

K-12 Heritage Language Program Profile

Spanish for Heritage Speakers/ Redondo Union H.S Redondo Beach Unified School District

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Dialects/languages taught: The school encompasses various levels of Spanish including three levels primarily for heritage speakers. An Advanced Placement (AP) Literature course is also taught, which includes some heritage speakers.

Grades: 9-12

Program Description

Purposes and goals of the program and staff expectations: This course is an integrated language arts program designed to provide native Spanish speaking students with cognitive academic language proficiencies. Students develop the four language skills--listening, speaking, reading and writing-- by participating in functional communicative activities, which allow the skills to develop naturally within the context of a linguistic and literature-based curriculum.

This course acknowledges and builds upon the students' linguistic ability in both English and Spanish as a base for increasing their vocabulary. The course also strives to broaden the students' cultural awareness of the various Spanish-speaking communities by presenting literary works from a collection of Hispanic writers and focusing on the cultural experience of Hispanics. Thus, the program helps students understand the products and perspectives of the culture studied. This course is open to students in grades 9-12 who have a Grade Equivalency (GE) Spanish Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) score in the range of 5.0-6.0.

Type of program: The program is a part of the foreign language program.

Program Origins: The program was founded in the early 90's by the school district.

Parents' expectations for the program: To have their children engrossed in both English and Spanish so that their level of bilingualism will be heightened and to expand their knowledge of the diversity of Spanish.

Students

- First-generation immigrants: 10%
- Second-generation immigrants: 70%
- Third-generation immigrants: 20%
- Children of interethnic marriages: approx. 30%
- Others: We have included students with a non-ethnic background who have lived in Spanish speaking communities for several years and used Spanish in academic and social settings.

Countries of origin: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, and USA

Total student enrollment: 140 (for all three levels)

Identification of a native speaker: The program identifies students as native speakers who show a native or near-native speaking knowledge of Spanish acquired at home. Although reading and writing proficiency are not necessary to enroll in the first and introductory heritage level course, comprehension is a must.

- *Language assessment:* The students take a language assessment and are interviewed the spring prior to their freshmen year in high school. The director of the foreign language department travels to the junior high feeder schools and administers the written exams and interviews candidates. The results are reviewed by the instructors of the various heritage Spanish levels. The high school counselors are alerted and the students are enrolled in the appropriate language level. For new students coming into the district at the beginning of the year, individual assessments are taken. For the higher level AP language and literature levels, a student must obtain their former teacher's recommendation based on a grade of B or higher.
- *Oral interview:* Students are asked basic questions such as their name, age, interests, and who in their immediate family and community communicates with them in Spanish. Questions include the amount of time the student has been speaking Spanish and the reasons for communicating in and learning Spanish.

Percentage of students who complete the program: In the first year approximately 70%; in the second year approximately 40-45%.

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

Possible reasons for not completing the program: Scheduling conflicts, slow progress (needed more time to grasp the linguistic or literary concepts), or the student relocates to another district

Students' attitudes toward the language varieties they speak: In the last 14 years of teaching these courses, we have seen several attitudes. These courses

include students are very determined and proud of Spanish and others who are somewhat nervous and unsure of their Spanish skills. We address various linguistic varieties. It has been our mission to have students understand their linguistic obstacles and remove negative attitudes toward the language.

Instructors

Number of staff in program: 3

Languages in which staff members are proficient: All three are proficient in Spanish and English. There are two native speakers and one teacher who lived in the Dominican Republic for some time.

Credentials

Teacher certification: All teachers hold either university degrees in Spanish or have completed a state proficiency exam like the State Language Praxis exam.

Anita Rossell:

- BA in Theoretical linguistics
- MA in Applied Linguistics
- TESOL
- Praxis Language Exam

A native speaker originally from Lima, Peru, who is contemplating a doctorate in curriculum writing (for programs addressing the needs of heritage speakers).

Professional development opportunities teachers have: Access to conferences like the California Foreign Language conferences that are held every year. Ms. Rossell participated in a language consortium held at U.C. Davis last year along with various teachers from California and New York who taught heritage speakers.

Professional development opportunities teachers need: The instructors need more access to grants that will allow us to improve these courses. In addition, more technical support is needed for instructors who are trying to establish technology in their classrooms. Finally, more collaborative networking among educators teaching heritage speakers along with more current research work supporting these particular language programs.

Courses

Course description: The courses views bilingualism as a talent and not a handicap. The first two courses use a linguistic approach and focus on such issues as language interference, language change, fossilization, and bi-cultural identity. Also included is a historical and political perspective on the Latino population in the U.S. and the various Hispanic subgroups (e.g. the Cuban, Puerto Rican, and Mexican experience). Also included are literary works that describe the linguistic and cultural components of being an individual who lives in a bilingual/bicultural environment.

Hours per week students receive instruction: The school's block schedule allows students to receive 55 minutes at the beginning of the week and two classes of 90 minutes later in the week. This amounts to about 4 hours of instruction a week.

Student grouping: We group students based on the results of their assessment tests. For students we receive the recommendation of their former teacher.

Heritage Language Skills

English Skills

- Other: We do a great deal of linguistic comparison with both English and Spanish to identify false cognates and discuss the nature of language change occurring in Spanish.

Heritage Skills

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing
- Other: We discuss the etymology and the diversity of the Spanish language. In addition, we analyze some of the morphological, phonological, semantic, and historical changes that have been influenced by English.

Levels of language proficiency students reach by the end of the program: Students who have successfully completed all levels of the program are eligible to take an Advance Placement Exam and receive college transfer credits.

Culture

- History
- Festivals
- Customs
- Traditions/beliefs
- Folktales
- Arts and crafts
- Rhymes
- Social and cultural norms
- Cultural appropriateness
- Literature

Other culture-related topics or activities: Students took a field trip to the Museum of Latin American Art, located in Long Beach, California. This museum houses one of the largest collections of art created by Hispanic artists. Students participated in a hands-on art workshop along with a tour headed by Spanish-speaking docents.

Student identity that the program fosters: The program strives to develop students who:

- appreciate the Spanish language and the diversity of the Hispanic culture.
- are tolerant of linguistic variations found in the language and knowledgeable of the formal and informal registers of Spanish.
- can analyze and make connections between the literary works presented in the course and real life experiences.
- embrace their linguistic abilities as well as their bicultural experiences.

Methodologies

Methodologies and instructional strategies using in class: Cooperative and collaborative group work are essential components of the course. The Web site has the course syllabus and resource links to help aid native speakers (<http://www.freewebs.com/arskeeter/>). This is the Web site's first year in operation. PowerPoint presentations are used in the course along with a DVD provided by the publishers of *Nuevas Vistas Curso Avanzado, Uno y Dos*. Students are required to keep a writing journal, which allows them to share their work with their peers. There has been an ongoing Mexican foreign exchange program for the past 15 years. Ms. Connie Smith, the program head, has occasionally included heritage speakers to act as hosts for students visiting our country for two weeks. Although, the majority of students who act as hosts come from the regular Spanish classes, we have had several bilingual heritage speakers participate in the program. We have also included various films in the advanced level curriculum.

Materials

Textbooks: We use the following textbooks and supplemental materials in our 2nd year level course (We will adopt a new textbook in the year 2008 for these particular courses.)

- *Sendas Literarias* (Heinle & Heinle, 2003)
- *El Español Escrito*, Curso Para Hispanohablantes Bilingues, (Prentice-Hall, 1993)
- *Veinte Poemas de Amor y Una Canción Desesperada. Cien Sonetos de Amor*, 4th edition (Plaza and Janes Editores, 1996)
- *Don Juan Tenorio* (Juan de La Cuesta-Hispanic Monographs, 2004)
- *Marianela* (Dtv, 2000)

Other materials: Native speakers of the second year level have had access to a Web site designed to address their specific needs. We are currently working on updating the Web site.

Technology used in the program: Students are encouraged to produce their own videos pertaining to the various themes presented in the class, create their own PowerPoint presentations, and research various topics via the Internet.

Assessment

- Weekly quizzes
- Chapter tests
- Mid-term tests
- Final exams
- School/District developed tests
- State testing
- Standardized test name: Advanced Placement exams
- Student self-assessment instrument
- Teacher's observations
- Portfolios
- Program exit test

Articulation

Local school connections: The school receives students from Adams Middle School (Redondo Beach, CA) and Parris Middle School (Redondo Beach, CA). We have connections with students who may transfer from other schools that offer heritage speaker courses.

Home-school connections and parent involvement: At the 2nd year level, students are asked to interview parents or family members to understand newly arrived immigrants and those from previous generations. Parents have been invited to speak about their experiences with the language and the cultural issues they have dealt with while in this country. We also encourage students to share their cultural experiences during holidays and special celebrations such as their "quinceañeras."

Opportunities students have for using the language and developing cultural knowledge outside the program: Students are informed of various social activities and events that take place in our community and state.

What the program has in place

Financial support

- Parents
- Local community organization
- A few organizations have offered monetary scholarships for a few students
- We are in desperate need of grant money. Some of our students are involved in the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, which helps students who will be the first in their family to attend college.

Solicitation of funds: No one is soliciting financial support yet, but Ms. Rossell has begun grant writing to help some students.

Assistance or collaboration you would like to receive for your program from other entities: We would like to see more competitive writing programs and programs supporting literacy in both Spanish and English.

System for graduating students and granting credit for study in the program: We have been successful in acquiring Advance Placement (AP) college credit for our students at the Universities of California (UCs).

System for monitoring student academic achievement: The program does not monitor students' overall academic achievement in school. However, the program staff believe that bilingualism promotes academic achievement.

Research or evaluation of the program: There is no formal evaluation of the current program for heritage speakers, but staff would like one to be done.

Special Challenges and Comments

Special Challenges: We are in need of current, research-based textbooks. We are also looking at revising our placement test or replacing it with a more current one. I would also like to see a higher percentage of heritage speakers in the Advance Placement Literature course.

Comments: Popular culture is one aspect we would like to work into the curriculum to reach more students. The staff have thoroughly enjoyed teaching the students and these courses, because we have seen changes in students' language and cultural awareness. To see students take pride in their linguistic abilities has been thrilling. Finally, students see first hand the importance of language appreciation. Now, students are seriously considering utilizing their language abilities in their professional lives and in their local community.