

PerfecTIC

General description	
Title	Using songs to learn a language
Learning goals	Read, understand, and explain the words of a song in a second or foreign language
Summary	<p>After listening to all the songs in class that their teacher has prepared using Cantare, students choose a song for their term project. The software allows them not only to listen to the song, but also to read the lyrics in synchronization with the music, to listen repeatedly to a particular passage, to get definitions for certain words or expressions, and to practise singing the song either with or without the lyrics displayed. At the end of term, they must present their song to the class using the language under study (theme, style of music, singer or group, or any other relevant information). Another variation could be to ask the students to sing the song with the music in the background but without seeing the words.</p>
Duration	<p>For the teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• About 30 minutes per song <p>For the students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• After class, about 5 or 10 minutes of listening per song and 2 hours of preparation for their presentation• In class, about 10 minutes per student for their oral presentation
Technological skill required	<p>By the teacher and the students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic working knowledge of a PC or Macintosh computer
Material needed	<p>By the teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Macintosh or PC computer with 32 MB of RAM, equipped with a CD-ROM drive, a color monitor, and a sound card, either freely accessed in a college computer lab or at home.• <i>Cantare</i> software (Teacher Module)• A CD-ROM containing songs with lyrics in the language under study

Advantages of using ICT

By the students:

- Macintosh or PC computer with 32 MB of RAM, equipped with a CD-ROM drive, a color monitor, and a sound card, either freely accessed in a college computer lab or at home.
- *Cantare* software (Student Module)
- (Optional) Several diskettes to install the songs prepared by their teacher using *Cantare* on their personal computer
- (Optional) Recordings of the songs chosen by the teacher
- (Optional) Earphones

Most young people love music, even if the words are in a foreign language, and with *Cantare*, language teachers can offer learning activities that capitalize on this natural predisposition.

Of course, you don't need software to get the lyrics of a song; most of the time, you can find them in the CD case. But thanks to *Cantare*, students can listen to songs line by line, play parts over and over as often as they like, consult an integrated dictionary, and lastly, make the connection between what they are hearing and the words that appear on the screen. As the lines of lyrics scroll on the screen, students will certainly have a great deal of fun trying to sing them, just like a karaoke song, and this gives them excellent practice in pronunciation.

Step-by-step sequence

Preliminary pedagogical preparation

By the teacher, before the beginning of term:

- Choose a certain number of songs in the language under study; the lyrics must be clear and not too difficult for the language level of the students.
- For each song, choose the words and expressions that will make up the integrated dictionary.
- Write short, general notes about the song.

By the students:

- None

Preliminary technical preparation

By the teacher, before the beginning of term:

- Have the *Cantare* teacher module installed on the computer which will be used to prepare the activity.
- Have the *Cantare* student module installed on the college intranet or on the computers in the lab
- Make reservations for a stereo system or a computer for the class periods during which students will present their songs.

By the teacher, before the beginning of term, for each song:

- Using the *Cantare* teacher module, transcribe the song's lyrics, prepare the dictionary, synchronize the music with the lyrics, write short, general notes about the song, and save everything in a file with a designated name. (N.B. These steps are described clearly in the software Help.)
- Place the created file on the college intranet or on each of the computers in the lab (or ask a technician to do this for you).
- If necessary, place several copies of the CD containing the song on reserve at the loan counter.

By the students:

- Install the student module of *Cantare* in their personal computer.
- Install the songs prepared using *Cantare* by the teacher on their PC. These files can be copied from a diskette or downloaded from the Internet.

Step 1 (10 minutes)

At the beginning of term, the teacher:

- explains to the students that, near the end of term, they will have to present the lyrics of a song (chosen from a proposed list) to the class using the language under study;
- explains to the students how to use *Cantare* either in the college computer lab or at home;
- (optional) specifies the marks awarded for this activity as well as the correction criteria used.

Step 2 (5 to 10 minutes of listening for each song and 2 hours to prepare the oral presentation)

During the term, the students individually:

- listen to and read the lyrics of all the songs that the teacher has prepared using *Cantare* and choose one of them for their oral presentation;
- listen to and read the lyrics of the chosen song as often as needed, either in a college computer lab, or at home if they have the required material.
- in the language under study, prepare an oral presentation on the chosen song (theme, style of music, singer or group, or any other relevant information).

Step 3
(10 minutes per student)

Near the end of term, the students:

- play their song to the class (a variation could be to sing their song with the music playing but without looking at the words);
- present their chosen song orally to the class in the language under study

For more information

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Main reference

Cantare (Software). Montreal: Centre collégial de développement de matériel didactique, 1999. Created by L. Froio and D. Joly. Configuration: PC or PowerMac, 32 MB of RAM, CD-ROM drive.

Suggested reference

Nil