

Integrated computer help to conjugate Spanish verbs

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Thanks to the Technology Fellowship from the Associated Colleges of the South and the help of the Academic Technology Center at the University of the South, we were able to create a web-based program to conjugate verbs for foreign languages courses.

The program was written during the summer of 2003, together with the design and interactive aspect of the program. Also an extensive database of Spanish verbs was installed during the summer so that AVISPA could be used during the fall.

During the fall semester of 2003, we added more verbs to the main database of AVISPA. We were also time testing the program with seven different classes/sections that formed two different courses (Spanish 103 and Spanish 104), both of them targeted at beginning Spanish students. The testing is still going during the Spring semester, with the same group of students plus one more advance class.

The interactive interface of the program is totally completed. This is the aspect of AVISPA that is viewed by the students when they do their work. They can see the assigned homework, past present and future; they can see if they have completed their assignments or not, and when they are doing the drills they can see how they are doing and the progress in the material.

This interactive interface is ascetically pleasing; we have experimented with colors so that students can automatically see if their work is done or not (green is done, yellow needs to be done, red not finished on time).

The administrative side of the program is almost finished; there are only two more sections that need to be completed and both of them deal with statistics. The program has three levels of access;

- * the Student

- * the Administrator: any professor teaching a class that involves the use of Avispa,

- * the Super administrator who controls everything.

The Administrators have the power to increase the database, make corrections to it, create their own drills, and generally have control over their own classes and students. They can also see what other Administrators have done, and they can share drills.

The Super administrator controls all aspects of AVISPA including the administration of the faculty group, and over statistical functions of the program. Right now only two persons have that rank: myself and my computer "guru" Greg Banwarth. We have created a demonstration of AVISPA that may be viewed online at this address: <http://avispa.sewanee.edu/DEMO/demo.php> The program was created using PHP and MySQL. After we refine and adequately test the program, we will share AVISPA with language departments in other institutions who need an online tool to create their own databases of conjugations for use as drill exercises for beginning language students.

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