

**Chase, Robert O. and Clarisa B. Medina de Chase. *An Introduction to Spanish for Health Care Workers*.**

**New Haven: Yale UP, 2003. ISBN 0-300-09715-8. Includes a CD-ROM.**

The fact that *An Introduction to Spanish for Health Care Workers* by Robert O. Chase and Clarisa B. Medina de Chase is in its second edition is sufficient proof of its success. Printed on non-glossy paper so that students do not have to contend with a “glare” when studying outdoors or indoors, this book is a beginning course that combines grammar and essential vocabulary in context for medical personnel. It is specifically written for people with little or no training in Spanish, so students learn essential skills such as taking a medical history, understanding patient concerns and building rapport with patients, as well as other crucial topics, including pharmacotherapy, diet, nutrition and diagnoses. There are even sections on dentistry, mental health, maternity, and safe sex. The authors sequence material in a logical fashion and open each chapter with clearly stated objectives as to what

students can expect to learn. While explaining important grammatical points and introducing critical vocabulary, the authors do not overwhelm students with information. Instead, chapters are of appropriate length, and the authors further facilitate learning and bolster student confidence through the presentation of cognates. Covering most of the medical encounters that practitioners will have, this very thorough book is most suitable for a year-long course; it could serve in a one-semester course, too (but only if the instructor is very selective).

Adopting the communicative approach, creative and engaging interactional activities effectively assist students in reinforcing the grammar and vocabulary that they are learning in contextual settings. These innovative and instructive activities include role-playing, dialogs, Jeopardy-like games, and many others. Furthermore, these well-designed activities can serve instructors who teach Spanish courses at the introductory level to non-medical students as well. Helpful icons easily distinguish among exercises, activities, and review material. In addition, interspersed reading practice activities, some with comprehension questions, serve to measure students' increasing proficiency.

Although the masculine form of adjectives and nouns systematically comes first, as it does in the listing of subject pronouns, with no variation from chapter to chapter (as in most texts), the authors consistently include feminine equivalents. The book is inclusive, too, in its illustrations that depict people of different ages, races and genders, and in various roles. Also, explanations throughout are clear and concise; for example, the authors compare object pronouns to "stunt persons" (109), so that students may visualize the variability of their positioning. Certainly it is understandable that the text does not include the pronouns *vos* and *vosotros* for students to learn as they conjugate verbs, yet a note about their existence seems important for practitioners who may encounter these forms. Some chapter vocabulary notes do include helpful and practical colloquial lexical variations and pronunciations. In addition, new vocabulary used in illustrative sentences allows students to see words in context, thereby helping them to learn the terms in a more meaningful way. The text includes a "Learning Check" section for use in the classroom or as self-tests, homework, or quizzes. Instructors may be pleased that there is no accompanying Answer Key. The inclusion of a CD with the text ensures that students have exposure to native speakers. The CD comes in a plastic pocket affixed to the back inside cover so that it slips into place for easy access and storage. A compact disc icon indicates when students are to listen to the audio program. The printed Audio Program Script may also be a useful aid to students.

Interesting and informative cultural notes are a wonderful feature of the text. Indeed, they address head-on the question of prejudice. The authors underscore that Spanish-speaking people may face discrimination due to language, race, and legal status. These thought-provoking notes teach the customs, beliefs, attitudes, and condition of Spanish-speaking peoples in this country.

The book also features appendices on the Spanish alphabet, and irregular and stem-changing verbs, as well as a glossary that, quite unexpectedly, appears after Appendix 2, rather than at the end of the book. In summary, this is an excellent, well-planned, thoughtful first-year book that offers a solid foundation in medical

Spanish, especially to those students who are not comfortable with a lot of text-tied technology. Because there is no color photography or separate workbook, it is most likely a cost-effective choice as well.

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