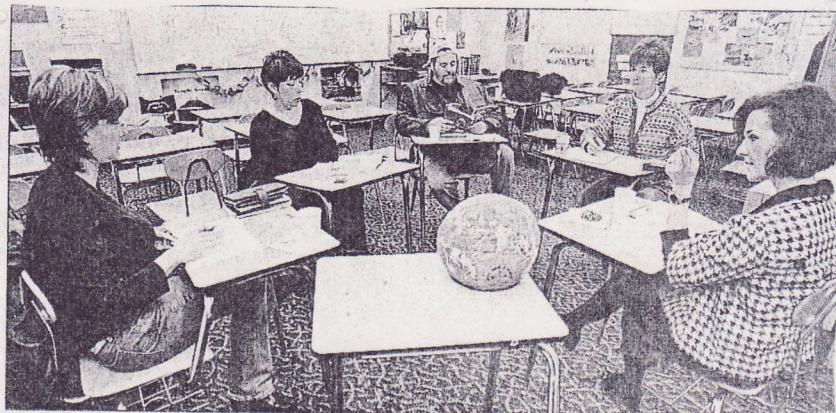


# Parents hit the books en Español



Sunnie Morris of Oxford, left, Lisa Fazioli of Oxford, Lorenzo Sollena of Rochester and Karen Stanko of Holly work with teacher Melanie Hendrick.

■ Oakland Christian School's language classes offer chance to get on the same page as their children.

By SHAWN D. LEWIS  
The Detroit News

**AUBURN HILLS** — The students in Melanie Hendrick's Spanish I class repeated the numbers from one to 12 flawlessly.

**Auburn Hills**

But when asked to turn the numbers into

a string of telephone numbers, they hesitated.

"Don't worry about it," said Hendrick, who teaches Spanish to grades 7-12 at Oakland Christian School. "You're not being graded on this."

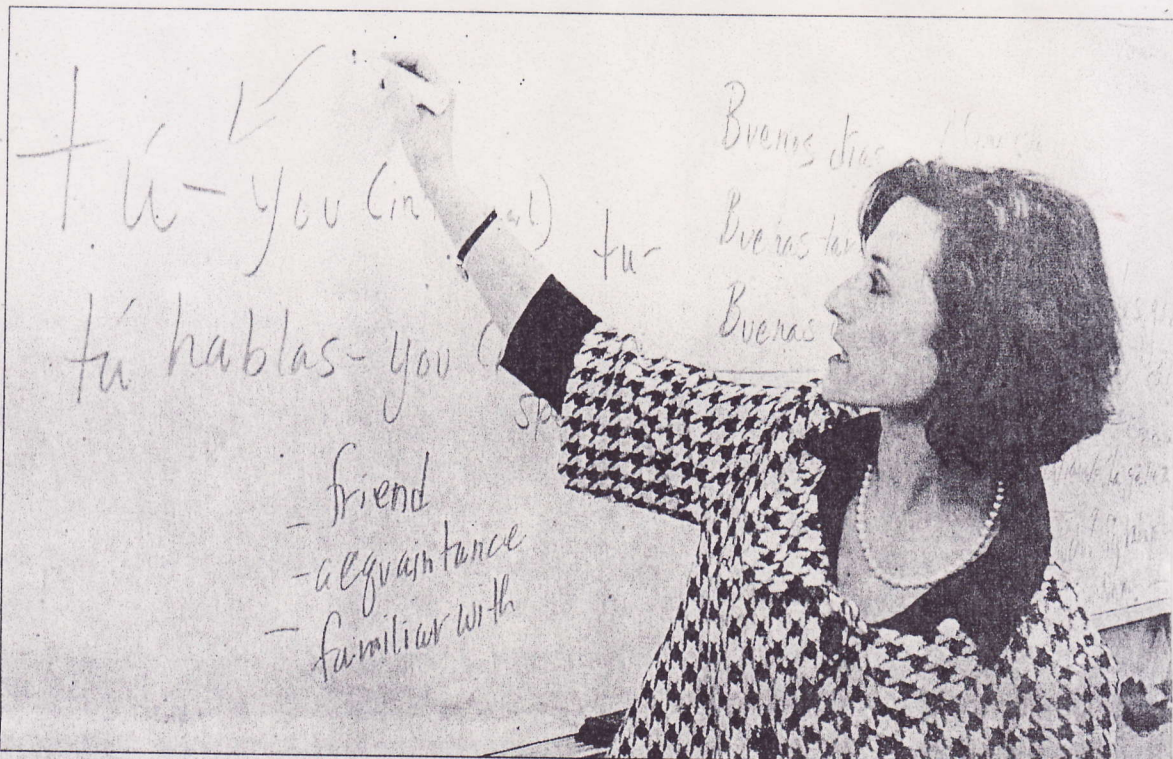
*No problema.*

These aren't ordinary students. These are parents who meet once a week to learn the language so they can help their children with their homework and practice communicating. The hour-and-a-half sessions began Jan. 15 and continue until March 13.

"I wanted to be able to communicate with my son so we can help each other out when we get stuck on a word," said Karen Stanko, 46, of Holly, whose 14-year-old, Caleb, takes Spanish at the school.

On this past Tuesday, the handful of parents snacked on homemade cookies and coffee in between learning how to conjugate "to be."

Hendrick said she hopes the class will grow in the future.



Spanish teacher Melanie Hendrick of Rochester Hills explains the finer points of Spanish at Oakland Christian School. The parents want to be able to help with homework and communicate with their kids in another language.

Photos by Ricardo Thomas / The Detroit News

"We talked about it as a family and decided since this is the second-most spoken language (in the United States), then this is the time to learn it," said Sunnie Morris, 46, of Oxford. She home-schooled all four of her children, and still teaches her 15- and 13-year-olds. She is taking the class so she can teach it to her children.

She related an incident in which

her daughter jumped into a conversation she was having with a friend in Spanish.

"I was in the parking lot of a gym the other day and greeted my friend in Spanish," she said. "My friend responded in Spanish and asked how I was doing in Spanish but I didn't hear that part and I started walking. So my daughter told me I forgot to say 'muy

bien,' (very well) and I started laughing because she was paying such close attention to my words."

Lorenzo Sollena, 51, of Rochester is taking the class, he said, to learn what his son, Lorenzo, 14, is learning.

"Spanish is one of the most prevalent languages, and everything is changing so quickly, I thought I'd better get on the bandwagon," he said.