

L3 Interactive's

SLOPESTYLE

Reviewed by Scott Brown

Everything about L3 Interactive titles are a little different. No doubt this originates with the company itself. L3 Interactive gets its name from its main programming interaction device, a cube. L3 stands for Learning Cube.

With a cube as a metaphor, L3 Interactive has decided to produce an abundance of titles that do nothing but teach--but that they do very well. The first title from L3 was *Mathemagics* where professor Arthur Benjamin demonstrated how easy and fun manipulating numbers could be. After that sort of beginning, we should expect a second title on physics, biology, or even computers, but not L3, they went snowboarding.



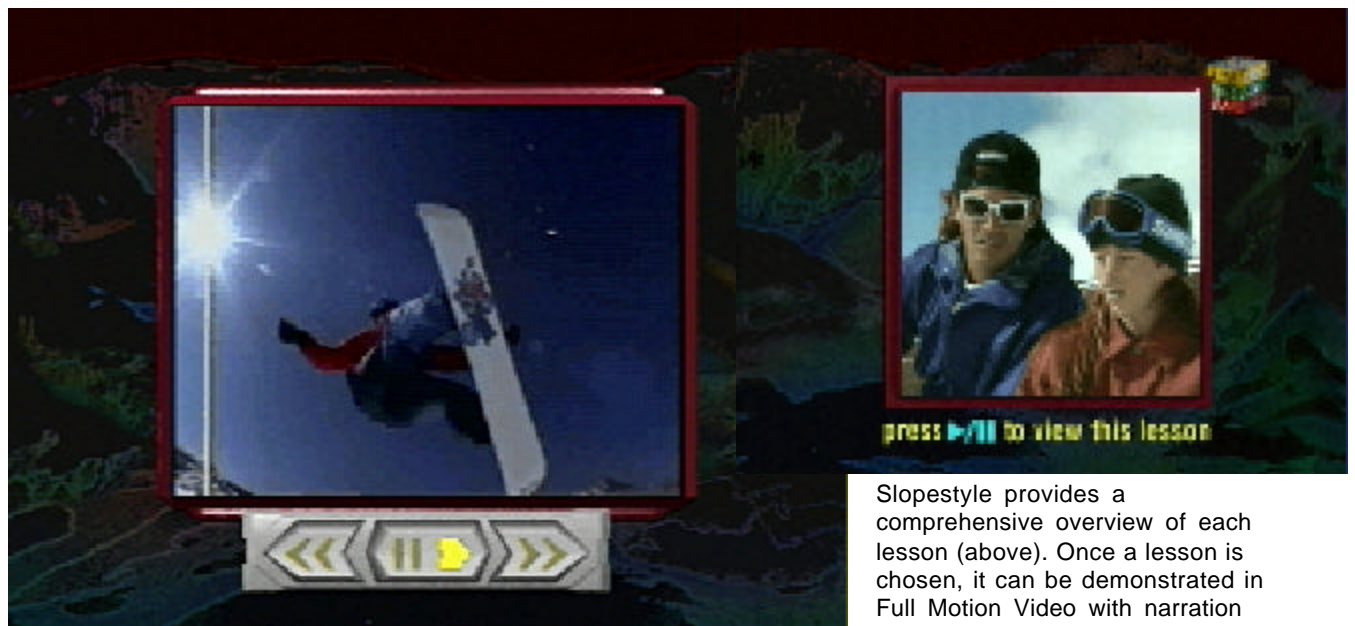
L3 Interactive just released their second title, *Slopestyleš*. Like *Mathemagics*, it uses the cube to teach 27 different lessons. Each lesson is one part of a three part section. Each section rests behind a single square in a row of three squares on the front side of the cube which makes up the levels in the lessons. In *Slopestyle*, the three levels are Getting Started, Almost There, and Beyond.

You pick a section from a level by moving the icon (in this case it is an animated snowboarder) over the required square and pressing A. Your selected square then is animated to the front of the screen and a Full Motion Video (FMV) provides an overview of that section. The square is animated back and the entire section is moved to the front of the screen.

You then move the character to whichever lesson you want. If you choose the pictorial side, you will see a FMV demonstrating the lesson with narration. If you choose the text side, you will hear the same narration and you will see it in text. Important words are in yellow (the main text is in white). If you would like to see an example or an explanation of the term in yellow, you can select the word and you will see a second screen with a text explanation. It is that easy.

Slopestyle--The Lesson

None of this is worthwhile if the lessons are bad, but L3 took no chances with this program. They hired Tina Basich, one of the world's top female riders, Tom Burt, an



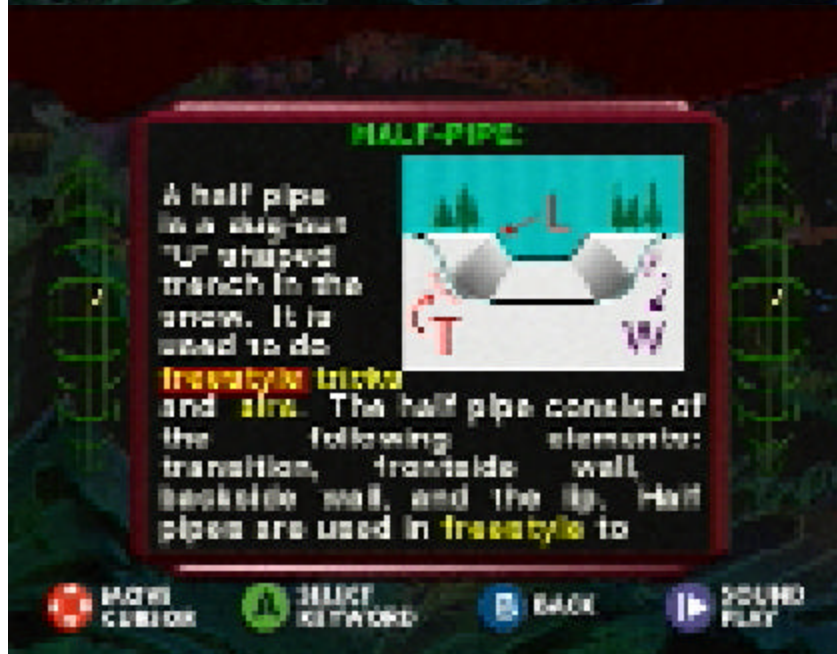
Slopestyle provides a comprehensive overview of each lesson (above). Once a lesson is chosen, it can be demonstrated in Full Motion Video with narration (top left) or narrated and read in text format (middle left). For more clarification, the user can turn to the highlighted text where they can read definitions and even study detailed drawings (bottom left).



expert extreme rider, and Nick Perata, an extreme rider who has appeared on ABC and ESPN. These athletes are not only knowledgeable, but very energetic and competent in their instructions.

The expert craftsmanship provided by the celebrities as well as the creative interface of the L3 Interactive Cube, makes this an enjoyable experience. If you do not understand a segment, you can move it back and go over it again. This is probably very comforting to anyone watching this with a cast on their leg from their last snowboarding experience.

If there is one drawback to this title, I would complain that it was too narrowcast. While it was entertaining, they have to be entertaining to enough people who own 3DO units and also want to pay the suggested price of \$44.95.



While the world is racing to find an elegant way to manipulate information in an interactive environment, L3 Interactive has discovered the secret. I really hope they sell enough of this title to make it worthwhile and create more learning cubes. Maybe one on sailing, where it is warm and you are not likely to get your leg broken.