

Objective

Children, grades 1-5, whose primary language is Spanish, learn to become proficient readers and writers of Spanish. Self-esteem flows from mastery, connection, and integration, and continuity with family and culture of origin while enhancing the assimilation of mainstream English language and culture.



Philosophy

A child learns a second language more easily and quickly when s/he is literate in his/her primary language. La Clase is based on this fact.

Children are given the opportunity to develop their original language, Spanish, especially learning to read and write Spanish. This facilitates the process of mastering their second language, English: speaking, reading and writing.

We believe in taking advantage of and building upon an asset the children bring: their primary language, Spanish.

Our goal is for the children to become bilingual and literate in both languages. "A high level of competence in the first language contributes to a healthy sense of biculturalism, and avoidance of the state of "bicultural ambivalence", shame of the first culture and rejection of the second culture." (Krashen, Stephen D. (1998), Under Attack: The case Against Bilingual Education. Language Education Associates, Culver City, California)

"Because they have not fallen behind in cognitive and academic growth during the 4-7 years that it takes to build academic proficiency in a second language, bilingually schooled students typically sustain this level of academic achievement and outperform monolingually schooled students in the upper grades." (Collier, Virginia P. (1995). Acquiring a Second Language for School. National Clearing for Bilingual Education)



The Program

- Spanish-speaking parents choose this once-a-week after school 1.5 hour class for their children.
- La Clase begins in mid-October and ends during the first week of June.
- The children are in grades 1-5 and attend the school where La Clase is offered.
- The teachers are mothers of students.
- The teachers plan lessons based on books from Mexico to teach reading and writing.
- The school offers space for La Clase: a common room, the conference, the English language Learners' class-room, and adjacent classrooms.
- The school donates use of a copy machine and paper.
- The principal and staff offer their support for this class, realizing the positive academic and psychological importance of La Clase for the students.

Brief History

La Clase Spanish Literacy Project will begin its sixth year in fall of 2009.

Our first class had approximately 20-25 students each week. During the last school year, 2008-2009, we averaged 55-60 students each week.

Carolyn Winch has been the coordinator-director for these past five years and will continue in this capacity for the present time.

She retired from Redmond School District in June 2004, after having been the English Language Teacher for second language learners for many years at Evergreen, John Tuck, and Vern Patrick elementary schools.

The English Language learners' teacher at Vern Patrick acts as the liaison between Vern Patrick School and La Clase, writes necessary communications for parents and helps facilitate La Clase.

This past year, six mothers were involved as teachers. One maestra (teacher), Saby Hernandez, will teach art to all the students beginning the 2009-2010 school year.

Vision

The mother-teachers, "Las maestras", are volunteers. They gain pride and self-confidence from their growing pedagogical skills, and their collegiality and friendship with one another. They are able to impact students' lives and observe their growing ability to read and write in Spanish, which aids their desire to continue this exciting and rewarding challenge.

Our hope is that La Clase may continue for years to come and that more parents from other schools will get involved.

The project will thrive as long as parents, students, teachers, school staff, and community volunteers and partners continue to support this uniquely special project.



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After School Spanish Literacy Project

Redmond, Oregon