



## How does software support learning in the home? Hear for yourself!

**Situation:** This is a transcript of a conversation between an 11 year old girl (AC) in CFY's program and her mother (Mom). They are playing Real Lives™, a computer-based life simulation and the winner of CFY's 2006 Family Learning Software Award.

For her character in the simulation, the child chooses to be a boy who lives in Barbados, the country in which her mother grew up. The child and her mother then proceed to play the game. (See final page for example screen from Real Lives™.)

A CFY staff member (**KT**), set AC and her mother up on the computer. For the most part, **KT** is out of the room during their conversation.

1 AC: Now I am going to have to pick a job because I am getting older. You should help  
2 me mommy.

3

4 Mom: Go down and let's see what the choices are. Go down, wait! That's it, there are no  
5 more choices? OK so go back and pick the one that YOU want. You have to hold it and  
6 bring it down.

7

8 AC: Which one should I pick?

9

10 Mom: OK, so what happened to doctor? Or journalist or writer? Umm let's see,  
11 domestic helper. Wow!

12

13 AC: This is a point were I have to really sit down and think about which one I want to  
14 be.

15

16 Mom: Right! and I guess it is supposed to go together with your interest. Um! Where  
17 did we see doctor, that sounds very good.

18  
19 AC: I know right, I picked that before the last time I was in Barbados. Before that last  
20 time I was a nurse in school, a school nurse.  
21  
22 Mom: So where is that choice on here?  
23  
24 AC: No, that is not here anymore, because when you pick a country, there is a few  
25 different jobs.  
26  
27 Mom: OK  
28  
29 AC: Usually they have um, you can't pick...  
30  
31 Mom: How about travel attendant, for now, since you are having such a hard time...or  
32 fashion model?  
33  
34 AC: OH! Fashion model, yeah! that is good for me.  
35  
36 Mom: OK, go ahead and finish. What are you picking now?  
37  
38 AC: Cause I could not find another job right now. (reading) You are..  
39  
40 Mom: You just picked fashion model, Mari  
41  
42 AC: I know.  
43  
44 Mom: But why did you say you that you did not find a job, if you found a job as a  
45 fashion model?  
46  
47 AC: No, I cannot find another one!  
48  
49 Mom: Oh, you are being urged to find a job so you need to find a second one, and if the  
50 second choice that we had from fashion model..  
51  
52 AC: Doctor  
53  
54 Mom: had nurse, had nurse, no click on here...click on it.  
55  
56 All: (reading) Working as a nurse is typically a women's job.  
57

58 Mom: REALLY! Typically, yes it is, (Reading) they will not accept a male. Would you  
59 like to find another job? I keep on forgetting that your character is a male.  
60  
61 AC: I know right.  
62  
63 Mom: So go to doctor...  
64  
65 AC: Go to doctor or...  
66  
67 Mom: or scientist or something. Doctor OK. (Reading) You need a post grad degree to  
68 work as a doctor. Would you like to find another job? Yes! You definitely need a post  
69 degree, yeah , definitely need to get a degree for that. Just click Mari, you are going too  
70 fast, you are not looking at the choices so go back, go back and pick that and go! Wow,  
71 so basically all your choices, you need a college degree for the really good jobs and for  
72 the jobs like domestic housewife and stuff like that you do not need a college degree, so  
73 that's a strong message! Lets see here, hmm, I know nurse you need some kind of ...  
74  
75 AC: I can't be a nurse because I am a male.  
76  
77 Mom: Listen, they have male nurses because I work with male nurses everyday!  
78  
79 AC: Well, they don't let you do it on this computer. (laughs)  
80  
81 Mom: How about college professor?  
82  
83 AC: OK, professor sounds like a good....  
84  
85 Mom: You need a post...(laughs) you need a post degree, so this is really, you really  
86 need to really pay attention to this and the message it is saying.  
87  
88 AC: I have to age a year, and then when it comes up you wanna apply for um..  
89  
90 Mom: OK lets do this, this seems rather simple, you need a college degree, REALLY!  
91 Wow that's new. I did not know you need a college degree to be a librarian.  
92  
93 AC: OK, so click that and move over.  
94  
95 Mom: So Mari, just about everything you need a college degree here.  
96  
97 AC: I know, I learned a lot now. (laughs)

98  
99 Mom: Yeah...Yeah  
100  
101 AC: That is why I like this program because.....  
102  
103 Mom: 'cause you know what, odd temporary jobs. They can't tell me that I need a  
104 college degree (reading) while you are qualified to work as temporary, you do not get a  
105 job, would you like to find another job? My goodness...  
106  
107 AC: what's wrong with me?  
108  
109 Mom: This is really real life because, you know what? That happens out there Mari, it  
110 happens, it happens.  
111  
112 AC: And there was a time where my family...  
113  
114 Mom: Let's try this one and see.  
115  
116 AC: Mom, you know, there was a time where I played *Real Lives* and my family was  
117 poor and I had to choose to rob a bank so I could get money for my family or my family  
118 would probably die.  
119  
120 Mom: Um OK.  
121  
122 AC: And I robbed a store, and my family survived.  
123  
124 Mom: (reading) You meet a new girl named Brenda Tucker, whom you are attracted to.  
125 Would you like to get involved romantically? The first time you said yes, it said she was  
126 not interested. So we are going to say no. (reading) It's time for you to earn some  
127 money (laughs) please look for a job. Again, Oh!  
128  
129 Mom: OK. Mari ,all of these things you need some kind of secondary education, you  
130 know you really do, you need to be in college basically.  
131  
132 **KT**: I like this. Mom is taking over the mouse a little bit...  
133  
134 Mom; Oh sor....  
135  
136 **KT**: No, No, No. it's good, you're interacting.  
137

138 (laughs)  
139  
140 Mom: Nurse and you need a certified nursing...  
141  
142 AC: I am a MALE!  
143  
144 Mom: Oh, that's right!  
145  
146 AC: Oh my goodness!  
147  
148 **KT**: You can be a nurse and be male.  
149  
150 Mom: but they are rejecting us, they are saying that's typically not...  
151  
152 **KT**: Oh, in Barbados! Right!  
153  
154 Mom: Oh right! You know what? You are limited in, really limited ...  
155  
156 AC: You should know mom.  
157  
158 Mom: How about sales person? you don't need a degree...  
159  
160 **KT**: Amari, why did you choose to be a male?  
161  
162 AC: Oh! It just came up, I picked country...  
163  
164 **KT**: Um Hmm!  
165  
166 AC: and right after that it just went to...  
167  
168 Mom: and you could have changed it to female, you know?, because I think it would  
169 have been a bit easier. (Laughs)  
170  
171 AC: want to change it? I am glad I am female.  
172  
173 **KT**: You know what though, save this life. OK? So we have this one.  
174  
175 Mom: how do you save it?  
176  
177 **KT**: OK cancel, then go to "save," to "life," and then go to "save," "save as," and then

178 you, "Amari" or something so I know it's you and your mom. And then you can make a  
179 new one as a girl. She [AC] always plays girl. I've never seen her play boy before.

180

181 (Mom and KT Laugh)

182

183 Mom: OK, you want to find another country, we don't have to be in Barbados.

184

185 AC: No, I want to be in Barbados, I just want to be a female, please! OK, I should be my  
186 name , that's surname, is just like...

187

188 All: Last name.

189

190 Mom: OK Mary, Mary is a female, or you can choose another one, go down.

191

192 AC: There's Mary.

193

194 Mom: You are going to fast, Mari.

195

196 AC: (Laughs) Andrea Campbell, Andrea Parker.

197

198 Mom: Whatever, Mari. Andrea Carter, how about Carter?

199

200 AC: Oh, I didn't even see that. Yay! all right.

201

202 Mom: OH wait not Spightsou, ah I like St. James, or Bridgetown, either one. It went  
203 back to Mary Smith.

204

205 AC: I already clicked it. (Mumbles)

206

207 Mom: Father is Sean, Hmmm, I don't think I would pick a Sean. St. James Barbados, I  
208 love St. James.

209

210 AC: OK now lets age...

211

212 Mom: Look how small Barbados is on the whole map. It's like a tiny little dot, it is really  
213 very small. It only has 11 parishes, which is like Boroughs here, like you would say  
214 Bronx, Manhattan and Queens. It's like 11 of those and St. James is one of them.

215

216 AC: (reading) Your sister Betty has Epilepsy.

217

218 Mom: what is Epilepsy?  
219  
220 AC: Let's learn more. Epilepsy is...  
221  
222 Mom: It's a seizure. It's the nerve cells, is misfiring in the brain and it causes you to  
223 have all these different jerks and sensations.  
224  
225 AC: Oh, like that.  
226  
227 Mom: Yeah, combustionis.  
228  
229 AC: Oh, that's happened to me before.  
230  
231 Mom: No it has not.  
232  
233 AC: No, not in real life. You have Measles. Wow!  
234  
235 Mom: OH NO!  
236  
237 AC: (reading) Measles is a contagious disease...  
238  
239 AC & Mom (reading together): ...that is found throughout the world. It is caused by a  
240 virus and is spread by breathing in the virus after someone sneezes, coughs, or talks.  
241  
242 Mom: (reading) Symptoms include high fever, rash, runny nose, watery eyes and  
243 coughing. Approximately one million people die from measles due to complication of  
244 brain inflammation, Pneumonia, diarrhea, or combustionis. About one in 20 people in  
245 Mary's age group, sex and social economic class in Latin American comes down with  
246 Measles each year. Calculated estimate based on sources, blah blah blah. Oh you have  
247 whooping cough. Wow you are a sick, sick woman. You're sick! They got you with all  
248 kinds of diseases in Barbados.  
249  
250 AC:(Laughs)  
251  
252 Mom: Whooping cough is also called Proctitous. It is an infection of the respiratory trap,  
253 which is very contagious and can be dangerous. (mumbles)... also produces chemicals  
254 that damage inflame the airways. Symptoms include, cold light symptoms, please give  
255 way to prolong, productive coughing. And coughing that can go on a long time  
256 causing the sufferer to gasp for air usually making a whooping sound. Oh, that's why  
257 it's called Whooping Cough.

258  
259 Mom: Complication include Pneumonia, seizures, and brain damage. The disease is  
260 treated with antibiotics. A vaccine provides immunity that fades in several years. About  
261 one in every 17 people in Mary's age group, sex, and social economic class, in Latin  
262 American comes down with that each year.

263  
264 AC: Didn't I get Measles when I was 4 years old?

265  
266 Mom: Yeah. Oh man! OK! So far we have measles and Whooping cough.

267  
268 (Laugh together)

269  
[FAST FORWARD TO FINAL COMMENTS]

KT: (laughs) So, I am going to have to take you guys back down stairs soon, because they are starting to go now, but do you have any questions...?

Mom: I like it, I like it , I like it because it reinforces school, it reinforces the importance of getting a good education. Every field that we went to for a job, you HAD to be in college.

# Screen shot of Real Lives™

**Real Lives - Mary Carter**

Life Edit Actions View Help

Age A Year Revert to Age

Political Society Health WW/W

**Barbados**  
 Pop: 277,000 PR: 1 Corr: 5  
 Cur: Barbados dollar CL: 1 GSS: 2

**Diary**

**0 years old**  
 I was born a girl in the town of St. James in Barbados.

My parents have named me Mary. My surname is Carter. My mother, Michelle, is 26 and my father, Jonathan, is 20. I have no brothers or sisters.

**1 year old**  
**2 years old**  
 My mother has had malaria.

**3 years old**  
**4 years old**  
**5 years old**  
**6 years old**  
 Began school.

**Home**

Home - St. James, Barbados

**Mary's Personal Data**

Happiness	76
Intelligence	73
Artistic	77
Musical	62
Athletic	50
Strength	50
Endurance	50
Appearance	81
Conscience	59
Wisdom	17
Income vs Nation	
Income vs World	
Diet	Adequate
Home	Simple
Safe Water	Yes
Public Sanitation	Yes
Medical Care	Yes
Televisions	1
Radios	1
Telephones	1
Cars	1
Formal Education	0 years
Language	Bajan (creole English)
Religion	Anglican

**Real Lives**

You have begun school this year.

OK Less Info

About 78% of children in Barbados attend primary school. 75% of girls and 75% of boys finish secondary school. Literacy is 99% for females and 99% for males.  
 Source: Encyclopædia Britannica CD 1999 . (c) 1994-1999 Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

**Mary's Family**

The Carter household	Age	Health	Resistance	Health Problems	Profession	Monthly Income	Monthly Expenses	Net Worth (Barbados dollars)
Michelle (mother)	32	77	83		shoemaker	1,320		
Jonathan (father)	26	29	15	Chagas' disease	freight handler	1,040		
Mary (self - female)	6	93	100			0		
<b>Household</b>						<b>2,360</b>	<b>2,368</b>	<b>32,428</b>

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