

K-12 Heritage Profile
Spanish Grammar I, II Storm Lake High Storm Lake School Community

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Language: Spanish

Grades: 9-12

Program Description

Purposes and goals of the program: Maintain the home language, and provide instruction to develop reading and writing skills in Spanish. Serve as a bridge to literature and other academic contents in the school mainstream.

Type of program: Content-based

Program Origins: The program was founded in 1996 by the school district.

Parents' expectations for the program: Become bi-literate

Staff's expectations for the program: Students connect to the school academics and extracurricular activities using the native language as a way to feel more comfortable.

The program tries to follow the National Standards for Teaching Foreign Language, the 5 Cs (Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) with units on American-Mexican war, Translator, and Interpreter as a career.

Students

- First-generation immigrants 90%
- Second-generation immigrants 10%

Countries of origin: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Venezuela

Total student enrollment: 200

Identification of a heritage speaker: The program identifies heritage speakers by their last name, if it is Hispanic, and by a brief interview with counselors when giving students their schedule.

Percentage of students who complete the program: 95% complete at least the first semester

Percentage of students who continue to study the heritage language after completing the program: 25%

Possible reasons for their withdrawal: Students usually expect this to be an easy class; however, their oral skills in Spanish are poor. As a result, they want to be immersed in English.

Students' attitudes toward the language varieties they speak: At first some students feel ashamed of their "Spanglish;" others, just arriving to the US, try to adapt their varieties to the majority northern Mexican. For example, Honduras and El Salvador students drop the use of "vos" after a couple of months.

Additional comments: We have wide ranging levels of proficiency in the native language in this group. This includes English speakers and immigrants with regular schooling and no schooling. After two years of Spanish grammar, the native speakers can attend the Spanish IV program, which offers credit with the community college. This gives the students 4 college credits for each semester. In this course the material is oriented for Spanish. The number of native speaker participants has increased from 50% to 90%.

Instructors

Number of staff in program: 2

Languages in which staff members are proficient: English, Portuguese, and Spanish

Credentials

- Teacher certification Iowa- Spanish, Portuguese, ESL. The other teacher is an assistant instructor with no teacher preparation
- BA: ESL, Portuguese
- MA : ESL
- Other: Endorsement in Spanish

Professional development opportunities teachers have: None, only for non-speakers

Professional development opportunities teachers need: Workshops on the needs of native Spanish speakers, Spanish language varieties, workshops only in Spanish, and instruction on adjusting the standards to this program.

Courses

Hours per week students receive instruction: 3 hours and 45 minutes

Students are grouped:

- Freshmen - Spanish Grammar I
- Sophomores - Spanish Grammar II

Heritage Skills

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing

Other skills: *listening* - short video clips (Univision- interviews, news, soap operas); *writing* - essay formats, creative writing; *reading* - known authors of short stories

Skills and levels of language proficiency students reach by the end of the program: They are able to read novels and write summaries and essays.

Culture

- History
- Festivals
- Customs
- Religion
- Folktales
- Songs
- Literature

Other culture-related topics or activities: When reading literature pieces, many different cultural aspects are brought up and debated. There is a folklore group in the school- (not necessarily participants in the program); the students dance in different festivals throughout the year.

Methodologies

Methodologies and instructional strategies used in the program:

- Socratic
- Total Physical Response for Teaching - new vocabulary
- Cooperative learning
- Pair work

Materials

Textbook: *Español Escrito* (Prentice Hall, 2002)

Other materials:

- Web sites
- *Abriendo Puertas* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002)
- Literatura Hispana- an anthology

Students can choose to take the National Spanish Exam. They generally get good classification in the state.

Assessment

- Weekly quizzes
- Chapter tests
- Final exams
- Teacher observations
- Performance-based tasks or assessment

Students continue their study at Buena Vista University or Iowa Central Community College. However, very few students go on to continue studying Spanish at a higher level.

Articulation

Program Connections:

- Colleges
- Universities

The high school has a charter school program, where students can stay one or two years or more, taking college classes offered in the high school and colleges nearby and graduating with an AA diploma.

Home-school connections and parent involvement: Teacher- parent conferences are set by advisors and advisees. Each advisor sits with the advisee individually to check their curriculum and career plans. Then a time is scheduled by the family to talk with the advisor during those 3 days of teacher-parent conferences.

Opportunities students have for using the language and developing cultural knowledge outside the program: Buena Vista University organizes a festival every May. The community offers church services in Spanish, and there are restaurants, stores, etc. in Spanish.

What the program has in place

Financial support

- US government
- Local/state government support:
The principal solicits funds for the program.

Assistance or collaboration you like to receive for your program from other entities: Variety of authentic materials, for example, cultural DVDs or videotapes in Spanish. However, cultural based documentaries are in English only.

System for graduating students and granting credit for study: The same as the other content areas, students can get credit with at least a D in the class.

Special Challenges and Comments

Challenges that your program has experienced: There is no time available to prepare classes together, the other instructor does not have pedagogic preparation, and the school does not require a curriculum. For the next school year this program needs to follow a curriculum prepared by one teacher. There is no in-service training for the teacher in this program, nor any help from the universities. These institutions are unacquainted with the learning needs of native speakers. Besides a few publications on Web sites and one book, I lack information on Spanish varieties.

Other insights: It has been exciting to teach these classes. I am not a native Spanish native speaker, so the community did not readily accept my position to teach their children Spanish. However, I try to emphasize that I am the facilitator to help them read and write Spanish to high levels.