

Higher Education Heritage Language Profile
The Sabine Ulibarri
The University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM

Department: The program is run under the Spanish and Portuguese Department

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Languages/dialects taught: Spanish

The courses are taught on an **Undergraduate Level**.

Course Sequence: There is a sequence of four courses that are taught through a 200 level.

Program Description

Purposes and goals of the program: The program is literacy based, so we aim to develop confidence in the students' ability to speak their different variations of Spanish. Additionally, we encourage students to take pride in their language heritage and ethnic history.

Program Origins: The program was founded in the 1950s, by a professor at the university, out of a need for a special language class for bilingual students.

The faculty's and administration's expectations for the program: To have the students develop strong Spanish literacy skills.

Students

Second generation immigrants

Third generation immigrants

Other: The program can have up to 12th generation immigrants

Total student enrollment: 450 in the fall semester

Age of students: The program accepts students of all ages. Our age range usually spans from 18-70.

Identification of a heritage speaker: The program has two ways of identifying a Spanish heritage speaker:

1. If Spanish is the primary language spoken at home
2. If a student is separated by immigration by at least two generations

Placement of students: The students take a placement exam before they enter the program to determine their level. The same exam is administered at the end of the first course to determine how far the student has progressed.

Percentage of students that complete the program: 60%

Percentage of students that continue studying the heritage language after completing the program: 30%

Reasons students do not continue the program: The students usually aren't taught the importance of being bilingual in today's society. Additionally, many of the students are not encouraged to continue studying Spanish by their individual advisors.

Students' attitudes toward the language varieties they speak: Several students enter the program with negative attitudes.

Students' expectations of the program: There are a variety of expectations from the students. A majority want to sharpen the language skills they already have acquired so they can communicate with their grandparents. Others want Spanish literacy skills for potential job opportunities and for other personal and identity reasons.

Faculty

Total number of faculty teaching in the program: 11.5

Number of Tenure-track professors: 1

Number of Teaching Assistants: 10.5

Languages in which the faculty are proficient: English, Spanish, and Portuguese

Credentials:

MAs and PhDs: Hispanic Literature, Portuguese, Linguistics, Southwest Studies, Peninsular Literature, and Latin American Literature

Professional development opportunities available to the faculty: TAs are required to take a methodology course in the fall semester, a weekly practicum, and a one week orientation seminar before each new semester.

Professional development opportunities the faculty need: The faculty needs to take more workshops during the year.

Instruction

Courses: There are a sequence of four courses in the program, 111, 112, 211, and 212. Since there are so many students in these classes there is a total of 22 different sections for these classes.

Language Skills

Heritage Skills:

- Listening
- Speaking
- Reading
- Writing

Culture

- Geography
- History
- Festivals
- Customs
- Traditions/Beliefs
- Religion
- Folktales
- Arts and Crafts
- Dances
- Songs
- Rhymes
- Social and cultural norms
- Cultural appropriateness
- Literature

Student identity that the program fosters: Since New Mexico is rich in Hispanic history, we are trying to revitalize a trend of student interest in seeking their own personal identity.

Special content courses offered: There are special 300 level courses, offered through the university, that include topics on Hispanic literature, film, music, theater, etc.

Methodologies

Methodologies and instructional strategies used in the program: The program uses a rather eclectic approach by teaching Spanish through a historical and modern context. Additionally, a great amount of emphasis is placed on communicative competence.

Materials

Textbook: The program uses a working manual, made up by myself, of photocopied materials. Included in the book are cultural readings and grammar worksheets.

Other Materials: There is a packet of short stories that includes some authors from New Mexico. There is also an audio CD that is used in correspondence with the textbook.

Technology used in the program: We use a variety of resources in our courses, including overhead projectors, the internet, and a language lab. We use the language lab to work on grammar and play language games.

Assessment

- Weekly exams
- Research Projects
- Oral Proficiency Exams
- Final Exams

A series of three exams are given throughout each semester.

Articulation

Local connections: The program will occasionally invite first generation immigrant high school students to participate in class instruction. Additionally, we will assign research projects and other assignments that require students to visit and interact in the local heritage community. This includes interviews with grandparents or other senior members.

What the program has in place

Financial Support: Financial support comes from the University's Department of Spanish and Portuguese.

Special Challenges and Comments

Special Challenges: A huge problem that the program faces is the campus' lack of knowledge on the special needs of heritage speakers. Heritage students are unique in that they function in two different worlds and it becomes an important part of their identity to revitalize their language skills. Additionally, many students do not realize how important bilingualism can be to their success at the university and to their future.

Comments: This program offers a unique learning experience because of the tradition and age of the program and its heritage community. For example, many of the teaching assistants are heritage speakers that have already completed this program. Also, the heritage community offers a mixture of new immigrants and families that

have been in the area for several generations. However, despite its strong roots, there are still many negative attitudes nationally stigmatized about this particular community. One of the giant hurdles for the program is helping people, both heritage speakers and non-speakers, to understand the culture, traditions, and needs of this community.