



# Building Biliteracy through Organizing Instruction for Explicit Skill Transference

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## Foundational Knowledge

### Transfer of Skills from Spanish to English: A Study of Young Learners Report for Practitioners, Parents and Policy Makers

Diane August, Center for Applied Linguistics  
Margarita Calderón, John Hopkins University  
María Carlo, Harvard University

May 2002



## Research Findings

An effect of transfer from Spanish to English exists for:

- **phonemic segmentation skills,**
- **letter identification and**
- **word reading skills**

for Spanish speaking students initially instructed in Spanish.

### **Vocabulary knowledge:**

The Spanish instructed students knew significantly more cognates than those instructed in English only, but the two groups did not differ on their knowledge of non-cognates.

### **Comprehension:**

There is a positive correlation between Spanish comprehension and English comprehension students with the highest Spanish passage comprehension scores at the end of second grade had the highest English passage comprehension scores at the end of fourth grade.

**August, Calderón and Carlo, 2002**

## Implications



These findings support the practice of providing literacy instruction in Spanish to Spanish-speaking English Language Learners as a means of helping them acquire literacy skills in English.

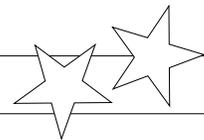
The practice of strengthening students' Spanish literacy, also enables them to use their native language well, enhancing their bilingual capability.



## What is skill transference?

Transfer of learning means the application of a previously known skill set to a new experience or learning.

The cross-linguistic transfer research points out how reading ability is enhanced when students whose first language (L1) is Spanish learn to apply their linguistic knowledge and literacy skills to reading in English as their second language (L2).



All learning that occurs is influenced to a great extent by previously learned concepts.

Thorndike first advanced the notion that skills from one task would transfer to another task as long as the **critical features** of the second task were like those of the first task.

## **Metalinguistic Awareness**

Is the ability to deliberately reflect on and manipulate the structural features of spoken language, treating the language system itself as an object of thought, as opposed to using the language system to comprehend and produce sentences.

That is, metalinguistic awareness refers to the individual's ability to understand the nature of language rather than the ability to use language to communicate meaning.

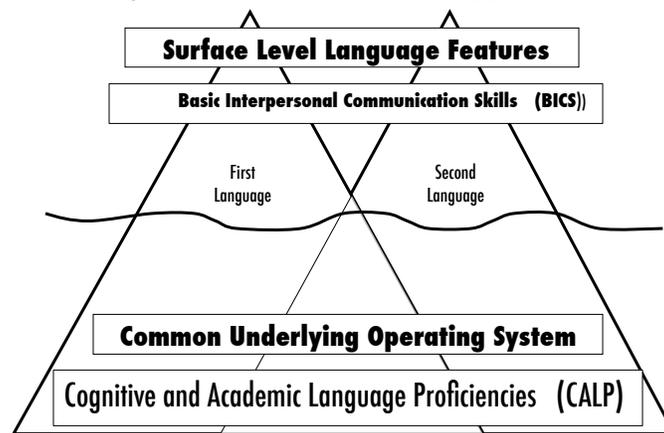
Tunmer & Cole, 1985

## **Transfer is best when there is:**

- similarity in the learning conditions
- similarity in the learning task
- similarity in the expected student response
- a comprehensible connections between first learning and second learning
- a clear understanding of rules or generalizations

Eleanor W. Thonis

## Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis



Cummins, J. (1981). The role of primary language development in promoting educational success for language minority students. In California State Department of Education (Ed.), *Schooling and language minority students: A theoretical*

*framework.* (pp. 3-49). Los Angeles: National Dissemination and Assessment Center.

### Teaching for language transference affirms the following notions:

- Proficiency in Primary Language has a positive correlation to proficiency in a second language
- Human beings do not have to lose their primary language in order to acquire native like proficiency in a second language.

**When transference of skills is explicitly taught...**

- Students can avail themselves of known concepts and skills in L1 to learn L2.
- Students need the opportunity to learn negative transference skills in a language they understand.

**Think - Pair - Share**

**Turn to your partner and share**

**One comment**

**One question**

**One thing to remember...**

## Principles of Skill Transference:

- Similarity in learning conditions, task, and expected response
- Opportunity for practice in the first learning
- Comprehensible connection between first learning and second learning
- Understanding of rules or generalizations

## DI in the Context of L1 to L2 Transference

DI Phases	L	What teachers does
Orientation	L1	Activates prior knowledge Connects L1 to L2 learning State lesson objectives
Presentation	L1 - L2	Explains and demonstrate and gives examples of concept, skill strategy and points out elements of L1- L2 transferability
Structured Practice	L1 - L2	Leads students step by step, clarifying, using concrete/visual representations.
Guided Practice	L2	Provides corrective feedback as students practice on their own.
Independent Practice	L2	Insures students are working at appropriate level of L2 language proficiency

Silvia Dorta-Duque de Reyes, 2005

<b>Explicit Instruction</b>	
<b>Teach</b> <i>Orientation</i>	<p>Teacher clarifies objectives and procedures - activates prior knowledge</p> <p>Introduce/review academic terms</p> <p>Show the way concepts are organized (use organizational map and visuals)</p> <p>Define orthographic (spelling pattern) and morphological (meaning) word structures. Use pictures and realia to codify and access meaning.</p> <p><b>* Provides a comprehensible connection between first learning and second learning</b></p>
<b>Model</b> <i>Structured and Guided Practice</i>	<p>Model using think loud to show structural features orthographic and morphological word structures.</p> <p>Engage students in structured and monitor guided practice activities.</p> <p><b>* Points out the similarity or differences in the learning conditions and tasks</b></p> <p><b>* Continues to negotiate the rules and conditions applicable to the skill or task</b></p>
<b>Apply</b> <i>Independent Practice</i>	<p>Provide meaningful and engaging activities that address the standard, which are focused on the objective, and provide the opportunity for students to independently demonstrate they understand the concepts taught.</p> <p>Provide differentiated activities that take into account students' level of language acquisition.</p> <p><b>* Insures assigned student tasks assigned are at each student's appropriate level of English language proficiency.</b></p>

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Explicit teaching of skill transference begins with an overt acknowledgement to students that they already know a skill or concept and that they are ready to transfer what they already know to English.



Eleanor Thonis

**There are two basic transference routines:**

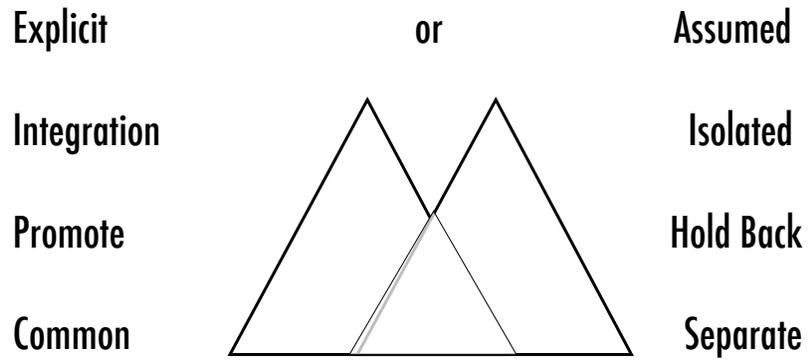
<b>Transferable Skills Routines</b>	<b>Non-Transferable Skills Routine</b>
a. Review known skill in L1	a. Review known skill in L1
b. Review academic terms in L1	b. Review academic terms in L1
c. Introduce academic terms in L2	c. Introduce academic terms in L2
d. Compare L1 and L2 skill explicitly	d. Contrast L1 and L2 skill explicitly
e. Model in L2	e. Model in L2
f. Practice in L2	f. Practice in L2
g. Provide opportunities for independent practice in L2	g. Provide opportunities for independent practice in L2

**Table Talk**

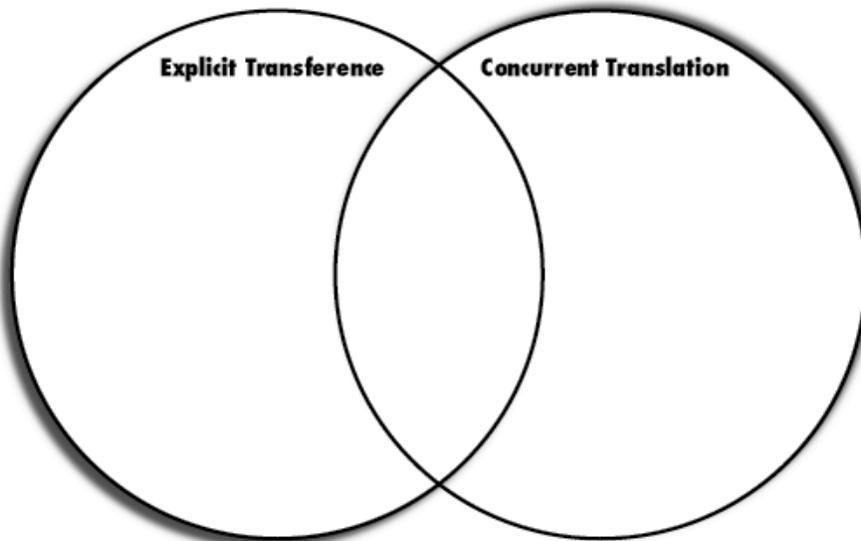
1. What is the key difference between these two basic routines?
2. How does explicit teaching of transference promote metalinguistic awareness?

## Controversy

### Transference of L1 and L2



### Organizing Instruction for Transference



## **Identification of Essential Transferable Skill Sets**

- Determine grade level standards targets in L1 and L2
- Analyze the transference relationship between L1 and L2
- Recognize instructional implications
- Teach explicitly in L1
- Explicitly link L1 skills to L2
- Teach explicitly in L2

## **Explicit Teaching of Transferability**

- Alleviates student' s burden of having to learn a skill or concept in a language they do not yet understand
- Enables access rigorous grade level skill set
- Provides three Direct Instruction venues for teaching and learning the same skill set.

## Big Ideas

- Transference of skills cannot ever be assumed to occur without explicit teaching
- Teachers can consciously and purposefully teach for transfer through cognitive planning and Direct Instruction
- The strength of the original learning determines the extent of transfer in the second learning



Questions?

Ideas?

Next steps?