



## Materials Review

*Film Strip: Asi Son Los Mexicanos I* (E M C Corporation, 180 East Sixth Street, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101), six full-color filmstrips with accompanying tapes or cassettes; six Student Activity Booklets and a Teacher's Guide. Price, \$88. (Additional student booklets available.)

*Asi Son Los Mexicanos I* is a multi-media approach for introducing language and culture to the beginning Spanish student. The program consists of six filmstrips and corresponding dual-track tapes. Track I presents lively cultural topics which accompany the frames of the filmstrip under the headings of *Dialogo*, *Lectura*, and *Rincon de Cultura*. Track II places emphasis on student practice and includes the dialogue, pronunciation exercises, and varied oral exercises based on the grammar presented.

Workbooks accompany the program and allow the student to follow the recorded material in written form. These also include a summary of pertinent grammar, written exercises, vocabulary and a *Rincon de Diversion*, consisting of crossword puzzles, rhymes, tongue-twisters, etc. The teacher's manual serves as an answer key and supplies additional background notes to the cultural topics.

The success of much of this program centers on the student's ability to memorize a fairly long dialogue. The dialogue serves not only as the model for the syntactic pattern in the oral exercises, but also as an introduction to a theme later repeated in the *Lecturas*. It is, therefore, essential that the student have complete control of the dialogues if he is to absorb the grammatical patterns and more fully comprehend the subsequent readings. The difficult task of dialogue memorization is facilitated by the visual cues shown on the filmstrip. In some cases, however, the semantic content of the dialogue is only vaguely related to corresponding filmstrip frames, giving the student few if any clues. Perhaps ideograms, or some similar technique, would have been a more effective aid to student recall, especially for abstract ideas which are difficult to capture in action photographs.

The grammar presentation in the Student Workbook is somewhat limited. Subject pronouns are the only pronominal forms covered; the presentation of verbal systems is limited to the present tense of regular verbs and commands. Grammatical constructions used in the *Rincon de Cultura*, however, are more sophisticated and are directed to the intermediate student. An English version is provided for the beginner.

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The most appealing aspect of the program is the varied cultural information presented in the *Lectura* and *Rincon de Cultura*. Topics range from such activities as shopping in open-air markets, "De Compras en Mexico", to the historical, social, and geographical realities of the country—"Las civilizaciones indias", "La composicion racial de Mexico", "Las regiones de Mexico". Through these filmstrips with their helpful background notes, the student will meet many delightful Mexican types including the ubiquitous shoeshine boy and the colorful *charro*. He will become well-acquainted with poor neighborhoods and narrow streets as well as with luxurious homes with their typically lush gardens and surrounding walls. The color photography is excellent and the filmstrip frames and narration are well correlated.

As an introduction to Mexican culture, *Asi Son Los Mexicanos I* will capture and maintain student interest. Through the *Dialogo*, the presentation of syntactic pattern is well-integrated with the cultural materials.

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*on the Teaching  
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