



Reviews from The Couch

We Love "Kids Love Spanish"

The Cat came home one day last school year announcing, "I know how to count to three in Spanish! Pedro knows the rest!"

"What?" I hadn't recalled any boys in his Kindergarten class named "Pedro," but I did know that there were many Hispanic kids at the school.

"Pedro knows the rest." He insisted.

I finally realized he was mispronouncing "Uno! Dos! Tres!" by creating an English sentence that made sense to him. After a lot of coaching, I was able to separate the words for him. Then he wanted to go up to ten. And then up to twenty. And then to one-hundred.

Later, he started running around announcing "Wii!" the way the Wii sounds when jumping over hurdles in the scarecrow-tipping game: high pitched and abrupt.

"It means 'yes' in French," he explained to me.

I had to counter that "oui" is pronounced without the raised eyebrows, crazy eyes, and super-screchy register. Still, I was glad that he was learning little bits of another language.

And so, when the Parent Bloggers Network asked if I might be interested in receiving the Kids Love Spanish DVD set, I was thrilled! I knew the Cat would love to learn more Spanish than during his brief introduction in Kindergarten. Plus, I want to get Spiggle started on the concept of bilingualism.

The Kids Love Spanish DVD set has introductory concepts / phrases and vocabulary groups (shapes, colors, letters, numbers, family, food.) There are seven DVDs in all, with a music CD soon to be available.

A child who watches all seven DVDs will have a great jump-start in vocabulary and concepts in a variety of areas. The best way to learn a language is through interaction in that language, so having some basic tools and recognition of common vocabulary words will help children "pick out" the words they know when exposed to a more intensive or fluent conversation. The kids can feel confidence that they have many building blocks to start speaking or understand Spanish.

The basic pattern for the most vocabulary-heavy episodes is to have an introduction (such as singing the alphabet song), then have an in depth exploration ("'coo' [q] is for 'queso,' cheese! Coo!") followed by another exposure to the whole slate of words/concepts (again, the alphabet song.) The in-depth portion repeats the word many times for reinforcement, and when applicable ties the word to the concept. Frequently, the explanation of the word is in English, but sometimes an additional Spanish word will be included.

Initially, I was concerned about so much English. During the "animals" DVD, for example, each animal was described as "cute" as in "Look at the cute perro! Look at the cute gato! Look at the cute elefante!" I was hoping they'd also say "bonito" or "monado" but perhaps they didn't want to confuse. (To say "cute dog" they would end up saying "perro monado" which may confuse the kids into thinking the second word is "dog!") Other times, they did mention another Spanish word or two in the midst of the English. I would have loved hearing the description in Spanish right after the same sentence in English for the sake of identifying the Spanish sentence to the concept already explained in English.



I agree that since grammatical rules are different in Spanish than in English, it is tough to do a clean translation since it isn't parallel. Furthermore, I don't think the kids should feel the need to connect the English word with the Spanish word. Instead, the concept itself needs to be identified in Spanish. There is a fine line between using English to describe the Spanish word (better understanding of what that word is supposed to mean) versus inadvertently creating a need to "translate." But I suppose the "need-to-translate" drops out as one becomes more fluent.

The theme songs are completely in English. Songs are so catchy and memorable, that it would have been nice to have some Spanish verses in there. Spiggle was singing, "Kids Love Spanish!" while he shook himself around, but he didn't repeat any of the Spanish words on the rest of the DVD. However, it occurred to me that encouraging the children using the words they know (English) may promote excitement about the concept of learning Spanish, such that by singing the English song, they are "psyching themselves up" for learning more Spanish.

The Cat repeated many of the Spanish words, and was curious to delve deeper than what was introduced. This curiosity is exactly what I imagine the Brock Sisters had in mind when creating these videos. After watching the numbers 1-20, the Cat lamented that it didn't go up to 100. I told him we could build on what we had learned: "Well, you know that 'veinte' is twenty, right? So we can say 'veinte-y-uno'" for twenty-one." I explained treinta is 30, cuarenta is 40, and so forth up to cien for 100.

Similarly, we were able to deconstruct the numbers a bit. When I asked him "What is sixteen?" he was nervous until I said, "Remember ten and six? Diez-y-sies?" It is diez for ten, then seis for six. "And" is y" Of course then I had to explain that "y" is pronounced "E" even though the letter "I" is pronounced the same. The Cat laughed, saying "y" is "E-griega," which he had just learned in the previous segment on the DVD.

It can definitely be confusing when an English "E" and a Spanish "I" have the same letter-name which is the same pronunciation as the word "and" - y - in Spanish. But I hadn't thought of it until the Cat was confused, so even in my non-fluent state, I was able to accept these differences without question at some point in my Spanish education.

When learning the basic phrases, the Cat laughed at the upside-down question mark. But that gave me the opportunity to explain punctuation in Spanish, and how an exclamation point or question mark can be inverted at the beginning of a sentence to indicate its tone.

These DVDs give children (and adults!) plenty of little pieces: just as we learn English by repeating nouns and learning common phrases, so does these DVDs introduce our kids to single words and quick phrases that will eventually turn into sentences.

I remember having to learn the Spanish alphabet the first week of junior high, quizzes on basic vocabulary words, and how sometimes I'd know the construction of a sentence but would forget a "simple" word because I hadn't had much practice with it. If the Cat and Spiggle learn everything on these DVDs, they will already have those words to "plug in" to intermediate and advanced concepts. Having the basics will give them confidence.

The Cat said, "I really like this show!" and has asked me to look up some additional words. He also wanted to know if we could learn the same things in French. I had to laugh when he asked, "What comes after French?" as if there is a progression from English to Spanish to French to the Great Unknown. We had an interesting conversation about how different people learn different languages at different times, sometimes simultaneously.

I want to encourage this curiosity, and having some foundation with the Kids Love Spanish DVDs will be important towards this end.

* Also spelled "veintiuno"

**Also spelled "dieciséis"

... but for the purposes of my deconstruction, I chose to spell these numbers with the "y" to encourage the concept of twenty-and-one or ten-and-six, respectively.

Tags: [bilingual](#) [kids love spanish](#) [parent bloggers network](#) [spanish](#)

Posted by Karianna on September 17, 2007 12:31 AM | [Permalink](#)

TRACKBACK

TrackBack URL for this entry:
<http://www.karianna.us/moveable/mt-tb.cgi/355>

POST A COMMENT

(If you haven't left a comment here before, you may need to be approved by the site owner before your comment will appear. Until then, it won't appear on the entry. Thanks for waiting.)

Name:

Email Address:

URL:

Remember personal info?

Comments: (you may use HTML tags for style)

VOCALPOINT

Join Vocalpoint today and receive a **FREE Procter & Gamble sample product!**

SEARCH

Search this blog:

ABOUT

This page contains a single entry from the blog posted on September 17, 2007 12:31 AM.

The previous post in this blog was [It's Fun to Learn With the Zula Patrol.](#)

The next post in this blog is [Books are Moo-velous with Wilbur.](#)

Many more can be found on the [main index page](#) or by looking through the [archives](#).

SHOP!

- [Kid's Clothes](#)
- [Kid's Crocs](#)
- [Webkins Pets](#)
- [Children's bedding](#)

Search Amazon:

Search New and Used [amazon.com](#).

MY OTHER ONLINE HAUNTS

[Subscribe to this blog's feed \(What is this?\)](#)

SITEMETER AND SUBSCRIBE!

[Subscribe in a reader](#)

Powered by [Movable Type 3.31](#)