

THE DICTADO- PART 1:
USING WRITING TO MAKE CROSS-
LANGUAGE CONNECTIONS FROM
SPANISH TO ENGLISH

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Theoretical Background



- Bilingual perspective - Learning to read and write in two languages differs from monolingual literacy
- Emerging bilinguals draw on all of their linguistic resources as they become biliterate
- *Cross-language Transfer* - Children actively apply what they know in one language when they are learning another (L1 \leftrightarrow L2)

Theoretical Background



- Helping children to attend to the *differences* and *similarities across languages* will increase their overall academic performance
- The utilization of cross-language connections can improve children's writing skills in both bilingual and English medium classrooms

Literacy Squared®



- Simultaneous literacy instruction in both Spanish and English beginning in first grade
- A single trajectory to biliteracy rather than 2 separate processes
- Assist children in making explicit cross-language connections between Spanish and English

The Dictado: A Cross-language Method



- It can be used in bilingual classrooms and also as a component of ESL instruction
- A tool for analyzing the similarities and differences across languages
- Helps students correct errors so that approximations do not persist into the upper grades
- Helps children to learn the standard academic register through guided and focused practice

The Dictado: A Rationale



- Requires few materials;
- An **integrated** approach to teaching language arts (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar);
- Opportunity to develop metalinguistic knowledge and skills (talking about language);
- Concrete cross-language connection.

The Dictado

- 10 -15 minutes a day, at least 3 times a week
- The teacher dictates sentence(s) to the students
- Teacher and students collaboratively create a corrected model of the focus text
- Students amend their sentences using a two-color system to draw attention to errors
- The same dictation is repeated throughout the week
- If implemented in two languages, focus on students' developmental linguistic needs in each language

The Dictado

IS:

- Teacher directed and explicit
- Integrated (spelling, language arts, grammar)
- Development of metalinguistic skills
- Cross-language connections

IS NOT:

- The child dictating to the teacher
- Daily Oral Language (DOL)
- The same in Spanish and English
- The entire language arts program

The Dictado



PROCEDURE

Day 1 – The Dictado



- T reads through the Dictado at a normal rate.
- Together T and Ss count the number of words/sentences in the Dictado.
- T tells Ss to get ready to write. Ss write in pencil.
- T begins by saying “First word/first sentence.”
- T proceeds through the first sentence. At the end of the first sentence, T says, “End of sentence.” Then, “Second sentence” and so on.

Day 1 – The Talk-Through



- Students change their pencils for pens or **red pencils**.
- **Teacher** and **Students talk-**through the Dictado linguistically, grammatically, and metalinguistically in an **interactive** and **explicit** manner.
- As the talk-through progresses, T slowly constructs a correct model on the board, asking Ss to contribute to the construction of the correct model.
- Ss **self-correct** their own papers with **red** pencil and **do not erase**.




The Talk-through



The talk-through steps are **crucial** because these are the points when teachers...

- ▣ make explicit, direct teaching points including language conventions, grammar, and spelling
- ▣ model and generate meta-language
- ▣ help students make cross-language connections

Standard Marking Code

	Add Something
	Add a Comma
	Add Quotation Marks
	Take Something Away
	Spell Correctly
	Indent the Paragraph
	Make a Period or an End Mark
	Make a Lower Case Letter
	Capitalize

Day 2



- Students dictate in pairs. Then, corrections are made and compared to Day 1.
(Note: This is optional)

Day 3



- Teacher dictates again, emphasizing any issues that she notes in students' writing.
- Teacher repeats talk-through, **reconstructing** a correct model on the board.
- Corrections are made and compared to Days 1 and 2.

Day 4



- Repeat Day 2. (Note: This is optional.)

Day 5



- Teacher administers the final Dictado, collects students' work, and grades it.

Sample Lesson - Grade 1



I like to play with my cat.

Talk-through teaching points:

- Prepositional phrase
- Spelling: high-frequency words - I, like, play
- **Cross-language connections:** Capitalizing 1st word, spacing between words, and the final period are the same in Spanish

Sample Lesson - Grade 5



Colorado got its name for its reddish dirt. Many rivers run through Colorado. Over millions of years, the rivers have cut breathtaking canyons in the red rock. The wind, sun, and water have taken their toll on the land. That is called erosion.

Grade 5



Talk-through teaching points:

- Vocabulary: erosion, breathtaking
- Past perfect tense (have cut, have taken their toll); over millions of years
- **Cross-language connections:** Colorado is a Spanish word; cognate - canyon

Beginning Steps



- Analyze students' writing in both languages
- Establish the students' strengths and needs
- Establish what is being transferred in their writing from Spanish to English and English to Spanish
- Establish what the students need to know in English that cannot be learned in Spanish
- Consider the students' language quality beyond spelling, variety, complexity, and pragmatics

Building Steps



- Over time, incorporate increasingly sophisticated vocabulary and grammatical structures, so that the Dictados address language structures within the students' zones of proximal development
- Emphasize similarities and differences across languages
- Explicitly teach what transfers and what does not transfer across languages

Reminders



- Do the same Dictado all week long
- **Meaning** should be at the CENTER of Dictados
- Always spelling, punctuation, and capitalization - choose **1-2 other teaching points** (e.g. diminutives etc.)
- Students correct their own work each day except the final day (Teacher grades)
- **Standard editing marks** for your classroom/school