KEY ISSUES IN SPANISH HERITAGE LANGUAGE PROGRAM DESIGN AND ADMINISTRATION

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Introduction

The field of Spanish heritage language (SHL) education has experienced tremendous growth since the late 1990s. Our understanding has greatly developed in the areas of heritage learner (HL) profiles and needs (see, e.g., Alarcón, 2010; Au & Oh, 2005; Beaudrie, 2009; Carreira & Kagan, 2011; He, 2010; among others), SHL linguistic systems (see, e.g., Montrul, 2008, 2012, this volume; among others), HL instructional goals (Beaudrie, Ducar, & Potowski, 2014; Valdés, 1995, 2005; Valdés & Parra, this volume; among others), and HL instructional practices (Beaudrie et al., 2014; Carreira, 2012; Carreira & Potowski, 2011; Kondo-Brown & Brown, 2007; Martínez, 2003; Roca & Colombi, 2003; among others).

At the same time, SHL programs across the United States have been steadily expanding. At the postsecondary level, the trend has been for language departments across the country either to initiate or to expand the number of courses specially designed for SHL learners (Beaudrie, 2012) in an effort to meet the needs of a growing Hispanic population. Notwithstanding the significant gains made in the field of SHL education and SHL research in general (see Beaudrie & Fairclough, 2012), scant research has been conducted on administering such programs, and our understanding of what constitutes effective practices in program coordination is limited. In light of the growing number of these programs, the need to develop efficient and successful administrative practices is becoming ever more pressing. First, this chapter briefly describes key issues in language program administration more generally, drawing on decades of experience in basic language programs that teach second languages, in order to highlight what is different about HL program direction. A summary of publications investigating the existence and growth of SHL programs around the nation is followed by an overview of existing proposals for addressing current issues in SHL program administration. The chapter continues with an overview of several concrete SHL program initiatives, and finally sets an agenda to expand this critical area of practice and research. The chapter focuses on the postsecondary context, but several issues are likely relevant to high school Spanish programs as well.
Key issues in language program administration

A “language program” is defined here as one that teaches a non-English language. The 2013 Survey of the Modern Language Association found that 8.1% of the total post-secondary student population enroll in modern languages courses with Spanish as the most studied language (50.6%), followed by French (12.7%), American Sign Language (7.0%), and German (5.5%). Overall, results showed that a diversification of the languages is being studied in comparison to prior years and there are increases in several languages such as Korean, American Sign Language, Chinese, and Portuguese. Nevertheless, Spanish enrollment continues to exceed enrollments in all other languages combined. Given that the majority of U.S. postsecondary institutions have language programs, it is important to understand how they function and what are considered best practices in administering them. To date, Lord (2014) and the annual research volumes published by the American Association of University Supervisors, Coordinators, and Directors of Language Programs (www.aausc.org) have served the needs of second language programs, but neither has directly explored specific issues related to heritage language learners.

SHL programs in the United States: a general survey

SHL programs in the United States have seen tremendous growth in recent years. In 2002, Ingold and colleagues found that only 17.8% of 146 university Spanish programs offered separate courses for SHL learners, and that enrollment in these courses was generally quite low. The survey respondents reported facing challenges due to inadequate program information, low interest among students or insufficient student enrollment “expected,” and inadequate language-placement and advising procedures in place. Programs that did not offer SHL courses cited insufficient enrollment, lack of resources, and lack of trained instructors. Also, participants noted a lack of interest and support from administrators, students, and faculty. Overall, the results suggested that as of 2002, heritage learners’ needs were still not a priority for Spanish language programs, especially in institutions with low numbers of Hispanic students. However, ten years later, Beaudrie (2012) contacted all four-year postsecondary institutions in the United States with at least 5% Hispanic enrollment (p. 422). A high response rate of 86% revealed that 163 SHL programs were distributed across 26 states plus the District of Columbia, accounting for 40% of the surveyed institutions and representing a 22.2% increase over Ingold et al.’s (2002) study.

More recently, Carreira (2014) reported on the findings of an online survey of heritage language programs (HLPs) in postsecondary institutions administered by the National Heritage Language Research Center. It was designed to address gaps in previous surveys in the areas of teacher training and background, the proficiency levels for which HL courses are designed, and pedagogical materials used. At the time, 298 programs were part of the database, 76 operating in Spanish. Of these, a total of 61 programs (80.2%) offered separate courses for SHL learners, a considerably higher figure than had been reported in previous surveys. Given that these results come from programs that volunteered to complete the survey, a self-selection bias appears to be the cause for the high number.1

It is very likely that the number of SHL programs continues to rise each year concomitant with the increase in the percent of the U.S. Latino population, which grew from 12.5% in 2000 to 16% in 2010 and to 17.3% in 2016 (the last year for which data were available at the time of writing this chapter). There has also been important growth in the number of Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), defined by the Higher Education Act as degree-granting institutions with Full-Time Equivalent undergraduate enrollments that are at least 25% Hispanic.

1
Figure 24.1 shows the growth in the number of HSIs from 1990 through 2014 as well as the types of institutions they constitute.

While not all individuals who identify as Hispanic have Spanish proficiency, HSIs very likely have relatively large numbers of heritage speakers. Thus, a future direction would be to survey those HSIs that offer Spanish courses and potentially develop a network of HIS HL programs.²

Challenges faced by HLPs

Research on SHL programs in the United States has highlighted achievements but also numerous challenges. A very pressing problem is the lack of appropriate course placement mechanisms (to be addressed further in a later section). Beaudrie (2012)’s nationwide survey asked whether a placement exam was administered to match heritage language students to the appropriate course. Out of 99 respondents to this item, approximately half said they did not.³ If this trend holds, relatively few universities (only 9.4%) have adopted a placement exam. Given the lack of a commercially available SHL exam and, more importantly, the diverse nature of the SHL student population, current research suggests that it is most effective for each program to develop its own test tailored to the characteristics of the local population (Beaudrie & Ducar, 2012; Beaudrie, Ducar, & Potowski, 2014; Potowski, Parada, & Morgan-Short, 2012). Several studies have documented how individual universities have successfully designed in-house placement exams (Beaudrie & Ducar, 2012; Carreira, 2012; Fairclough, 2006, 2012; Fairclough, Belpoliti, & Bermejo, 2010; MacGregor-Mendoza, 2012; Potowski, Parada, & Morgan-Short, 2012; Wilson, 2012).

The NHLRC survey (Carreira, 2014) revealed that existing SHL programs target learners with relatively high levels of Spanish proficiency. Less advanced SHL learners tend to end up in L2 courses, which do not provide an optimal context for these students, because the textbook and curriculum adopted are designed exclusively for the characteristics of L2 learners. Survey participants also identified inadequate course options for students, non-tenure-track faculty (lecturers, students, and visiting fellows) being assigned to teach HL courses, inadequate professional development opportunities for instructors, inadequate placement tools, inadequate
pedagogical materials, low enrollments, and low retention. The most disturbing issue common to all these areas of concern, according to the author, is the implicit lack of funding and institutional commitment to heritage language teaching. It appears that several of the obstacles initially reported in Ingold and colleagues’ (2002) survey are still present in current programs, despite advances in research on SHL placement, pedagogical materials, and teacher training resources.

Two regional studies provide deeper insight into the major obstacles that SHL programs are currently experiencing. In California, Valdés and colleagues (2006) conducted a statewide inquiry of current practices in secondary and postsecondary SHL programs through surveys, observations, and interviews. They inquired about language-placement exams, course objectives, effective instructional practices, and education of instructors, among other things. As had been found by Beaudrie (2012), the majority of the institutions surveyed did not use exams to place students in appropriate language courses, so students either self-selected into a course or were advised by counselors. Importantly, the authors found no evidence that Spanish language maintenance was one of the program goals, even though one might argue this should be the main goal of SHL instruction (Valdés, 2010). The primary focus of most SHL programs was the teaching of “standard” Spanish, primarily because the instructors had no knowledge of language variation and devalued the Spanish varieties spoken by students. Interestingly, the results of a survey of Hispanic professionals, part of the same study, revealed that they would prefer to learn local community varieties of Spanish.

In an earlier study, Beaudrie (2011) examined SHL course offerings in four-year public and private universities in the Southwest. Out of 173 universities, 66 (38%) had an SHL program, but they addressed a limited range of instructional goals and only accommodated learners with a very specific profile. Most programs focused on improving students’ literacy skills, primarily writing, ignoring other language skills and students’ heritage cultures. In addition, courses were geared to students who were around the midpoint of the bilingual continuum (see Valdés, 2001), frequently excluding students at the lower or upper ends of the bilingual range. Moreover, there was a lack of consistency across university programs regarding course levels and the terminology used to describe various proficiency levels. Terms such as beginning, intermediate, and advanced had program-specific meanings, and a beginning-level SHL course in one institution, for example, was labelled as an intermediate-level course at another, making cross-programmatic articulation difficult. In addition, courses were inconsistently placed across programs in the first-, second-, or third-year curriculum regardless of targeted levels. Thus, although more programs are being created, it appears that some may have limited capacity to provide SHL learners with a quality language education.

In conclusion, the increasing availability of SHL programs is a key finding in existing research on SHL programs at the university level. Research has also highlighted that despite advances in the field, these programs continue to face major challenges in the areas of student placement, student enrollment, language curriculum, teaching materials, goals for HL education, and teacher training. The next section addresses recent research that points to solutions to these problems.

Specific issues in HLP development and administration

An earlier section outlined some of the major issues in language program administration. This section underscores what is different about HLPs, focusing on curricular development and placement issues.

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 2010) published a position paper calling for successful language programs to adopt a curriculum that recognizes
that the needs of heritage speakers often differ significantly from those of non-heritage speakers and to implement a challenging curriculum that builds upon the linguistic skills, cultural heritage, and cultural knowledge that HL students bring to the classroom. This is an important step for heritage language education because it challenges language programs to provide curricular options for heritage learners, either in specially designed SHL tracks or in mixed classes with a curriculum adapted and differentiated for both L2 and HL populations (see Carreira, 2012; Carreira & Chik, this volume).

Regardless of whether a program offers mixed classes or a separate SHL track, the goals for SHL instruction are significantly different from those for second language education, in order to address the specific needs of SHL learners. Beaudrie, Ducar, and Potowski (2014) summarize these goals, proposed by Valdés (2005) and Aparicio (1999):

1. Maintenance of the heritage language;
2. Acquisition of a prestige language variety;
3. Expansion of bilingual range;
4. Transfer of literacy skills;
5. Acquisition of academic skills in the heritage language;
6. Cultivation of positive attitudes toward the heritage language; and
7. Acquisition or development of cultural awareness.

These goals emphasize expanding the students’ linguistic repertoires so that they can communicate and function effectively in a range of bilingual, monolingual, and academic contexts. Although all of the goals are important in SHL education, from a programmatic perspective, it is important to bear in mind Valdés’s claim that a primary goal of HL education is heritage language maintenance not only for SHL learners but also to potentially help with intergenerational transmission of the heritage language (Valdés, 2010). For this reason, community connections and support are crucial for promoting heritage languages and bilingualism in the wider context.

With these goals in mind, the rest of this section will provide practical guidelines for how to go about overcoming the common challenges to creating and administering an SHL program. Beaudrie (2016) presents guidelines for the design, implementation, and evaluation of a program for heritage learners (see also Beaudrie, Ducar, & Potowski, 2014). She calls for a collaborative, integrative, and inclusive approach with an evaluation component as crucial for success. Table 24.1 presents the steps in designing or redesigning an HLP.

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<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>STEP 8</td>
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Step 1: Gather information and build an argument for the creation of an HL program

The first step addresses the problems reported in the literature regarding the lack of interest in HL programs among administrators, students, and faculty. It is crucial to gather available data to build a strong case for the value of a new SHL program. Such information should include the benefits of bilingualism and HL maintenance, comparisons with course offerings at peer institutions, and assessment of students’ self-reported needs and motivations. Beaudrie cites several resources available to help guide this process, including the Heritage Briefs on the CAL website (www.cal.org/resource-center/resource-archive/heritage-briefs) and recently published books (Beaudrie et al., 2014; Brinton, Kagan, & Bauckus, 2008).

Step 2: Gather resources for program building

Step 2 calls for identifying all existing and potential resources and sources of funding. Building a new program requires resources and funds for varied tasks such as implementing a placement test, designing websites, or simply advertising the courses, so forming a team that can work collaboratively to secure new or repurpose existing resources will greatly increase the chances of success. Readers may find it useful to consult Moore (2014) for ideas on how to obtain funding, although this source is aimed at non-public institutions.

Step 3: Provide teacher professional development in HL instruction

It is important that the teachers in charge of HL courses are selected from among experienced instructors who have received or are willing to receive additional training in HL education. Schwartz Caballero (2014) reviews national initiatives that support HL teacher preparation, including the National Heritage Language Resource Center (NHLRC), the Alliance for the Advancement of Heritage Languages, and the National Foreign Language Center (NFLC). Other resources are publications whose primary purpose is prepare teachers to be ready to teach HL learners (see, for example, Potowski & Carreira (2004) and Beaudrie, Ducar, & Potowski (2014), as well as the free Startalk online activities at http://startalk.nhlrc.ucla.edu/Default_startalk.aspx).

Step 4: Decide on program structure and preliminary course content

Once the initial decisions are made about the need for an SHL program, the resources available, and the professionals who will be in charge of it, the specifics of program structure need to be considered. According to Beaudrie (2016), step 4 is to make decisions about the course sequence of the program. This should be done after a careful consideration of the language proficiency levels and instructional needs of the target population in combination with the resources available to the program. Current SHL students enrolled in L2 courses can be point of departure to determine the proficiency levels of potential SHL learners. While typical SHL programs offer either one or two courses to address the literacy development of Spanish speakers, a good number of programs offer courses for non-fluent SHL learners such as receptive bilinguals or advanced courses to help students further develop written academic genres.

The two main options are to offer a sequence of courses that exactly parallels the L2 track (e.g., Spanish 101 for L2 and Spanish 103 for HL), or to offer one intensive, semester-long HL course per year of foreign/second language study (e.g., Spanish 101 and 102 for L2, and Spanish 103 for HL). The program structure must be tailored as much as possible to the pedagogical needs of the local student population. Designing only one course and enrolling every available student in it, regardless of their linguistic competencies and needs, would likely compromise the quality and success of the program. For examples, visit the SHL program at the University of Houston (www.uh.edu/class/spanish/language-programs/heritage-language/) or at the University of Arizona (http://spanish.arizona.edu/undergrad/spanish-heritage-language).
Step 5: Identify HL students

The next step is to design a quick and accurate procedure for identifying SHL students, distinguishing them from L2 learners. While some institutions are able to meet and identify students on an individual basis, some others have to include an identification tool in their placement exam because there is no personal contact with students. Three identification tools are commonly used and have proven effective depending on program individual needs (see also Beaudrie et al., 2014): (1) questionnaires (with questions probing the amount and type of contact students have had with the HL); (2) lexical identifiers inserted in a placement exam (i.e., lexical items expected to be known only by heritage learners and not by L2 learners; see Potowski, Parada, & Morgan-Short, 2012); and (3) informal methods (self-identification, advisor referral, and personal communication). The most important point to take into account in this step is that future enrollment relies to a great extent on the identification tool and that is the reason why it is so crucial to select a tool that is accurate and at the same time allows an institution to reach a large number of potential SHL learners. Unfortunately, many students are unaware of the SHL track option and identifying them early provides an excellent opportunity to inform them of it and recruit them. This is especially critical for programs that allow HL learners to enroll in L2 courses. Once students enroll in L2 courses, it is very difficult to convince them to switch tracks, no matter how many incentives are offered (retroactive credits, hybridized or intensive programs with fewer in-class hours and quicker completion of language requirement, etc.). For further reading on this topic, readers should consult Beaudrie and Ducar (2012); Fairclough (2012); Fairclough et al. (2010); González Pino and Pino (2000); Kondo-Brown (2004); Llosa (2013); Potowski, Parada, and Morgan-Short (2012); and Thompson (2014).

Step 6: Place HL students in appropriate course levels

Once students have been identified as SHL learners, the next step is to place them into the appropriate course level. A good placement test avoids the time-consuming alternative of placing each student individually in the appropriate course and increases the chances of having maximally homogenous classes, which are pedagogically more effective. Table 24.2 summarizes available SHL exam options.

Each individual program should opt for the exam type that best suits its needs and resources. It is useful to assemble a group of collaborators who can contribute to such a project with different areas of expertise. Individuals with training on test design, statistics, and computer programming may need to be consulted.

As noted by Beaudrie, Ducar, and Potowski (2014, pp. 211–212), there is an important difference between proficiency tests and placement tests. Proficiency tests seek to establish the general level of linguistic abilities students have. Many language departments administer a general language proficiency test and then create a scale of which scores correspond with which courses. True placement tests, on the other hand, utilize actual course content for their question items. Researchers strongly recommend that HL programs use true placement and that it be locally designed to meet specific programs (which ideally were designed for specific student profiles). This means that the task of designing an HL placement test often lies within each HL program. This is a key feature that makes HL program direction very different from BL program direction; BL program placement in large part relies on fairly universal course content. First and second semester Spanish, as well as third and fourth semester Spanish, look basically the same no matter where they are taught because the students are more homogenous in their experiences with Spanish. As many chapters in this volume make clear, heritage speakers have widely varying abilities in Spanish.
Step 7: Promote the program and recruit students

Step 7 is one that is frequently overlooked but can be very important for the success of an SHL program, especially where HLs have the option to take L2 courses. Program promotion and student recruitment, although time consuming, makes a difference in student enrollment levels. As with the other steps, a collaborative effort is most effective and more likely to have a big impact. Potential collaborators are program coordinators, advisors, faculty and graduate teaching assistants, administrators, and the SHL students themselves. Some of the main activities that can be used to promote SHL courses are (1) marketing materials and media (welcome letters/e-mails, promotional letters/e-mails, an HL program newsletter, an HL program website; and (2) physical presence: class visits to promote the program, attendance at events that attract potential students; visits to campus advisors to educate them about the SHL program; launch a program visibility and promotion campaign, and promotional videos. For examples, visit the SHL program at Arizona State University (https://silc.asu.edu/content/spanish) or the SHL program at the University of Oregon (https://rl.uoregon.edu/undergraduate/shl/).

Step 8: Evaluate the program

The last step calls for a program evaluation, which is “the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the

Table 24.2 Placement test options

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<th>Type of placement exam</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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| Oral interview         | - Face-to-face  
                       | - Requires administration and scoring expertise  |
|                        |           | - Is personalized  
                       | - Provides opportunities for advising and mentoring  |
|                        |           | - Provides no information on literacy skills  |
| Written essay          | - May be paper-and-pencil or computerized  |
|                        | - Requires scoring expertise  |
|                        |           | - Provides information on writing skills  |
|                        |           | - Provides no information on other language skills  |
| Multiple-choice exam with discrete items | - May be paper-and-pencil or computerized  |
|                        | - Requires design expertise but minimal administration or scoring expertise  |
|                        |           | - Is fast to administer  
                       | - Measures specific characteristics that help place a student  |
|                        |           | - Requires some technical and statistical resources  |
| Proficiency test       | - May be paper-and-pencil or computerized  |
|                        | - Requires expertise in design, administration, and scoring  |
|                        |           | - Provides good information on proficiency  |
|                        |           | - Requires considerable technical and statistical resources  |

Source: Beaudrie et al. (2014, p. 213).
program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming” (Patton, 1997, p. 23). This step is crucial for ensuring program quality. The diversity of the HL population and their wide-ranging needs makes program evaluation particularly important for ascertaining that the practices being adopted are effective in meeting both program goals and the specific needs of the local student population. For SHL programs, a comprehensive evaluation should include the following components:

1. Examination of the program mission and instructional objectives to verify their appropriateness for the current population of students and their alignment with the perspectives and needs of administrators, instructors, and students and the current recommendations in the academic literature.

2. Analysis of the content and materials for each course to determine how well these fulfill the program mission and objectives and meet teachers and students’ expectations.

3. Careful inspection of the SHL learner identification and placement procedures to make sure that the classes are maximally homogenous (which is most effective pedagogically) and that the official criteria for inclusion in the HL program are realized in practice.

4. Examination of the effectiveness of instruction to determine to what extent the current teaching methodologies are helping students reach the program’s instructional goals and are based in research.

5. Scrutiny of current learner assessment methods in terms of how accurately they reflect students’ learning and proficiency levels and measure instructional goals.

6. Measurement of the health of the program in terms of student enrollment levels, instructor turnover, and instructor and student satisfaction levels.

It is recommended that both qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods be used (Ross, 2009). In addition, using a combination of evaluations of products and processes is optimal because the former provides information on what works, and the latter reveals why. Large-scale program evaluation should be carried out every few years (see Birckbichler, 2006; Kiely & Rea-Dickins, 2005; Lynch, 1996; Norris, 2009; among others).

**New initiatives and future directions**

Recent publications on SHL instruction have described innovative projects and curricular options for SHL learners that reflect current understanding of best practices in SHL instruction. This new trend responds to, as Martínez and Schwartz (2012) note, calls from scholars for the implementation of a critical approach to SHL instruction and the incorporation of critical service-learning (Leeman, 2005, 2012; Leeman et al., 2011a) and the voices of students desiring stronger connections with their surrounding Spanish-speaking communities (on the latter see Beaudrie, Ducar, & Relaño-Pastor, 2009). Such proposals are primarily based on either cultural or community service-learning projects. Examples of these two types of projects are showcased next.

The first innovative culture-based project was introduced more than 14 years ago in Fountain (2001). She described the development and structure of a culturally focused SHL program in a small college with a growing Latino student population. This program focused on forging connections with the Hispanic community through an increase in the college library holdings of Spanish-language materials, trips to other Spanish-speaking communities in the United States, and internship opportunities in the local Spanish-speaking community. Fountain also described how the college expanded its Latino activities and services and its course offerings to serve the
growing Latino population (e.g., courses in Hispanic Communities in the United States, Cross-Cultural Seminar in Mexico, Hispanic Practicum).

Another innovative cultural project initially described by Roca and Alonso (2006) is the “Abuelos Project.” In this case students interview Spanish-speaking community elders in their native language about their experiences as immigrants to the United States. This project helps students develop not only their language skills but also their historical and cultural knowledge as well as their connections with local community members. Building on this project, Maria Carreira (n.d.) developed a unit with a series of progressively more difficult writing assignments that range from a transcribed oral history to a written interview, a short story, and finally, an academic essay. Students are immersed in and read pieces related to all these different types of genres in order to increase their exposure to various types of writing. The curriculum is available in the NHLRC (www.nhlrc.ucla.edu/nhlrc/category/learnteach).

Finally, Belpoliti and Fairclough (2016), propose inquiry-based cultural projects designed to develop learners’ communication skills and cultural competence. Over the course of a semester SHL learners participate in different research projects that involve surveys, Internet searches, and interviews, first within their immediate context (family and friends) and then in the broader community (peers and community members). The research topics center around different aspects of the HL culture. At the semester’s end, students prepare oral presentations and write academic essays.

Community-based or community-service learning projects are the other main development in SHL curricula (see Abbott & Martínez, this volume). Martínez (2010) described the development of a four-course program, Medical Spanish for Heritage Learners (MSHL), that focuses on the development of language skills and critical awareness for health-care professionals serving the U.S. Latino community. The program features thematic units on particular diseases or health issues that integrate language development and the learning of medical concepts and issues surrounding the U.S. Latino community. As students progress through the units, they develop the linguistic and cultural proficiency to discuss these concepts and issues in a variety of situational contexts. The most innovative aspect of the curriculum is that it integrates the most important features of sound heritage language instruction, language instruction for specific purposes, and service-learning. The serving-learning component, which takes place in the local community, makes a vital contribution within the Spanish-speaking community whose members often experience health disparities due to language differences and limited English proficiency (LEP). Martínez and Schwartz (2012) describe students’ experiences in a required component of the MSHL program, a semester-long internship at a Texas clinic on the U.S.-Mexico border. This experience renewed students’ commitment to Spanish language maintenance and increased their understanding of and respect for language variation in Spanish.

Another service-learning project aimed at both improving the academic experience of SHL college students and achieving social change in the community is described by Leeman et al. (2011a, 2011b). In this initiative at George Mason University, college Spanish students taught an after-school HL Spanish enrichment program at a local elementary school. The college students were encouraged to enter the community as experts in language and culture and to participate in community-based projects promoting Spanish language maintenance. By the end of the project, students had expanded their linguistic repertoires and critical language awareness, while at the same time they reported greater awareness of and pride in their cultural and linguistic expertise. Other critical service-learning projects are described in Rabin (2008, 2011) and Trujillo (2009).

A mixed heritage/non-heritage service-learning course is presented by Parra (2013). This advanced fourth-year course at Harvard University is based on a methodological approach that combines service-learning, multiliteracies, and critical border pedagogy. It focuses on the experiences of Latinos in the United States, addressing the complex Latino history in the United States.
Regarding issues such as border crossings, cultural identity, the education of Latino children, and the future of the Latino community. The course included a service component in a local organization serving the Latino community. At the end of the course, students were required to complete a project that included producing an art object, writing an essay, and presenting the project to the class.

Until recently, most institutions of higher education have offered traditional programs for SHL learners with a main focus on preparing them to continue their studies toward a major in Spanish. As Valdes et al. (2006) point out, these programs espouse goals that may be misaligned with community members’ needs, such as the Latino professionals’ in their study. The innovative projects described earlier show that a different trend is emerging, led by pioneering scholars who have a different vision for SHL programs. They are responding in creative and powerful ways to the call for SHL instruction practices that are attuned to the needs of students and the local community and that provide opportunities for meaningful connections.

Future work needs to continue examining current instructional and curricular practices to explore how the goals laid out for SHL education are being realized in actual classrooms. Exposing areas of potential disconnect between research and practice will allow educators to begin narrowing these gaps. Classroom-based research studies are desperately needed to determine if SHL instructional practices reflect current understandings on the best practices and methodologies for implementing SHL goals. In addition, stronger and more widely available teacher preparation and development programs will be crucial to prepare future and current teachers for research-based SHL instruction.

A burning question in SHL program administration that still needs to be answered is what to prioritize in the SHL curriculum. Students come to the classroom with a host of needs and wants, but they cannot all be addressed in the limited amount of time these courses typically provide. A corollary question is what is the optimal distribution and time frame for individual course goals and objectives to be achieved? It is crucial to develop a curriculum that sets challenging but realistic expectations for students. Further research is necessary to understand curricular options and their effectiveness before we can find any answers to these two questions.

A notable gap in current research on SHL programs regards potential uses of technology to enhance instruction. In L2 contexts, technology has greatly enhanced both language assessment and language instruction (see Golonka et al., 2014 for a review). Although some work is under way in this area (Correa, 2015; Henshaw, 2016; Torres, 2016), the potential benefits of Web 2.0 applications, online and hybrid instruction, and telecollaboration for SHL instruction still have not been researched. We obviously cannot assume that technology will have the same beneficial impact in the SHL as in the L2 context.

Finally, I believe that the SHL profession would benefit greatly from the development of program standards, analogous to the Standards for Adult Education ESL programs (TESOL, 2003) or the CEA Standards for English Language Programs and Institutions (CEA, 2014). SHL or HL program standards will help new and existing programs to follow best practice guidelines and ensure that students receive quality education.

**Conclusion**

Undeniably, the fields of SHL research and SHL education have experienced tremendous growth since the late 1990s. The positive trends in terms of SHL program growth and curricular innovation are encouraging. As SHL programs spread around the country, they typically face enormous challenges regarding resources, support, and expertise. It follows that a major task for scholars of SHL research and education is to renew efforts to bridge these gaps in order to transform SHL programs nationwide into pioneering centers of quality Spanish-language education and maintenance.
Notes

1 The survey was launched on the NHLRC website in October 2010. Recruitment efforts included listserv announcements, advertising, and personal contacts of people connected with the NHLRC in some way.

2 Kim Potowski, personal communication.

3 Those who did report using the following methods (in order of frequency): (1) a combination of two or more methods (25, or 26%); (2) self-identification (22, or 23%); (3) teacher or advisor referral (9, or 9.4%); (4) interview (9, or 9.4%); and (5) placement exam (9, or 9.4%).

4 A preliminary version of these guidelines appeared in Beaudrie, Ducar, and Potowski (2014).

References


Spanish program design and administration


