

Dicto-Comps: A way to work on listening, speaking and grammar

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MARIO RINVOLUCRI DESCRIBES ONE WAY TO WORK WITH DICTOCOMPS IN GRAMMAR GAMES AND DICTATIONS: NEW METHODS, NEW POSSIBILITIES (WHICH HE WROTE WITH PAUL DAVIS).

I'VE ADDED A FEW ADAPTATIONS OF MY OWN TO HIS BASIC IDEA. STUDENTS ENJOY DOING THEM AND THEY HELP THEM REMEMBER THE LESSON. WHILE I'M ENCLOSEING TWO DICTO-COMP LESSONS WITH POEMS, I HAVE ALSO DONE THEM WITH PARAGRAPHS TELLING A SHORT STORY THAT BEGIN A TRADITIONAL WEST AFRICAN TEXTBOOK BEFORE ALLOWING THE STUDENTS TO OPEN THE BOOK AND CHECK THEIR WORK. STUDENTS ARE DELIGHTFULLY SURPRISED THAT THEY KNOW THE LESSON BEFORE ACTUALLY SEEING IT BY PRACTICING IT WHILE COMPLETING THE DICTO-COMP.

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1. Ask the students to get a piece of paper and a pencil. Tell them to put them down on the desk, fold their hands and listen.
2. Read the dictocomp passage at a normal speed while they listen
3. Read the dictocomp passage at a normal speed while they write. Do not repeat anything.
4. Ask them to get into groups of three and compare what they caught of your dictation.
5. When they are finished reconstructing what they can, tell them to send one member of their group to each of the three lists you have taped on the wall at different parts

of the room. The lists have numbered lines. One list includes all the nouns and pronouns. A second list includes all the verbs. The third list gives all the other words.

6. When the members regroup after seeing the lists, they should be able to reconstruct the passage completely .

I've used this in both big and small classes. When I used it in a class of about 120 students in West Africa, I made two copies in big letters on newsprint of each of the three lists so that the number of students around each list was not unnecessarily unwieldy.

A good Internet source for poetry is www.mta.nyc.ny.us

*Life has loveliness to sell
 All beautiful and splendid things
 Blue waves whitened on a cliff
 Climbing fire that sways and sings
 And children's faces looking up
 Holding wonder like a cup
 Life has loveliness to sell
 Music like a curve of gold
 Scent of pine trees in the rain
 Eyes that love you, arms that hold
 And for your spirit's still delight
 Holy thoughts that star the night
 Spend all you have for loveliness
 Buy it and never count the cost
 For one white singing hour of peace
 Count many a year of strife well lost
 And for a breath of ecstasy Give all
 you have been or could be.*

by Sara Teasdale

Nouns and pronouns

1. Life loveliness
2. things
3. waves cliff
4. fire
5. faces
6. wonder cup
7. Life loveliness
8. Music curve gold
9. Scent trees rain
10. Eyes you arms
11. delight
12. thoughts night
13. you loveliness
14. it cost

15. hour peace
16. year strife
17. breath ecstasy
18. you .

VERBS

1. has sell
- 2.
3. whitened
4. sways sings
5. looking up
6. Holding
7. has sell
- 8.
- 9.

10. love hold
- 11.
12. star
13. Spend have
14. Buy count
- 15.
16. Count
- 17.
18. Give have been could be

All the other words

1. to
2. All beautiful and splendid
3. Blue on a

4. Climbing that and
5. And children's
6. like a to
- 7.
8. like a of
9. of pine in the
10. that that
11. And for your spirit's still
12. Holy that the
13. all for
14. and never the
15. For one white singing of
16. many a of well lost
17. And for a of
18. all or. *SPEAK OUT*

