



K-12 Program

Background Information

Institution: The Literacy Program, Wilcox High School, Santa Clara Unified School District

Program address: 3250 Monroe Street, Santa Clara, CA 95051

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Languages/dialects taught: Spanish

Grades taught: 9-12

Program Description

Purposes and goals of the program: The purpose is to build on heritage and native speaker language ability to develop academic language.

Type of program: Content-based, heritage language, immersion program

Program origin: 1998

Parents

Parents' expectations for the program: Parents expect their children to acquire academic language and be prepared to successfully take the Advanced Placement Language Exam (3rd year) and the Advanced Placement Literature Exam (4th year).

Staff

Instructors' and administration's expectations for the program: The staff expect students not only to learn how to communicate in both oral and written forms but also to develop the confidence necessary for success in postsecondary programs.

Students

Students:

- First-generation immigrants: 25%
- Second-generation immigrants: 50%
- Third-generation immigrants: 25%

Others: The percentages vary from year to year, depending on the student population. The vast majority of the students are American-born, second-generation heritage Spanish speakers.

Countries of origin: Most students come from Mexico or are Mexican-American. About 15% are from Central America.

Total student enrollment: 150

How the program identifies heritage speakers: Middle school teachers send us a list of heritage speakers. Incoming freshmen with Spanish surnames are tagged. Any of those students whose primary language in the Home Language Survey is Spanish are looked up on the student information system, placed in Literacy I, and administered a placement test.

How the program determines the language background and language proficiency of students: A quick oral interview, based on the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Test is administered. Then students are given the placement test that determines the level that they are placed in. We administer a placement test the first week of school to place students according to their proficiency. Also, all students need to fill out a Home Language Survey by state law.

Percentage of students who complete the program: 50%

Percentage of students who continue to study the heritage language after completing the program: We do not have any records.

Possible reasons for student withdrawal: The 3rd and 4th levels of the program require a lot of reading outside class, and many students, either due to work or a heavy schedule, choose not to continue.

Students' attitudes toward the language varieties they speak: All of the teachers understand that students need to know that there is a Spanish that is spoken among

friends and relatives, and a formal Spanish that is spoken at the workplace and school. At Wilcox, our teachers of heritage speakers are aware that this is vital to the success of the program.

Instructors

Number of instructors in the program: 4

Languages in which instructors are proficient: Spanish

Proficiency level: All are native speakers of Spanish, holding at least one master's degree.

Credentials: Clear Single Subject Secondary Teacher Credential, Spanish BA; One teacher has a Liberal Arts MA (in Spanish, Administration, and Special Education); One teacher is ACTFL Oral Proficiency Testing certified.

Professional development opportunities instructors have: All have attended 1-2 summer training sessions for Advanced Placement at Stanford University

Professional development opportunities instructors need: I would like teachers to have training in teaching heritage speakers, but I haven't found anything local.

Instruction

Total contact hours per week: 5 hours per week

Student grouping: Students are grouped according to language proficiency.

Language skills

Skills developed by the program: Heritage Spanish skills

Heritage language skills:

- listening
- speaking
- reading
- writing
- In addition, we teach culture, history, and geography.

Levels of language proficiency reached by the end of the program: At the end of the program students are able to take the Advanced Placement Literature Exam and have done all the reading it entails.

Additional comments: This may be the first opportunity for students who traditionally do not see postsecondary education as an option to explore a rigorous curriculum and experience academic success.

Culture

Aspects of culture taught:

- geography
- history
- festivals
- customs
- traditions/beliefs
- folktales
- arts and crafts
- dances
- songs
- rhymes
- social and cultural norms
- cultural appropriateness
- literature

Kind of student identity program fosters: One of the goals of the program is integration into the school culture. Although Latinos are 30% of the student population, only 5% participate in student government. The program allows students to experience success here, which translates into success in other classes and in school as a whole.

Methodologies

Methodologies and instructional strategies used in the program: This is a literature-based program that begins to introduce the AP Literature authors in the first year.

Materials

Textbooks: Nuevas Vistas I, Sendas Literarias I & II. Album, Espanol Escrito, Abriendo Pasos I & II

Other materials used for instruction: Various novels and plays are read in the 3rd level such as *Como Agua Para Chocolate* and *En La Ardiente Oscuridad*.

Technology used for instruction: We have a foreign language computer laboratory, and all teachers have LCD projectors they use to access various materials from the Internet.

Assessment

Assessments used to evaluate students' progress:

- initial oral proficiency test
- weekly quizzes
- chapter tests
- mid-term tests
- mid-term tests
- final exams
- school/district developed tests
- teacher's observations
- performance-based tasks or assessment
- portfolios
- Third year students take the AP Language Exam, and fourth Year students take the AP Literature Exam.

Articulation

Connections with other institutions: We are a unified school district and have articulation meetings twice a year. We also have connections with colleges and universities.

How the program develops home/school connections or promotes parent involvement: Parents are connected to the school through School Loop, an information system where teachers post grades and assignments. Teachers contact parents through telephone or email.

Opportunities for using the heritage language and developing cultural knowledge outside the program: All of our students speak Spanish at home.

What the program has in place

Financial support the program receives: It is funded out of the general fund.

Other support the program receives: The school district

Assistance or funding the program would like to receive: Occasionally I will seek funding from the Site Council to attend conferences.

Monitoring of overall achievement in school: Teachers are able to monitor student grades in other classes through School Loop.

Special challenges

Challenges the program has experienced: Some students, though heritage speakers, wish to remain in the regular program. They need counseling and communication with their parents, to transfer to SNS classes.

Additional comments: To begin a successful program you need at least two levels, otherwise it becomes a dumping ground.