ASSIGNMENT ONE. The Time Travel Story: A Branching Narrative

Description of final application:
This interactive narrative, created in Macromedia Director, tells the story of a protagonist who finds herself in a jam. Unable to escape the predicament with her current knowledge and resources, she hops into her handy-dandy time machine and chooses one of the six options presented to her. Arriving in an alternative time and place, she finds herself confronted with a choice between two possible paths. One path leads to a place that contains two objects, one of which may solve her problems, the other which could be deadly in its implications. However, if she chooses the other path, she must confront a villainous character who might harm her, or this character might have some insight or possession that proves to be the panacea she's been looking for. Out of these four possible outcomes, only one or two in each time travel destination offers success; the others bring dismal consequences.

Narrative Morphemes:
• Protagonist in a jam without apparent or immediate solution
• Time travel control panel with list of six places and dates
• Time period locale with two doors/entrances/paths
• Result of one door/entrance/path: 2 objects
• Result of other door/entrance/path: confrontational character
• End result #1: protagonist with unhappy face and red ‘X’ superimposed over face
• End result #2: protagonist happily out of jam (solution ambiguous)

Preparatory work (due September 1):
Four people will turn in three images of a protagonist (protagonist in a jam, end result #1, end result #2—as described above). The other members of the class will turn in images from a particular time and place (“fork in the road,” space with two objects, confrontational character—as described above) all adhering to one of the following themes (or one of your own choosing):

1950s United States Atlanta, 2000 Plymouth Rock
Feudal Japan Los Angeles, 1980s Victorian England
Medieval Europe Berkeley, 1968 Roaring 20s
Egyptian Dinosaur age Mars, 2075

Image Format:
All images should be 640 by 430 (leaving room for a 50-pixel text box at the bottom) in any image format accepted by Director (jpeg preferred). Put the images in a folder titled with either the name of your protagonist or the place and date of your time travel destination. Include a “Created by...” tag in the Comments section of the Folder’s General Information (Command I) so we can find out who made the cool graphics and who made the sucky ones.

Scripting Assignment (due September 8):
Choose one of the four protagonists and six of the twelve time travel destinations. String together the images adding text in a text box at the bottom of the screen (or on separate screens between images) to construct a story that makes (some) sense. You will have to construct your own image of a time travel machine control panel (or hand-operated time transporter) with buttons for each of the six destination options you have chosen. Make buttons that allow the user to make choices between branches of the narrative (as described above—“choose one of the objects”... “attack or flatter the confrontational character”). You may wish to include a “try again” button at the end of an unsuccessful branch of the narrative. The images that stay the same regardless of which destination is chosen should be in the internal cast. You should have an additional cast for each of the six travel destinations. Each travel destination should utilize the exact same ordering of sprites on the score. Choosing a travel destination will switch out which cast is referred to by sprites on the score. All scripts must be commented. Turn in the final project to the partition with your name on it and document one of your project’s scripting innovations or triumphs on the coweb for an extra point.
Lingo Basics
* O'Reilly-Lingo 3-112
Julius 31-97
Demyst 7 283-355
Grace 63-119
Sorcery N/A
Callery 117-136

Casts
O'Reilly-Lingo 443
Sorcery N/A
Grace N/A
*Demyst 7 519-526
*O'Reilly-Director 129-132
Julius N/A
Callery 31-32

Custom Menus
*O'Reilly-Director 471-482
O'Reilly-Lingo N/A
Grace 192-212 (learning through a specific example)
Sorcery 277-289 (advanced)
Demyst 7 444-447, 952 (limited information)
Julius 211-218

Helpful Lingo
the castLibNum of sprite 1
the filename of castLib (for external casts)
castLib "Egypt"
castLib 5
the number of castLib "Egypt"
the name of castLib 1 (for its name as set in Modify > Movie > Casts)
set the filename of castLib "career" to the moviePath&"thirdcast.cst"
member 5 of castLib 10
the checkMark of menuItem "Atlanta, 2000" of menu "Choose Destination"
the enabled of menuItem "Confrontation" of menu "Return to…"
installMenu "Choose Destination"
installMenu ()
if the platform starts “Windows” then

Addendum
• See additional Lingo added to “Helpful Lingo” above and additional page numbers for information on Custom Menus.
• There will only be three protagonists to choose from (rather than four).
• Using internal/external casts will affect what Lingo you use to switch the casts.
• Instead of a “try again” button, you may wish to have a customized menu that allows the user to return to the time machine, or to a previous point of branching within the same destination. In this case, you may want to experiment with the check-marking function available within Lingo-created menus. You can even enable and disable items in the menu as the user progresses through the narrative (e.g., the menu can maintain a list of places the user has been and can return to). Or you might consider having two different menus, one for each platform (since some menu functions are not cross-platform). In other words, you would check the property “the platform” at the start of the movie and install a different menu depending on the result of this query. At the very least, you MUST have a customized menu that allows the user to quit.