

Omaha Public Schools K-12 Program

Background Information

Institution: Omaha Public Schools

Program address: 3215 Cuming Street, Omaha, NE 68131

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Contact Person:

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Type of institution: Public middle and high school

Grades taught: 6-12

Languages/dialects taught: Spanish

Program Description

Purposes and goals of the program: To increase the literacy and communication skills of Spanish-speaking students.

Instructors' and administration's expectations for the program: Students will be able to communicate in formal registers in both speaking and writing.

Students

Countries of origin: Mexico and other Central American countries

Total student enrollment: 650

Age of students: 11-18

How the program identifies heritage speakers: In the past students were asked if they had grown up in a Spanish-speaking home. A placement assessment is currently being created.

Percentage of students who complete the program: 75%

Possible reasons for student withdrawal: Other classes conflict with the schedule or students lose interest.

Students' attitudes toward the language varieties they speak: The program is designed to teach them greater tolerance for other varieties of Spanish.

Instructors

Number of instructors in the program: 7

Languages in which instructors are proficient: Spanish. Six of the seven teachers are native speakers of Spanish.

Credentials: Teachers have Spanish certification in Nebraska.

Professional development opportunities for instructors:

- Central States Conference for Foreign Language Teaching
- Other conferences
- Literacy training provided by ESL program

Instruction

Total contact hours per week: 5

Times per week: 5

Student grouping:

- Middle School Heritage Speakers
- Heritage Intro (High School)
- Heritage Speakers
- Heritage Speakers II

Language skills

Skills developed by the program: Listening, speaking, reading, and writing in Spanish and cultural knowledge.

Levels of language proficiency reached by the end of the program: Students attain intermediate-low to advanced-low (on the ACTFL scale) in speaking and writing.

Culture

Aspects of culture taught:

- History
- Festivals
- Customs
- Traditions and beliefs
- Songs and dances
- Social and cultural norms
- Cultural appropriateness
- Literature

Kind of student identity fostered by program: The program attempts to foster pride within the students. Several of the courses are honors courses that recognize students' language expertise.

Methodologies

Methodologies and instructional strategies used in the program: Standards-based language approach

Materials

Textbooks: Nuevas Vistas. 2005, Holt.

Other materials used for instruction:

- Teacher-created materials
- Internet resources

Technology used for instruction: All teachers and students have computer access.

Assessment

Assessments used to evaluate students' progress:

- Chapter tests
- Midterm exams
- Final exams

- Standardized assessments
 - Formative
 - Summative
- Self-assessment (Lingfolio)
- Teachers' observations
- Portfolios
- ACTFL OPI

Articulation

Connections:

- Local schools
- Colleges and Universities
- Partnership with El Museo Latino

Opportunities for using the heritage language and developing cultural knowledge outside the program: Partnership with El Museo Latino