Our mission is to empower students, teachers and professionals with the command and the understanding of Spanish as a Second Language in order to broaden their personal and professional skillset and flourish in an increasingly global and multilingual environment.

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It was back in 1988 when a small publishing house dedicated to Spanish as a foreign language opened its doors in Madrid. That was the time when teachers and researchers began to demand more communication in Spanish-language classes, and this publisher’s first materials brought innovative ideas and a breath of fresh air into the classroom. The first name of the publishing house was Difusión, and its surname was Centro de Investigación y Publicaciones de Español.

Since then, Difusión has become the best-known and the most internationally recognized Spanish publisher, and has accompanied thousands of teachers and students of Spanish around the world. Throughout the years, our goals have been to grasp the needs of teachers and learners, provide them with tools that are useful, effective and up-to-date, and support their training. In 2018 alone we’ve trained over 15,000 teachers with our professional development seminars, online and training, held in the United States and in the rest of the world.

Fruit of our labor are the more than 200 titles that make up our catalog. They range from materials for children and teenagers to higher education programs.

In recent years, we’ve been contacted by many teachers who work in a wide variety of educational contexts in the US. They have told us about their needs and those of their students, and they asked for innovative materials that respond to the new challenges of teaching Spanish in this country. We’ve talked with them about learning, communication, culture, about recognizing the value of Spanish and Hispanics in the USA.

After listening to teachers, exchanging experiences and perspectives, we have learned a lot about what it means to teach Spanish in the US today. This is why we are proud to present two new programs:

- **Alba y Gael**, designed for children aged 7-11 years.
- **Proyectos**, an introductory Spanish course for students in Higher Education.

In the creation of both programs, we’ve been guided by both the Can-Do Statements for language and the Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication in order to develop Communication standards and learners’ Intercultural Communicative Competence. However, without doubt the fundamental factor in creating these programs has been the authorship and guidance of the teachers in the United States who have given us their talent, their experience, their vision and their help.

Thanks to all of you!
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**I Seminario desarrollo profesional, Difusión-AATSP Minnesota.**
November 11, 2017

**I Seminario desarrollo profesional de profesores de español para niños, Difusión-Instituto Cervantes de Nueva York.**
May 12, 2018

**100th Annual AATSP Conference, Salamanca.**
June 25-28, 2018

**II Seminario desarrollo profesional, Difusión-AATSP Minnesota**
November 3, 2018

**ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), New Orleans.**
November 16-18, 2018

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ALBA Y GAEL was designed to comply with World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages:

Communicate in Spanish: Communication is at the heart of ALBA Y GAEL’s pedagogical approach. The ultimate goal is for students to acquire communication skills, and ALBA Y GAEL exposes students to real-life experiences to practice the three modes of communication: interpersonal, interpretative and presentational.

Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures: Culture is present throughout all units. The main characters are a girl from Spain: Alba, and a boy from Mexico: Gael. They share stories and experiences from their own cultures and come across other cultures as well.

Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information: Connection is a key element in ALBA Y GAEL. Students establish connections with other disciplines and reinforce what they have already learned. Mathematics, arts, music, social studies, science among other subjects and topics, are part of children’s experiences who learn Spanish with ALBA Y GAEL.

Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture: ALBA Y GAEL’s family and friends introduce children to the diversity of the Spanish-speaking world. In this way, children begin to have a deeper understanding into their own culture and language while learning to value different Spanish-speaking cultures and varieties within the Spanish language.

Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home & Around the World: ALBA Y GAEL has been created for learners who will be part of multilingual and multicultural communities in a global society. For this reason, ALBA Y GAEL offers activities that connect language learners with the world outside the classroom.

How does ALBA Y GAEL accomplish all of this?

• Providing a Spanish language curriculum designed exclusively for children’s Spanish language learning.
• Exploring different topics of interest for children, which engage students in a deeper and more meaningful way.
• Introducing hands-on activities and musical experiences from an intercultural perspective.
• Proposing engaging activities that foster learning, creativity, and cooperation.
• Presenting materials like posters, text, audios, and videos of excellent quality to attract students’ attention.
• Scaffolding students’ learning by offering numerous lexical and grammatical support from simple to complex.
• Incorporating Visual Grammar, a new didactic approach to learning grammar.
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UNIDAD 2

El cumpleaños de Gael

Chapter Introduction
The commitment to cultural diversity that Alba y Gael offers is motivating. In my school, children come from different cultural backgrounds and as they follow along the characters’ experiences in a meaningfully engaging way, their curiosity for learning more about Spanish speaking countries grows.

Karina Bustamante
International School of Brooklyn.
Advisor, Alba y Gael
PROYECTOS

Introductory Spanish course

PROYECTOS is a program aimed at North American college and university novice-low through intermediate-high students of Spanish. Its innovative perspective continues and reinforces project and task-based approaches.

The main purpose is to stimulate students to construct knowledge activating explorative and expansive learning. The Spanish classroom and course become a both a laboratory and a factory of ideas and real projects.

What are the most relevant features of PROYECTOS?

- **Intercultural competence** to develop critical thinking on Latin America, Spain and Hispanic presence in the USA from a multidimensional, contemporary, and inclusive perspective free from stereotypes.

- It presents a groundbreaking content and language integration. Students use the language in scenarios relatable to their own academic experience blended with Hispanic cultural components.

- Students are motivated to act and create in Spanish always with explicit reflection on the language: phonetics and intonation, vocabulary, grammar, and discourse.

- Repertoires of content and language are not closed: they are constructed by the students, who are encouraged to use digital tools available in contemporary communications.

- It offers a wide range of authentic and current documents that will inspire college students.

- Didactic materials allow flipped classroom dynamics, thus optimizing class-time management. Students can prepare independently before coming to class to maximize cooperation with the group.
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Proyectos Documentos para empezar

Proyectos Section Culturas
INTERVIEW WITH AUTHORS

What are the main new challenges in teaching Spanish in colleges in the United States?

Javier: Spanish in the United States is not a foreign language anymore. Traditional Spanish courses were focused almost exclusively in gaining linguistic and communicative competence. I believe that new Spanish curricula should include communicative and sociocultural competence as well as academic competence to develop skills that will allow learners to delve into further fields of knowledge. Proyectos adopts this principle because it’s based on language and content integration, one of the biggest challenges in the teaching of L2.

Do you think that instructional materials meet these new teaching needs in the United States?

Francisco: Our college students are increasingly demanding and expect a more personalized learning experience. For this reason, materials and cultural components must be attractive for our diverse students which often includes heritage speakers. The traditional concept of instructional materials or courses is in crisis and subject to a thorough revision. Didactic tools are increasingly versatile. We need more accessible teaching aids, more diverse classrooms, and more receptive instructors. With all this in mind, Proyectos comes to life, with the purpose of offering options to learn without being imposed a rigid model.

What are the main advantages and disadvantages in the use of new technologies in the teaching of Spanish L2?

Javier: A piece of chalk or a computer can be equally effective or useless, it all depends on the goal. Sometimes we are tempted to overuse technology and we may end up overlooking its real value. In my understanding, digital tools are increasingly useful as long as they help create knowledge. If we limit their use just to consume knowledge the potential technology will be wasted. Project-based instruction in Proyectos, is a good example of a wise use of these technologies.

What do you enjoy the most about teaching culture in your Spanish classes?

Fernando: Using the language as a means to share the richness of my culture and heritage, and in turn, learning about the cultural customs of my students. Why don’t they kiss on the cheek when they greet each other? Why are they so strict with their time? Or why do we show more affection when we greet each other, or why are we so relaxed when it comes to time schedules? Because of this interconnectedness, teaching a foreign language fosters a wider perspective on the world on the learners. Proyectos is a course that offers students insights which reach beyond the classroom walls. Teaching to speak a new language also means teaching to behave in another language. It means fostering an appreciation of difference. It means accepting that there isn’t only one way to approach a given situation. This can have a positive impact on many different areas of students’ lives, professionally and personally.

With all the distractions of college life, how can we possibly capture our students’ attention?

Fernando: If our students are actively participating and feeling challenged, they will more likely be interested in the lesson. Taking that into account, Proyectos uses a lot of task-based learning activities and self-discovery activities. For example, it gives students some target language in context, such as a reading or listening. Then, students in small groups identify the differences and decipher the grammar rules. Once they grasp the concept, they practice by creating their own personal examples, so as to solidify their understanding. In this way, lessons are very student-centered, the students themselves uncover the grammar rules and lead the discussions, rather than the instructor lecturing the entire class period.

Before we finish, any recommendation for instructors of Spanish who read this interview?

Francisco: First thing I would recommend is to be on the side of the learner. Positioning ourselves as teachers beyond our own interests or our institution’s interests is a very healthy practice. Sometimes we are controlled by routine and beliefs without reflecting on what we do in our classes and why we do it. Continuous education and reflection on our own teaching experiences are crucial.

Fernando: As language instructors, we have the responsibility of creating citizens of the world, not just a competent Spanish speaker. We should tackle a wide variety of issues in our classrooms—from international stereotypes to regional culinary delights—to stimulate our students’ curiosity about life outside their town, state or college. If we are able to touch our students’ lives in this way, it makes it worth all the effort and energy we put into our teaching.
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