

Bring El Día de los Muertos Alive for Your Students

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Des Moines Marriott Downtown

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Día de los Muertos – el horario

viernes - The week before our DOTD celebration Spanish 2 students bring in a shoe box, pictures of a loved one or a famous person who is deceased and they are supposed to have researched as much information about the person as they can by this day.

I stay after school and transform my room. I make an altar for my dad at the front of the room. I hang DOTD papel picado and decorations. I put the children's books out on the white board trays for students to browse through.

lunes – martes - jueves

In Spanish 2 students begin making their shoe box altars in class today. We have three class periods to work on the altars. I supply tissue paper, construction paper, ribbon, some rubber stamps, glue, some scraps of fabric and tape. Students supply anything else that they may need.

Over these three days, while students work I read them children's books about el Día de los Muertos.

- Day of the Dead by Lois Lowery
- Yo recuerdo a Abuelio, un cuento del Día de los Muertos por Janice Levy (bilingual)
- El Día de Muertos por Ivar Da Coll
- Day of the dead by Christine McNunn and Diane Cutler
- The Festival of Bones by Luis San Vicente (bilingual)
- Calavera Abecedario por Jeanette Winter

martes – In the 8th grade exploratory I usually tell the story I wrote about el Día de los Muertos.

miércoles – In all classes we watch a movie called El Día de los Muertos that we ordered through Teacher's Discovery. There is an activity packet that accompanies the movie and we have students complete some of the activities. We generally combine classes for this since we only have one copy of the movie. The movie is only 25 minutes long. It was filmed in Oaxaca, México in 2005.

jueves – In Spanish 1 and in 8th grade exploratory we have a día de artesanías. We make papel picado and paper flowers. In the past we have cut out and decorated paper skeletons.

viernes – We traditionally teach a dance on Friday. We combine all classes and go either to the commons or the wrestling room to teach the dance. We have alternated between *el Mourto muito louco* por Axe Bahía and *Sólo se vive una vez* por Azúcar Moreno. *El Mourto muito louco* is zombie dance (a la Thriller) and the song is in Portuguese. When we dance to *Sólo se vive una vez* we talk about the circle of life and that we have learned that in México death is considered a natural part of life. Therefore el Día de los Muertos is not a sad time. And people who have this sort of perspective on death, generally believe in living life to its fullest as well.

(Tammy Dann in West Des Moines has taught her kids el Baile de los Viejitos and when they turn young the dance to *Sólo se vive una vez*.) Both songs are great and kids enjoy both dances. We save enough time to return to our classrooms and everyone gets to sample *pan de muertos* which we purchase locally from Lara's Bakery.

lunes – The following Monday, Spanish 2 students will complete a self evaluation of their altar. And on the back they will write a description of the person whom they have honored. The description is written in Spanish and will lead to an oral presentation about their honoree. We do those presentations later in the week.

Months later – We will revisit what they wrote when we are learning the preterite and the imperfect. Students will rewrite their descriptions of their honoree, this time using the past tenses.

Some additional ideas

I have some activities that students can do when they are finished with their class work or as extra credit.

- word finds
- readings from the newspaper or magazines
- coloring

Students may choose to explore some specific aspect of el Día de los Muertos outside of class as a connection, enrichment or culture project. Students have chosen to make:

- calaveras de azúcar
- chocolate skulls
- el Día de los Muertos papel picado
- calacas

There are events in town that students can attend.

- The Day of the Dead Celebration at the Arts Center
Website: [http://http://www.desmoinesartcenter.org](http://www.desmoinesartcenter.org)
Date: Sunday Oct 30, 2011 Time: 1 - 4 p.m. Admission: Free
- Sometimes a local church or a nearby community has an event

