Ways to Deal with the Challenges Presented by Spanish Heritage Speaker Students
Iowa World Language Association Conference 2014

"The term "heritage speaker" is used to refer to a student who is raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speaks or merely understands the heritage language, and who is to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language." (Guadalupe Valdés, 2000).

- **UNI: Spanish Retrocredit for Heritage Speakers of Spanish**
  A student who is a heritage speaker of Spanish, and who takes Advanced Writing or an equivalent course designed for heritage speakers, and receives a grade of B or higher in this course, will receive credit for the following UNI classes: Elementary Spanish I; Elementary Spanish II; Intermediate Spanish; Oral and Written Spanish; Advanced Conversation and Reading.
  Courses will appear on transcripts as credit; no grade will be assigned.

- **Examples of textbooks:**
  - Marqués, Sarah: *La lengua que heredamos*. Wiley.
  - Roca, Ana: *Nuevos Mundos*. Wiley.

- **Reading list example:**
  - Julia Alvarez: *De como las muchachas García perdieron el acento*
  - Rudolfo Anaya: *Bendiceme Última*
  - Jimmy Santiago Baca: *En Stuelo Firme*
  - Ana Castillo: *Tan lejos de Dios*
  - Ana Castillo: *Carmen la Caja*
  - Sandra Cisneros: *La Casa en Mango Street*
  - Sandra Cisneros: *El Arroyo de la Llorona y otros cuentos*
  - Junot Díaz: *La breve y maravillosa vida de Oscar Wao*
  - María Amparo Escandon: *Transportes González e Hija*
  - Laura Esquivel: *Como agua para chocolate*
  - Cristina García: *Soñar en cubano*
  - Eduardo Gonzalez-Viana: *El amor de Carmela me va a matar*
  - Francisco Jimenez: *Cajas De Carton: Relatos de la vida peregrina de un niño campesino*
  - Tomas Rivera: *...Y no se lo tragó la tierra*
  - Luis J. Rodriguez: *La Vida Loca*
  - Esmeralda Santiago: *Cuando Era Puertorriqueña*
  - Luis Alberto Urrea: *Rumbo al Hermoso Norte*
  - Daniel Venegas: *Las aventuras de don Chipote o, cuando los pericos mamren*
  - Jose Antonio Villarreal: *Pocho*

**References:**

http://www.nationaljournal.com/next-america/population-2043/how-latinos-are-saving-iowa-20141002

"Latinos in Iowa: 2014." State Data Center of Iowa.
• How to design and implement a course for heritage speakers
• Ten points to take into account
1. Find the students.
   • Recruit aggressively.
   • Interview them about their cultural, linguistic and family background, but also to weed out outliers (there is a lot of variation in fluency and level of literacy).
   • Convince them of the convenience of taking the course. Talk to them about becoming fully functional, fully bi-literate bilingual people.
2. Find a textbook.
   • There are lots of choices from every major publisher.
   • Decide on a balance between grammatical and cultural content.
   • Find readings and activities that interest the students and with which you, as a teacher, feel you can excel.
3. Focus on cultural materials that are relevant to the students.
   • Let them talk about themselves and their experiences. Many interesting stories and frustrations come to life.
   • Let students express themselves.
   • A good source of inspiration: the movie Precious Knowledge.
4. Emphasize what they need to learn
   • Spelling and accent marks.
   • Syllabic structure and phonological stress.
   • Advanced grammatical topics.
   • Formal and diverse vocabulary, including dialectal variation.
   • Forget the things that they already know, like basic grammar.
5. Create a positive learning environment
   • Establish "street cred" for yourself (especially challenging for non-Latinos).
   • Avoid being judgmental of or criticizing their skills in the language.
   • Rather emphasize the idea that there is a more formal register that would be beneficial for them to learn.
6. Embrace Spanglish as a form of cultural expression
   • Do not discourage it but let them know that there is a time and place for it.
   • Compare its use with that of different registers.
7. Reinforce positive portrayals of their cultural status
   • Make them feel privileged rather than discriminated against.
   • Emphasize the importance of their cultural heritage.
   • Build pride in their bilingualism and bi-culturalism.
8. Show interest in them
   • Listen to their family histories, their places of origin and their family traditions and practices.
   • Let them discover and enjoy their own diversity.
9. In the end, convince them that their cultural background gives them an edge
   • Convince them that they have an advantage over monolingual U.S. citizens and monolingual Latinos.
   • Help them take advantage of that privilege.
10. Make them true lifelong learners
    • Try to engage them in the habit of reading and writing in Spanish.
    • Show them the importance of practicing and maintaining their language.
    • Encourage them to use their bilingualism in their work life.