

Programa de Alfabetización Hispano/Latino Community-Based Program

Background Information

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Contact Person:

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Type of institution: The program currently offers classes in partnership with three community-based organizations: the Latin American Youth Center (DC), Language ETC (DC), and CASA of Maryland (MD).

Languages/dialects taught: Latin American Spanish

Program Description

Purposes and goals of the program: The program's mission is to teach non-literate Spanish-speaking immigrant adults to read and write in their native language, as well as other basic skills, so that they can achieve functional literacy. Indirect goals include facilitating their later acquisition of English and the preservation of the Spanish language among younger bilingual generations.

Type of program: An adult Spanish literacy program, offering classes divided into 3 levels at a handful of community-based organizations in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

Program origin: The program was founded in 2004 by an individual who decided to help two acquaintances learn to read and write. Word spread to their acquaintances, causing the number of students to grow until the informal lessons were transformed into a full-fledged classroom program.

Students

Countries of origin: Students are first generation immigrants from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Peru.

Total student enrollment: approximately 75 per year

How the program identifies heritage speakers: Students self-identify.

Percentage of students who complete the program: Unknown

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

Possible reasons for student withdrawal:

- Work and/or family obligations
- Distance of home from class site

Comments: This is a literacy program offered in the native and primary language of the students and thus their learning is not focused on the acquisition of the oral language but rather the acquisition of reading and writing skills.

Instructors

Number of instructors in the program: varies

Languages in which instructors are proficient: Spanish and English

Credentials: Instructors have bachelors degrees in Spanish, business administration, psychology and other fields.

Instruction

Total contact hours per week: 2-4 hours

Times per week: 1-2

Student grouping: Students are grouped into three levels. The first is introductory including hand flexibility exercises and the alphabet. The second includes more writing exercises and phonics until basic reading/writing is achieved. The third level includes

more reading and writing exercises, mathematics, and reading comprehension exercises.

Language skills

Heritage language skills: Reading/Writing

Levels of language proficiency reached by the end of the program: Students achieve basic proficiency in reading and writing.

Methodologies

Methodologies and instructional strategies used in the program:

- Phonics (syllabic construction and deconstruction)
- Dictations

Materials

Textbooks: 1975. *Silabario Hispano Americano*. Edición 62, Editorial Lord Cochrane S.A., Santiago, Chile.

2006. *Nuevo Silabario Hispanoamericano*. Impreso Santa Inés, El Salvador.

Other materials: Instructors use Spanish-language publications and materials from adult literacy programs in various Latin American countries.

Assessment

Assessments used to evaluate students' progress:

- Teacher observations
- Performance-based tasks

Special challenges

Challenges the program has experienced:

- Volunteer recruitment and retention
- Constant influx of new students
- Student attrition rates
- Lack of dedicated classroom space
- Lack of materials
- Lack of financial resources
- Need for organization and lesson planning

Additional support desired:

Support in the following areas would be greatly appreciated.

- organizational development
- strategic planning
- advisory board member participation
- curriculum development
- evaluation and assessment
- fundraising
- volunteer coordination