic technology, and therefore rely almost exclusively upon imported hardware and software. Yet, there are more computer products available, in Spanish than in any other language except English. Furthermore, the fifth largest Spanish-speaking nation in the world happens to be the unquestioned leader in technological research and development: the United States.

Computer-Assisted Language Learning. Instructional programs in Spanish have become more sophisticated over the years, and have even started to supplant the traditional grammar drills with formats which better approximate content-based instruction (Quinn, 1990). For example, many packages now take advantage of digitized sound, which enables students to listen to authentic, native-speaker pronunciation rather than simply read the text on a display. One cannot emphasize enough the importance of such a step, for language is, by definition, an oral means of communication that involves ears and mouths, not just eyes reading a computer screen or fingers typing on a keyboard. Only when students can both hear questions in Spanish and speak their answers into a microphone will legitimate computer-assisted language learning finally become a reality. Several projects are also underway throughout the Hispanic world to store literary works in electronic format. Parallel to his project to archive references of Latin American literature, Professor Ned Davison (1978, 1979, 1980a, 1980b) also broke new ground by using the computer to analyze the works themselves. Other efforts have been made to create hypertext anthologies of literature, such as the *Rubén Darío Project* by Professor Joseph A. Feustle, Jr. at the University of Toledo, or my own *Poesía Hispanoamericana* and the forthcoming *Gauchos*. One can safely predict that the number of computerized texts available in the Spanish language will continue to grow, and will have a marked impact upon the content and direction of future literary research.

Electronic Networks. Electronic networks such as the BITNET and INTERNET span the Hispanic world and count many Spanish speakers as their most active and enthusiastic users.

Interest Group

Argentina
Chile

INTERNET Address(es)

ARGENTINA@DB.TORONTO.EDU
MLADINIC@PURCCVM.BITNET

Columbia
Iberoamérica
Latinoamérica

México

Perú
Uruguay
REQUEST@ENIAC.SEAS.UPENN.EDU
Venezuela
REQUEST@ARISIA.XEROX.COM

CHILENET@UCHCECVM.BITNET
RIVERA@CERNVM.BITNET
UMNEWS@MAINE.BITNET
ULAT-RD@FRMOP11.BITNET
LASNET-REQUEST@EMX.UTEXAS.EDU
PL335466@TECMTYVM.BITNET
PL158305@TECMTYVM.BITNET
OWNER-PERU@ATHENA.MIT.EDU
URUGUAY-

VENEZUELA-

Diacritics. The so-called "standard" ASCII codes (0 through 127) universally recognized by all brands of computers do nothing to accommodate the diacritics and special characters commonly used in other languages—accents, tildes, umlauts, circumflexes, inverted question and exclamation marks, and so on. Obviously, until programmers manage to eliminate such 'bugs,' or until the entire planet settles on a new "standard" ASCII code that includes all international characters, the AATSP guidelines will remain a viable alternative to serve the needs of Spanish speakers.

Publications. Spanish-language magazines and journals dedicated exclusively to computer topics are not abundant, but the number continues to grow each year. For example, *Computadoras y Sistemas*, *Micro Computación*, *Mini Computer*, *CompuMundo*, and *Uno Cero Uno*. As the Information Age continues to expand throughout the Hispanic world, new periodicals will undoubtedly appear, and their publishers will play a major role in the invention and dissemination of a new vocabulary for technical terms in the Spanish language. So far, it would seem that a sort of "Spanglish" is the preferred means of expressing such concepts.

Gay, G., and Mazur, F. **Combining and Recombining Multimedia Story Elements.** *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*. (1991, Vol.2, No.2, pp. 3-17.)

Establishing a foundation for language learning. An original creation in hypermedia, *El Avión Hispano* has for its objective the practice and teaching of Spanish. Students at the intermediate level are its intended audience. Created by Multimedia program developers with Cornell University's Interactive Multimedia Group (IMG). Developers first turned to the second-language learning principles of H. Douglas Brown (1987). In part, Brown's theory promotes communicative competence over linguistic competence, values cognitive learning more than it does rote, and recognizes the importance of the contextual, affective aspect of personal study and inquiry. The events which comprise *El Avión Hispano*, while they reflect these [redelictions], also provide human interaction at three of Brown's four levels of communicative competence: i.e., function, register, and sociolinguistic competence. Since strategic competence requires nonverbal actions on the part of the learner, this fourth and highest level is omitted. IMG members worked closely with content person Zulma Iguina to script the many scenes which both illustrate the aforementioned levels of competence and generate additional information about various passengers on board an airplane, the program's thematic and spatial metaphor. This choice of metaphor couples naturally to the main activity in which program users are to engage: specifically, they are asked to write about their fellow passengers. Thus, the metaphor takes advantage of an imaginative experience commonly shared by people, an experience created from human curiosity about what fellow passengers on the plane are like, who they are and what they do for a living, what their relationships might be.

Creating Ambiguity. IMG's director wanted students to interact with the program and to write creatively, subjectively; to benefit from the spatial quality of the metaphorical airplane and to trigger the metaphor's thematic quality of a flight of human imagination; to write their own fiction and not merely to "disinter" a tale by the program's authors. To better accomplish this, various scenes underwent revision and became deliberately ambiguous.

Recombining on Differing Platforms. IBM and Intel developers of Digital Video Interactive (DVI) invited Cornell University's IMG to make use of their technology. Using DVI, which converts an ordinary motion video signal into data bytes and then records them on a hard disk, program developers are able to view real-time video before pressing of a disc. DVI permitted the creation of very realistic picture icons, the on-screen notebook, and a unique cursor in the shape of an airplane that changed direction as it was moved about the screen. The RasterOps ColorBoard 364, Videologic's DVA-4000 adapter, and IBM's M-Motion Video Card, integrate motion video and the capability for its re-sizing onto the single monitor screen of the computer. Although double-screen platforms are presently in greater use than platforms on a single screen because of cost and availability, this likely will start to change as digital video technology continues to improve, making it easier and not so expensive to use.

Horowitz, Rosalind. Story as Vehicle: Teaching English to Young Children (Edie Garvie. Clevedon and Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters. 1990) Language Learning. (June 1993, Vol.43, No.2, pp. 295-300.)

Interest in stories, from narrative structure and narration to the story teller, the listener, and the reader, has increased substantially in the past decade. Attention to story is evident in many disciplines and for many purposes. A story is more than the sum of its elements (characters, plot, conflict, and resolution) and more than meets the ear or eye. As complex metaphors of life, oral and written stories reflect the most difficult aspects of life and convey what it means to be human. They reflect the cultures and symbol systems of the world. The story is a precious, powerful vehicle for expressing language, learning, and culture. Teachers need to value the language that the child uses and that the teacher benefits from being bilingual - a matter worth repeating. Story is described as a vehicle for (a) language development, (b) affective development, (c) for understanding the universal and intercultural, (d) for creating the interdependence of experience and language, (e) for building motivation and creating cohesion in ESL or EFL, (f) for contextualizing a syllabus, (g) for structuring a curriculum, and for (h) establishing a structured theme. Story is referred to as the deep structure of the grammar of the world, the raw material and the themes of events that occur in a cultural context. To teach a story the uses of games, song, role-playing, extrapolation of math concepts, social concepts, and specific language points are encouraged. The story should be a vehicle with a trailer that allows the teacher to expand upon appropriate aspects of the story. Guidelines for telling a story - namely, how to use voice, eyes, facial expressions, and gestures that will be a fit to the oral tradition of a culture. A child's empathy with narrative becomes a way for the child to enter a culture.

Riley, Gail L. A Story Structure Approach to Narrative Text Comprehension. The Modern Language Journal. (1993, Vol.77, No. iv, pp. 417-432.) E-Mail: glriley@mailbox.syr.edu

Short stories often serve to introduce students to the world of fiction in early stage foreign language classes. Very little research has investigated the effects that the

structure of narrative texts have on the reading comprehension of foreign-language (L2) readers in American schools and universities. A story grammar is a hierarchical network of story nodes, or constituents, and logical relationships connecting these units. These constituents, or nodes, normally, consist of a Beginning Event during which the protagonist encounters a conflict, followed by the Development where the protagonist establishes a goal path to follow in order to resolve the conflict and attempts to achieve the goal. The Attempt results in an Outcome, and subsequently an Ending. ESL readers may have to devote more attention to linguistic encoding, and would therefore have less attention to devote to the structural organization of a story. They may thus be more easily confused by violations of an ideal story grammar. The rationale behind selecting texts is frequently based on the difficulty of vocabulary and the complexity of sentence structure. This study would indicate that it is also important to take into account textual organization. It is important to recognize that students expect a story to have structure, and that they look for and use story structure as a basis for comprehension and memory. The structural expectations that the readers bring with them to the reading of short stories can be exploited in the classroom setting to enhance comprehension.

MWALL '94

Re-envisioning the Language Teacher's Role in the Interactive Technology Future presented by Dr. Wiley Feinstein, Associate Professor of Italian, from Loyola University.

*the language lab will become more of a primary space, the classroom secondary as the teaching of languages becomes more learner "centric". *

theory

- language learning more complete at a multimedia workstation, and the user has more control.
- presentation of the material is much more superior (i.e. the teaching of tense).
- stimulates the practice of the oral and written word much better than the classroom, for it is not as intimidating an environment.
- voice recognition would be the ideal, combined with the ability to intervene.

***practice**

- motivation for language instruction is not always optimal.
- classroom inhibitors(vacations, parties, better-speaking students).
- different paces for different students.
- credits earned more or less by their level of understanding.

***the role of language teacher's as facilitator**

- helping students understand how to use the technology.
- more responsibility by being available to respond to students problems on-site or by e-mail.
- group students together based on their motivation and ability.
- meet periodically to discuss students' specific goals and how to meet them(opera-music).
- work on essential new material(modifiable for instructors, current information).
- move outside the space of a single institution, especially to high schools and the community at large.

discussion questions and comments

- what is the current state of affairs at your institution? are there any faculty

who are beginning to think in "re-envisioning" terms?

- is a re-envisioned role for the language teacher workable?
- what are the implications for the lab? what obstacles would you face?
- as lab directors, what is your perspective on the future role of technology?
- overall frustration, possibly pose a threat for access by smaller institutions.

French in Action presented by Susan Gautsch, Instructional Technology Specialist, from Northwestern University.

*demonstrates a computer-based adaptation of the widely used "French in Action" program, focusing on where the use of interactive media strengthens and weakens the integrity of the original pedagogical design.

*21M, created using HyperCard combining QuickTime videos, audio, simple animations, and interactivity.

*University of Hawaii thesis project tested on 100 undergraduate students(50-60 communications, 40 education and computer science).

comments and questions

- grey copyright area, fair use questions, only thesis project can't be pressed to CD-ROM.

- complaint on too many pieces, paths, choices, doesn't have an overall sense of

- completeness, wants more of an entirety to the package.

- suggestions as to guidance, make it more informational, perhaps even interventional, and in relation to these suggestions find the programs' usefulness in the replacement of audiotapes only.

- would like the option to record voice and compare.

Hanzi Assistant presented by Gretchen Guo, Technical Services Specialist, from Northwestern University.

*multimedia database software application of 2500 Chinese characters (Hanzi), containing information on how to write a Hanzi in correct stroke order and gives both male and female native Beijing pronunciations.

*Winner of EDUCOM's 1991 Award for Distinguished Humanities

Software(Foreign Language) from Dartmouth College and distributed by Panda Software.

*stack-oriented, over 3500 cards representing the 2500 characters in multiple ways

- Brush image

- Pencil/Ball point image

- Animated character writing

- Sounds(both male and female)

- Pinyin(phonetic representation)

- English translation

The Chinese Language Kit presented by Gretchen Guo, Technical Services Specialist, from Northwestern University.

*takes advantage of Apple's World Script, and enables you to use Chinese characters (Hanzi) in Word, Hypercard, Power Point and many other applications, allowing you to mix languages within a document.

*depending on which program you port the Hanzi to, you may or may not be able to edit, for it must be a World Script savvy program.

Zi Xue Hanzi presented by Allen Singleton, Graduate student in Linguistics, from the University of Chicago.

*interactive HyperCard program developed to complement the University of Chicago's Chinese language curriculum by introducing the first 300 characters taught in the 1st year Chinese course.

*much like an electronic version of the flashcard, each card displays one character in either its simplified or traditional form.

*each character displays its romanization(both Yale and Pinyin systems), its radical, and its number of strokes, as well as providing male and female pronunciation, and stroke for stroke animation on how to draw each character.

*for each character card there is a corresponding vocabulary with examples of the character in useful compounds and expressions.

MacNorsk II presented by Barbara Need, Graduate student in Linguistics, from the University of Chicago.

*interactive HyperCard program containing a variety of vocabulary stacks with pictures of objects and actions along with digitized audio of native Norwegian speakers, other stacks include exercises on prepositions, Norwegian geography, and spoken vowel recognition, developed at the University of Chicago.

*done totally in Norwegian, no obvious buttons or graphics to guide you unless you know Norwegian already. Usage of someone else's graphics, so again the problem of the greyiness of copyright. Buttons within the stack that are not made clear to the user.

Sounds are in a separate folder for each different unit to reduce the size of the stacks and speed up the program.

*used in relation to and as a supplement to textbooks, workbooks, and homework assignments.

Dr. Vox / Visi-Pitch presented by Michael Ziolkowski, Graduate student in Linguistics, from the University of Chicago.

*Visi-Pitch, IBM based program utilizing visual feedback to improve the production of a native accent in languages dependant on pitch and vowel quantity to get across the meaning of a word.

*30 subjects used in the study using three methods of improvement

-audiotapes - hated(5 w/language experience, 5 w/o), flatline no improvement.

-one on one tutor - tiring (ditto), production & perception both improved.

-visual feedback - better (ditto), only production improved, definately feel it in your face.

*Dr. Vox will soon offer a Mac-based, individual pronunciation traing using visual feedback. At present too slow, and doesn't give you immediate feedback as the more expensive commercial products like Visi-Pitch. Advantage is low cost making visual feedback available not only to speech therapists who can afford the \$5000 pricetag, but to students of foreign language.

Drehort: Neubrandenburg presented by Franziska Lys, Senior Lecturer German Department, from Northwestern University.

*interactive videodisc application created using the authoring software Libra specifically for the intermediate German language class.

*again a stack-oriented program, comprised of two main stacks:

"Neubrandenburg Video" and "Ubung". "Neubrandenburg Video" is an interactive HyperCard stack that allows students to control the viewing mode(with or without German or English subtitles), and speed(freeze, fast forward, review, and recap) while watching the video on the computer screen. "Ubung" is an interactive exercises Libra stack that offers ample practice for listening comprehension. To answer a question or complete a given task, students can review relevant scenes from the video directly from within the

stack. Immediate feedback and various help modes guide th students along as they complete the interactive stacks.

*multimedia preliminary evaluation and presentation of the program was also available and was presented.

* used video on a RasterOps - not happy with the XCMD's available or the quality of QuickTime video clips.

Power Point presented by Terri Nelson, Teaching Assistant in French, from Northwestern University.

*basically a variation on HyperStudio, a computerized overhead projector for producing slide shows and presentations.

*shown in use for group reading activities in a beginning language course, and as a lecture and notetaking tool in a 3rd year language and civilization course. (lame)

Book Review

Arbol de la vida. Historias de la guerra civil [Tree of Life: Stories of the Civil War], by Mario Bencastro. San Salvador: Clásicos Roxsil, 1993.

Central American writers, as critic and poet Alberto Baeza Flores has noted, have always had to buck the odds. To the adverse social, cultural, and economic conditions facing them must be added a political climate marked by long periods of tension, conflict, and repression. All the more reason to welcome the publication, in the country that gave rise to them, of these stories about the bloody civil war that devastated El Salvador in the eighties.

During this long decade the world watched in consternation as the social fabric of this land of fourteen volcanoes, which the Pipil Amerindians called Cuzcatlán, unraveled into strands the color of blood, lava, and smoke. Bencastro does not, however, stress the pain of the nationwide ordeal, although it provides the narratives' somber background. The author chooses to emphasize the tenacity and spirit of the people, while highlighting the myths unique to the region. Bencastro regards literature as the repository of human values and harbors the hope that in the end literature will be what saves the species from total chaos.

The ten stories of the collection reflect the country's social problems. The manner in which social issues are handled is what

distinguishes the narratives, which range from the sober realism of "The Photographer of the Dead" to the surrealist and intensely lyrical "The Garden of Gucumatz." The latter piece, together with "The Insatiable Ones" and "The River Goddess," make use of Mayan mythology to lend a magical and indigenous effect to a social reality. "The Spirit of Things" affirms the strange and marvelous presence of Monsignor Oscar Arnulfo Romero in the streets and minds of the Salvadoran people since his death, while "Tree of Life" succeeds by fantastic means in depicting a people rooted in tradition and happy beyond life's harsh reality.

The more realistic among the stories afford remarkable insights into the effects of the violence on the lives of people who, as shown in the pathetic and moving "Clown's Story," find no use for laughter. But it is the stories that invoke indigenous beliefs that reveal to us the world view governing the author's inventions. The Quiché Maya's profound belief in life-creating oppositions, expressed in the Popol Vuh, lives on in these tales. The sustained allusion to Gucumatz, who appears in one

of his incarnations as the serpent Kukulcán in "The Insatiable Ones," is a key to an understanding of the narratives. This god, creator, and chief of the Quiché people, exemplified for earlier generations of Central Americans the models of human behavior in matters political, religious, cultural, and judicial, based on the concept of community action. Reflection, discussion of ideas in order to determine what steps to take, and agreement with others are actions associated with human beings as well as the gods in the Popol Vuh. Respect for the power of Gucumatz would cause

the united community to adhere to his moral precepts, and consequently social harmony would prevail in the pre-Columbian world.

The great book of the Quiché Maya records that another of Gucumatz's incarnations is a pool of blood, whose loss represents death and sacrifice. This charged image carries the play of opposites found

at the core of these Salvadoran stories: Death leads to the creation of a new life on the land made sacred. By means of this mythical component, Bencastro succeeds in conjuring the growth of a better future out of a devastating national history, and in envisioning the transformation of an embattled people into a strong nation respected for its courage and endurance in the face of adversity. ■



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IMPORTACION • DISTRIBUCION • EDICION

Santa Tecla, agosto 31 de 1994

Srita. Carisa J. Cannan
22-4A Fairwood Drive
Rochester, NY 14623
U.S.A.

Estimada señorita Carisa:

Nos complace recibir sus noticias, en las cuales manifiesta su interés por la obra "Arbol de la vida: historia de la guerra civil" de Mario Bencastro.

Le doy la dirección del escritor. Nosotros podemos enviarle el ejemplar, mediante el envío de \$ 4.50 para cubrir el valor del libro y el envío.

Mario Bencastro

Estamos seguros de que Mario se sentirá muy contento de saber sus inquietudes y de que la ayudará ampliamente.

Sin otro particular, nos es grato saludarla muy cordialmente.

Lic. Rosa Victoria Serrano de López
Gerente General.

Nota: Cheque a nombre de Clásicos Roxsil, S.A. de C.V.

SL/aa

16 de septiembre de 1994

Carisa J. Cannan
22-4A Fairwood Drive
Rochester, NY 14623

Estimada Carisa:

De Clásicos Roxsil recibí copia de su carta en que expresa su interés en mi obra, por lo cual le agradezco mucho.

Le envío un ejemplar de "Árbol de la vida: Historias de la guerra civil." Para mayor información sobre esta obra en cuanto a su uso didáctico, puede comunicarse con la profesora Susan Gierbach-Rascón, quien la usa en sus clases y en el curso que ella impartió en la Universidad Lawrence de Wisconsin. El número de teléfono de la profesora Giersbach-Rascón es

Gracias nuevamente por su interés en mi obra. Le deseo el mejor de los éxitos en su proyecto.

Con mis cordiales saludos,

Mario Bencastro