

to create and deliver pragmatic, 'real-world' language and culture training programs so that students can master 'need-to-know' language" (p. xiii). The volume's preface further states that the materials in the series and in this volume are designed for students with no previous knowledge of Spanish, but the authors are quick to add their contention that the volume could also be used with intermediate-level students to reinforce previous learning and to specialize their active vocabulary (p. xiii). Ten chapters, each divided into two modules, present traditional vocabulary themes (colors, personal identification, family, professions, etc.), along with specialized school-related vocabulary (e.g., how to register children for attendance at a neighborhood school) for teachers, administrators, and other certified and noncertified school personnel to communicate with Spanish-speaking school patrons, be they students, their family members, or school community residents. The authors seem to follow the natural approach in their presentations, embedding vocabulary in dialogues and readings related to school settings and exchanges typically encountered between school personnel and school patrons, as well as among school personnel. Vocabulary presented in context through comprehensible input is encouraged.

The traditional grammatical syllabus receives what the authors call "concise grammatical explanations" (p. xiv). There are two topics per module, presented in "chunks" (p. xiv). Coverage includes the problematic areas of *ser y estar*, *conocer y saber*, verbs like *gustar*, and *preterit vs. imperfect*. The subjunctive and commands are also briefly presented and practiced, but not enough to constitute an opportunity for mastery of these advanced concepts. Nor is mastery the authors' intent. Indeed, the focus of the materials is "communicative survival using basic vocabulary essential to the topic to enable [students] to utilize their Spanish in the real world of their job environment" (p. xiv). The teacher-led communicative activities, both vocabulary and grammar related, are enough to cause students to practice the material at hand.

In fact, the authors handle remarkably well what is in essence an impossible situation in this text and in the other texts in the Spanish at Work series. Here we have students who are (or soon will be) school personnel, learning to communicate in a language they do not know. As compassionate, caring, dedicated professionals, they want and need to understand and convey complicated language tasks to school patrons, including nervous, frightened, or upset children and their

adult caregivers. Unfortunately, the school personnel must communicate important information to native speakers with their limited vocabulary and grammar. The authors have, to their credit, created a character set of school personnel who, through the author-written dialogues, present chunks of language that, when acquired by the students, can lead them to accomplish with at least minimal proficiency a wide variety of school-related communicative tasks. In the hands of a skillful Spanish teacher, this slim volume can serve quite well the needs of beginning Spanish learners who want to use even a little Spanish in elementary and secondary school settings. Intermediate-level students can use the profession-specific vocabulary to immediate advantage, and the grammar chunks constitute a minimal but adequate review of previously presented material.

LEON BOOK

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SALABERRY, RAFAEL, CATHERINE BARRETTE, PHILLIP ELLIOTT, & MARISOL FERNÁNDEZ-GARCÍA. *Impresiones*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2004. Pp. xxii, 521. \$93.33, cloth. ISBN 0-130-92914-X. Student Activities Manual (0-130-92916-6), \$56.00, paper. Student CD-ROM (0-130-48379-6), \$26.67. Student Audio CDs (5) (0-130-48378-8), \$26.67.

Impresiones is a 14-chapter introductory Spanish text for college use. At the end of the book are an appendix of culture and grammar activities, a grammar topic index, English-to-Spanish and Spanish-to-English dictionaries, and tables of verb forms (all forms are given, not just the irregular ones). The 14-chapter length is just right. Some teachers will get through 10 chapters in two semesters, others more. A drawback for some is that those who finish only 10 or 11 chapters will not cover the subjunctive. Some will find that the future tense (ch. 13) is deferred too long. This review covers the book and all the ancillary materials. It is important to stress that the foregoing description makes the program sound typical. The fact is that *Impresiones* is well above average in the number and variety of text activities and in the abundance of ancillary media. It offers the advanced OneKey course management system (including Blackboard).

What matters most is how the program meets its stated goals. Some will argue with the style

of the preface and its expression of goals, but the program sets high and pedagogically sophisticated standards, and it reaches them as well as any product known to this reviewer. The preface begins blandly with the sentence that "*Impresiones* is a complete language program that motivates students to take responsibility for their own learning by making them active participants in the learning process" (p. xii). Under "Highlights of the Program," the authors state that "students are first immersed in a communicative context, and then guided to focus and reflect on the forms being used. By the end of the process, they have inferred the appropriate rules for themselves and are prepared to use them in meaningful communication" (p. xii). Many teachers will recall that this inductive method came along decades ago. Still, a restating of goals is valuable. The general summary of these is typical: "*Impresiones* has been conceptualized as a new approach for the teaching of Spanish along three different lines: 1) the teaching and learning of culture, 2) the development of sociolinguistic skills, and 3) the teaching and learning of grammar" (p. xv). Sociolinguistic may sound like jargon to some, or like overreaching to practicing sociolinguists. The mention of "psycholinguistics" (p. xvii) is relevant because the authors have given careful thought to mnemonics and related research on learning. Similarly encouraging is the keying of language acquisition goals to the five Cs of the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning (i.e., Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities). This product does an exceptional job of working each one of these five elements into every chapter. A nod is given to learning styles (p. xvii). More graphic and diagramming activities might have addressed a wider range of cognitive styles; the same case could be made for more group activities, especially for groups of four to eight students. Nonetheless, the great array of video, audio, online, and *Student Activities Manual* exercises provides an exemplary opening for some cognitive styles that may have been ignored before.

The general structure is as follows: The chapters contain "Vocabulario en contexto," "Enfoque cultural," "Gramática en contexto," "Integración comunicativa," "Comparaciones culturales," and "Diferencias dialectales." The last is a fascinating addition; the ceceo and the voseo are discussed, and three different words for tee-shirt are given. Each chapter has a focused two-page walk-through of the video, which makes this video (and its excellent, clear, and idiomatic audio) more useful than in many programs. Each chapter is followed by a short "En resumen" of both grammar and culture.

A strong organizational feature is the recapitulation, in chapters 8 through 14, of material learned in chapters 1 through 7. The benefit of this feature speaks for itself. The exercises keyed to the student audio CD are abundant. All the "Estrategias" are interesting; the one on transitions such as *por eso* is the best this reviewer has seen. The key is how well the dialogues, readings, and activities lead students from first seeing and hearing new vocabulary (and, more important, new structures) to understanding the general rules for their use and, finally, to producing new speech on their own. It is for each teacher to pick out preferred activities and media; in general, teachers will find that presentation of new material—by way of sequence, repetition, and integration—is carefully planned and is likely to produce lively classes and good retention results.

A round-up of minor complaints: Although explanations and directions are usually in Spanish after chapter 4, English often shows up in the "*Estrategias*" sections. On page 198 *lo, la* are explained mostly in Spanish (some will think that referring to substantives and atonic pronouns here, and in Spanish, is more than their students can handle). Just three pages later, well into chapter 6, there is a *cierto/falso* activity that is mainly in English. The *ceceo* is explained in Spanish, but the *voseo* is explained in English. Page numbers written out as words would have been a plus. Topical references to celebrities outdate themselves: Before *Impresiones* even reaches schools, Spain will have a president other than Aznar; Pedro Martínez will have moved from the Red Sox to the Mets. Last, teachers who like every chapter to begin with a dialogue will be disappointed.

Some comments on the ancillaries are in order here. The companion Web site is imaginative, navigable, and compendious, and it has links to the *Student Activities Manual*. The interactive flashcards are a major plus. The *Student Activities Manual*, accompanied by nine audio CDs, contains an impressive array of listening comprehension, short-response, spelling, fill-in-the-blank activities, as well as open-ended formats, and more. Much of the manual is in English.

The testing program (print and CD) includes oral tests, culture, listening comprehension, and cumulative tests. Like many competing programs, it includes A and B (less open-ended, easier to grade) versions. The image resource CD contains useful images for classroom use to create drills and clarify spatial relationships. The video, intended for in-class use, consists of long, thematically linked segments. The audio clarity is less than perfect. The student CD-ROM has excellent

exercises, including the ability to drag a sentence to the image of the speaker. Two problems are the volume, which cannot be made loud enough, and the video, which will not play if a student is using a monitor separate from the computer. The student audio CDs are the best encountered by this reviewer. There are hundreds of tracks, which are keyed to the text better than with most programs. The material is engaging, and the quality is clear. The annotated instructor's edition has the standard features: answer keys, suggestions, and audioscript. An extraordinary feature is the Integrated Components Guides. Because there are so many ancillaries, it helps teachers target which media and activities best reinforce text material.

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TURNER, JOAN F., WILLIAM C. MAISCH, & HEATHER MENDOZA. *Somos vecinos: Intermediate Spanish Through U.S. Latino Culture*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2004. Pp. xviii, 216. \$50.67, paper. ISBN 0-13-017926-4. Workbook. \$24.00, paper. ISBN 0-13-110924-3. Student Video CD-ROM. (0-13-140984-0), \$20.00.

The refreshing purpose of *Somos vecinos* is to lead fourth-semester Spanish students through a socio-cultural approach to U.S. Latino culture, elaborating cultural traditions, tracing historical events and migration, debunking stereotypes, and enabling students to use Spanish for creative self-expression and critical thinking (pp. xiii-xiv). Interviews with U.S. Latinos form the core of authentic material from which the grammar and vocabulary of each chapter derive.

The authors explain that students typically know famous Latinos, but they are not likely to encounter Sammy Sosa or Salma Hayek in their everyday lives (p. xiii). Instead, students in today's United States will meet and interact with Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cuban Americans, and Americans of other Latino groups. In each *Somos vecinos* chapter, students meet six to eight U.S. Latinos: a four-year-old child, teenagers, youthful members of manual and professional labor forces, and grandmothers. Each has an intensely interesting personal life story that will capture student interest and that reveals the rich fabric of the role of Latinos in U.S. history and culture.

Following a preliminary chapter orienting students to U.S. Latino culture and the book's interviewing procedures, the six chapters are organized around themes: academics, senior citizens, young people, artists, laborers, and professionals. Each chapter contains three major sections: "Encuentros," "Estructuras," and "Destrezas." In each "Encuentros" section, students meet a Latino who narrates his or her life story in one or two pages. Vocabulary contained in the person's narration and additional related words are listed and practiced. A second authentic selection from a newspaper, the popular press, or a literary work explores cultural aspects related to the initial narrative. Students then meet three more Latinos whose life stories provide additional perspectives. Pre- and postreading, comprehension, and discussion activities accompany each section, in which students are asked to think creatively about the issues faced by the people they have met, developing and defending hypotheses and what-if scenarios. Photographs of the Latinos narrators show them in actual life circumstances and form a unifying thread across these sections of the chapters.

The next section, "Estructuras," consists of an English-language explanation and contextualized practice of a primary grammatical structure, found in the "Encuentros" section, that is typically troubling to intermediate students (e.g., pronouns, preterit/imperfect, *por/para*, future/conditional, present/past subjunctive, and if-clauses). The *Workbook* contains additional practice and related supporting grammar explanations.

The last section, "Destrezas," contains a writing task, a video presentation, and another literary selection accompanied by writing strategies, and pre- and postviewing and reading activities. The often poignant literary selections by authors such as Gustavo Pérez Firmat, Sandra Cisneros, and Sabine Ulibarri are followed by a composition task in which students review themes across the chapter or respond with their perspectives on issues such as bicultural traditions, migration, genocide, and individual responsibility. In the culminating task of the chapter, students conduct an interview with a Latino in their community (e.g., in ch. 6, on professionals, students interview a professional Latino). For students unable to conduct interviews in their own communities, the authors provide virtual interviews on the student CD-ROM.

In addition to the textbook and workbook, the program contains a student CD-ROM, an instructor's video, and a companion Web site. The program comes alive with the video selections on