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Introduction to Heritage Language Learning: An Interview with María Carreira

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Introduction

We are delighted to present this collection of manuscripts that focus on various aspects of *Heritage Language Learning* in this Special Issue of *Dimension*. Our hope for this Special Issue is not only to bring attention to the innovative programmatic changes and best teaching practices presented in the following chapters, but also to stimulate discussion in the field on supporting the increasing number of Latinx students enrolled in Spanish language programs. Also included in this discussion is the increasing number of heritage language and second language (L2) learners in Dual Language Immersion programs who subsequently enter language classrooms with unique needs to further their language maintenance and development.

Heritage language learners (HLLs) of Spanish are a diverse population of students with diverse needs. Important issues for HLLs include, but are not limited to, sociolinguistics (topics such as translanguaging, language variation), the affective dimension of language learning, the acquisition of new registers (for careers/use in professional/formal settings), literacy, using Spanish to (re)connect with family and community members, linguistic insecurities, identity, culture, and linguisticism, just to name a few. HLLs participate in many different program models: dual language immersion schools, traditional second/world language classes, and heritage language tracks when available. It is not an easily accomplishable task; however, language educators—at all levels of instruction—must strive to create classrooms and curricula that appropriately respond to the diverse needs of this student population.

In order to contribute to HLLs' language maintenance and development, educators must know and understand their students so that their needs and goals can be identified. In her review of university-level Spanish HL programs, Beaudrie (2012) highlighted that these programs “are no longer confined to those regions of

the United States with large, long-established Spanish-speaking communities” (p. 217). With the expansion of Spanish HL programs, it is important to keep in mind that a one-size-fits-all approach to instruction does not work for the varied levels of experience students have with using Spanish in formal and informal contexts. Gaining an understanding of the local variety(ies) of Spanish and the ways in which HLLs currently use their HL can inform instruction that helps HLLs set and attain goals for how they want to use Spanish in new ways.

We had the honor and pleasure of interviewing Dr. María Carreira for this Special Issue of *Dimension*. Carreira, professor of Spanish at California State University, Long Beach, is a leading scholar in the field of heritage language studies. She is also the co-director of the federally-funded National Heritage Language Resource Center where she oversees heritage language learning and teaching initiatives and projects. Carreira, furthermore, is a heritage language learner. At the age of 12, her family moved to the United States. Carreira’s parents spoke Spanish at home, and she was immersed in English at school and the community in which she lived. We sincerely thank Dr. Carreira for sharing her personal and professional insights on heritage language learning in the U.S. with us during her telephone interview with co-author Paula Garrett-Rucks for this Special Issue.

An Interview with Dr. María Carreira

Question 1: Can you tell us how you became interested in heritage language learning?

I became interested in this topic when I started teaching at California State University, Long Beach in the 90s. A good number of students were heritage speakers, and I was interested in meeting their needs. The field was beginning to gain great momentum then, although admittedly, Guadalupe Valdés was writing “good stuff” in the area in the 70s, but with the 1990 census people started noticing the large population of speakers of other languages, and it was really a decade of great growth in the U.S. But it was the personal interactions with my students that alerted me to their needs, so I went off and started to read more about this topic.

I taught a course for Spanish heritage speakers in 1991, but it was a much different course than what I am doing now. Initially the focus was on getting students to learn the standard Spanish language without cutting down their language, but it was still standards-based and linguistic-oriented. It was called Spanish for Native Speakers with four goals: (1) acquisition of a standard language or variant, (2) expansion of the bilingual register, (3) development of age-appropriate literacy skills, and (4) expansion of the bilingual range—being able to use the language in more contexts and situations and purposes. The goals were very language focused and very academic focused. Now we use project-based learning for mastery. We do not spend much time with grammar, only insofar as it is needed to complete the project. Mostly, the language development emerges when working on the project—I notice gaps with what they turn in that I identify to fill the gap. In these instances, we stop and go over the type of language we need to complete the projects. This process also helps me to understand and connect with my students.

In project-based learning (PBL), models are important. What is so special about Spanish in the U.S. is that there are models online of culture that is produced

here in the Spanish language. For example, a number of years ago I went to Wyoming to train teachers on PBL. Someone asked about what makes a good topic in PBL, so we brainstormed local needs for Spanish materials—and teachers mentioned that at the local DMV, nothing was written in Spanish, yet. So, I suggested a student project to make DMV books in Spanish. There were models that already existed in California and New York, so it was possible for students to get those models, study them, and adapt them to their state. So, you can see how authentic models of DMV materials are readily available in the U.S., yet the concepts are unique to local areas. Another example we brainstormed was to create a vaccination handout in Spanish. The key to PBL is models, and we definitely have models in the U.S.

Many Spanish instructors are native speakers—people who by the time they arrived in the States had fully formed language by having completed high school or college in another language. There are many L2 speakers of Spanish who are great teachers too, but, like the native speaking teachers, they do not know what it is like to grow up in the United States as a heritage speaker. They have not lived the affective parts—community and interaction with parents and identity. Heritage speakers who *lived* that experience might be better able to address the affective issues—being questioned as a legitimate speaker or incomplete speaker of Spanish or another language, or not having a language that you can claim as your own. The native speaker and the second language speaking teachers do not have that experience; they have a language they can claim.

- *Question 1a: Can I ask you about your own language learning experiences?*

Yes, I was born in Cuba and left Cuba with my family when I was 8 years old. We then went to Spain for four years, so I was 12 when we came to the U.S. and immersed in English.

- *Question 1b: Did you struggle learning English?*

I am sure there was a struggle, but I do not remember it. I was held back a year for no reason when I first moved to Spain, and at the end of the first grading period I had the highest score in the class. When we moved to the U.S., I was not held back in school in Chicago. But I do not remember struggling with English. Though language teachers were not used to dealing with language minority students back then, I had the good fortune of having Sister Patricia Murphy as a high school teacher. She gave me a Spanish test in literacy and spelling, and decided I should not be in the Spanish language program. She understood that “regular” Spanish classes were not a good fit for me. Rather she worked with me individually until I was ready to go into the literature course. So, this was a very early example of Spanish for Spanish Speakers. I was taught Spanish on what interested me in our conversations, and she would correct it. Of course, my parents spoke Spanish at home, and then they told me I had to take it in high school.

When I was a college undergraduate, I majored in Math, but I had a minor in French and Italian. I was naturally attracted to linguistics in graduate school (phonology, in particular), because it was mathematical, yet also had language. After training as a phonologist at the University of Illinois, I was hired at the University of California, Long Beach. There was a large Spanish speaking population, and I felt I needed to learn how to meet their needs in learning Spanish.

I have evolved in my self-understanding as a heritage speaker of Spanish. The term *heritage speaker* did not exist, perhaps until ... 1999. That was the first time I heard *heritage speaker* used in a conference title. Before that we called heritage speakers native speakers. There was no distinction. It was there that I could place myself.

• *Question 1c: Who coined the term “Heritage Language Speaker?”*

Well, for a time there was “Spanish for bilinguals.” But in the 90s, the term *bilingual* became a bit of a dirty word. In the 90s, California eliminated bilingual education, and the word became politically charged. But the term *native speaker* did not quite describe us. We typically learned Spanish as a first language at home, but upon starting school, exposure to Spanish was greatly diminished before the period of acquisition was complete. For example, typically, Latino children speak Spanish as first language at home until they go to school around age five, and then they spend most of the day occupied in English, so Spanish input declines. There was a debate of what to call them, including the term *community language learner* then, but by the time the 1999 first conference was held, the term was used and it caught on.

Question 2: Please tell us about your Center and what it does.

The National Heritage Language Resource Center, at the University of California, Los Angeles, is a federally funded language resource center whose mission is to develop effective pedagogical approaches to teaching heritage language learners, both by creating a research base and by pursuing curriculum design, materials development, and teacher education. I have been a part of the Center since its inception in 2007, under the direction of a UCLA Russian Professor and HL specialist, Olga Kagan. I am now a co-director, in charge of language learning and teaching, with Maria Polinsky who directs the linguistic research.

The Center focuses on the teaching and learning of all heritage languages, including the less commonly taught languages, where the need for HL materials and teacher training is particularly high. There is room to think Spanish is a “premier case” for heritage language learning. Spanish heritage language learning has been positioned to lead the field due to the large number of students we serve and its long-standing record of teaching and research in the area of HLLs. And although resources are limited, we are fortunate to have some Spanish heritage language learning textbooks and developed teacher training materials due to the high demand with a bigger population. Despite this, Spanish as a heritage language is not always given its proper recognition. In 2017, a highly important paper commissioned by the Academy of Arts and Sciences set five priorities for the profession (see Flaherty, 2017). The paper established Heritage Language Learning among the five priorities in the profession, yet mentioned nothing specific about Spanish, despite its status as the de facto second language of the United States and the most commonly taught language in American language departments.

Question 3: What do you believe are the most pressing issues in the field of heritage language learning?

It depends on the language. I’ll start with the general; teacher training is so important—a lot of people are writing about how to teach heritage languages, but

there is still a gap between research and practice due to the fact that there are few heritage language teacher training programs. We cannot move the field forward without teachers who can teach with best teaching practices across languages. This is particularly important with some languages that primarily teach heritage speakers. For example, Vietnamese and Persian are mostly taught by heritage speakers, but there is currently no specialized heritage speaker teaching program.

- *Question 3a: But your center offers online modules for teaching heritage speakers?*

The modules are an introduction, but there should be a certificate program. Heritage language teaching is harder than second language teaching, because you need to manage the wide range of profiles in the classroom. You also need to be sort of a language arts teacher, as well as being a language teacher. Heritage language teaching is a lot like language arts teaching in that the focus is on using real-world language in a wide range of contexts, in the U.S. as well as abroad.

As such, teachers need to know about the communities of speakers within local contexts, not just communities abroad. With regard to Spanish, you need to know about the literature produced in the U.S. by Latinos, not just the literature of Latin America or Spain.

Question 4: How do you see the field evolving from where we have come to where we are now, and how do you see the future?

As I mentioned earlier, the field has moved from a deficit model of teaching, where the focus was on “fixing” deficient speakers as well as on form-focused teaching of the standard language to a more student-centered, meaningful language use such as project-based learning.

- *Question 4a: Can you explain how you have used project-based learning in your current Spanish for Heritage Language Learners courses?*

To determine projects themes, I group students by similar majors or professional interests. For example, in one class I grouped together students loosely connected to mass communication (a journalism major, a marketing major, and a film major), and they had to create a project based on a common interest. The journalism student knew that this department would soon be offering its first course in Spanish, and the department needed to market the course. His group put together a professional video on “Why do journalism in Spanish?” in which they assessed the ways in which Spanish media was growing and why it was a valuable field to get into. They interviewed students and people from Spanish news stations and described the course that the university would offer. The department ended up posting the video for the course on their website. It was a real-world project with a real purpose.

A doctor friend of mine once lamented that he had been studying Spanish forever but that he could not communicate with his patients. He knew standard medical terms but not Spanglish, or “home terms.” So I grouped my students interested in the medical field (majors in hospital administration, pre-med, and nursing), and they worked with the doctor to come up with a four-way glossary—Standard English to Standard Spanish and Spanglish to dialects in English. It was helpful for the doctor and the students. The doctor learned dialectal Spanish and students learned standard Spanish.

Project-based learning has three components:

(1) *Information collecting*: this is where you gather information that will inform your work. In a language class you are not only researching concepts, you are also researching language: looking for models of the type of product that you want to create, talking to people, and looking at dictionaries;

(2) *Information processing*: looking at what you collected and deciding on what you can use, or what you need to go back and get more of. At this stage, I guide my students in studying the language of the authentic models;

(3) *Information presenting*: the presentation of the work is done in two stages: (1) pieces of the project are presented to the instructor for feedback, as students work on them; and (2) the final product is presented to an audience—preferably one from the real world.

For example, for the medical glossary project, students would search a model to find out what makes a useful and complete glossary. Following an iterative process, students would start by making one entry, and at the end of class they would turn it in. I would take it home and point out mistakes and make suggestions. I then had them compare the authentic models of glossaries that they had collected to their own glossaries and notice the differences. In the process, they learned an important lesson: that learning words in isolation is not as useful as a word in a phrase. Project-based learning is an iterative process with a lot of revising and changing.

PBL is also very supportive of differentiation, as different projects call for focusing on different aspects of language. In my class, students who did the video project for the Journalism Department focused on using discourse-level language that was formal. On the other hand, the glossary students looked at the word level or phrase level and they also focused on dialectal terms. In all cases, the students collect models, and I bring attention to the different styles of language. This aligns well the goal of expanding students' bilingual range.

For presentations, we start by looking at the opening statement of each group's project. We soon realized they were all really dull. So we all had to reflect on different ways to captivate the audience, and then talked about the language that they needed to do this, like by asking a question. Students then started learning how to formulate a question. Every project requires different vocabulary and grammatical structures. Project-based learning is very differentiated and uses real-world language—language that will be useful to learners and further their language skills in an area where they are going to use the language.

• *Question 4b: Where is the field going?*

StarTalk initiatives have put money into resources and training teachers. We produced the modules with StarTalk funds. How we benefit from bringing the languages together creates a market for teacher training materials. But there needs to be a move toward teaching for real language use. Not teaching for academic use or use of the language in a monolingual setting. We need to stop teaching monolingual Spanish. We need to teach Spanish to use in the U.S. and how to navigate the varieties used here, as well as navigating Spanish and English. We need to take a more local approach—the Spanish used where we are rather than the imagined other place. Different dialects of Spanish come here and share the space with English. Many Spanish speakers have

challenges in academic English use. So talk about English, talk about both languages. Let's just help each other and model that practice in classroom instruction.

Question 5. What practical suggestions do you have for districts and schools that cannot have a dedicated Heritage Language Program to meet the needs of these students in traditional Spanish courses?

We do not have a methodology for teaching mixed classes, but the current practice—the de facto situation in most cases—is that when heritage language speakers are present, it is still taught as an L2 class. This practice is not benefiting either group. Take advantage of your resources! It is a challenging environment, and there is not a true methodology for this context yet. This remains a priority in the field, especially given that there are many types of mixed classes—at advanced level, and lower levels of instruction, and with a class that is predominately heritage speaker versus a class that only has a few HL learners. These are very different contexts with slightly different methodologies. Research is great, and it is growing, but until it is applied in a mixed classroom, this will remain a priority.

Another priority is changing the belief that heritage language teaching is about figuring out what students do not know grammatically and targeting instruction to that. I am often surprised by the level of interest in linguistic research that tells you what they do not know. Teachers flock to these presentations thinking that if we can only break that code, then we can teach them...but that is not what teaching is; it is about expanding the ability of HL learners to use their HL in different contexts and for different functions, not perfecting the use of grammatical forms.

The scientific research is important, but it is not what should drive HL teaching and curriculum design. With HL learners it is more the language arts style that is needed. Let's use the language they have. There are no shortcuts. Specifically, we need to target literacy development. Again, it goes back to a language arts approach; what you do with English in mainstream schools, and learning social studies and history and science...It is the ability to talk about a wide range of topics, and the topics mostly depend on the learners. What is specific to heritage language learning is often the interest in family backgrounds and family experiences, so this needs to figure predominantly: validate lived experiences, show these experiences as rich and important.

Literacy is different when you talk about heritage languages. Literacy can be an academic concept in language departments which boils down to "Can you write a literature paper?"; whereas literacy in the real world can be writing emails or reading a newspaper article. It is more a place-centered approach—what do they need to do to read and write to have effective use of Spanish? It is not writing literature papers. We need to be more like English Departments, where we teach a living language. It needs to be a concept of multi-literacies—different types of reading and writing skills for different purposes, contexts, situations, and needs.

Question 6. Is there anything else you would like Dimension to know about this topic from you?

Heritage language teaching poses challenges, but these are vastly outweighed by the opportunities it presents for making language learning relevant and fun for language minority students.

Dimension 2020: Focus on Heritage Language Learning

Carreira's interview provides an insightful overview of the development and evolution of the field of HL education. In addition, in her 2018 article with Olga Kagan, "Heritage Language Education: A Proposal for the Next 50 Years," the authors offer several proposals for advancing the field in terms of research, instruction, and programming. Among other recommendations, the authors call for researchers and practitioners to (1) embrace nontraditional language learning models that reflect the ever-increasing linguistic diversity of our students and their communities and (2) work to mainstream HL education so that it is allotted the same amount of resources and curricular value as other core subjects (Carreira & Kagan, 2018). The articles included in this special issue highlight the innovative research that is being conducted in the field and reflect a promising future for the continued development of HL education.

This first chapter provides the background for this Special Issue of *Dimension* that focuses on Spanish Heritage Language Learning in K–16 contexts and aligns with the ACTFL Position Statement on Language Learning for Heritage and Native Speakers (2010) that advocates for constant reevaluation of practices, models, and policies to help address the unique learning needs of heritage and native speakers. In her powerful and timely essay, "Language, Culture, and Spanish Heritage Language Learners: Reframing Old Paradigms" (Chapter 2), Patricia MacGregor-Mendoza (New Mexico State University) helps Spanish HL education enter the new decade by highlighting historical and current deficit views about Spanish HLLs in the U.S. The author analyzes approaches to instruction that persist in Spanish HL programs even though research, conducted from various perspectives, has established the inappropriateness of the reviewed classroom practices. MacGregor-Mendoza puts into question alleged shifts in paradigms in Spanish HL education that do not wholly embrace HLLs as fully-realized legitimate users of Spanish nor respond to the specific linguistic and psychosocial needs of the diverse population of students enrolled in Spanish HL classes. The author stresses the inextricable link that exists between language and culture in HL instructional contexts, as this important relationship has not been appropriately incorporated into HL curriculum.

The essay debunks four false beliefs about HLLs, and MacGregor-Mendoza asks all educators to reevaluate their own views on language and culture through a journey of self-reflection. A critical examination of one's own beliefs and practices, according to the author, will allow educators to help HLLs participate in this same line of self-reflection and questioning of power structures, ideologies, and educational policies. MacGregor-Mendoza insists that educators acknowledge and encourage HLLs' "linguistic super powers" (p. 21) and that the field not become complacent with the advances that have been achieved in Spanish HL education.

Carreira echoed many of the points raised by MacGregor-Mendoza when she recommended that educators "teach Spanish to use in the U.S. and how to navigate the varieties used here." Furthermore, Carreira called for "expanding the ability of HL learners to use their HL in different contexts and for different functions" instead of trying to perfect students' grammatical forms. This statement aligns with MacGregor-Mendoza's critique of ideologies that frame HLLs' knowledge of Spanish as

imperfect. The author also comments on some ways in which old *and* current paradigms can be reframed so that Spanish HL classrooms can address issues of inequity and social justice, and connect with Spanish-speaking communities.

In the next chapter, the author, through interviews and classroom observations, responds to the calls for more Spanish HL research that includes students' perspectives (Alarcón, 2010; Ducar, 2008; Valdés, Fishman, Chávez, & Pérez, 2008). Jason A. Kemp (University of Wisconsin) in the third chapter, "University Students' Experiences in Spanish Heritage Language Programs in the Midwest," interviews five HLLs of Spanish enrolled in new and emerging Spanish HL programs. The analysis of their responses points to a disconnect between their self-reported needs and the curriculum of their classes. Participants consistently reported on a writing focus in their classes, which addressed their concern about limited experiences with academic writing in Spanish. However, the participants also commented on the lack of attention given to the other three skill areas (speaking, listening, and reading). Links to future careers are also perceived as missing from the Spanish HL classes, and the curriculum tends to place continued emphasis on discrete forms of grammar instead of language functions.

As Carreira noted during her interview, she does "not spend much time with grammar" in her Spanish HL courses. Instead, she uses project-based learning which allows her students to focus on the language they need to complete a project. The participants in Kemp's chapter reveal a disconnect between in-class activities and real-world uses of their HL. Project-based learning, as recommended by the author, could reconcile this divide by shifting instruction away from discrete forms of grammar to contextualized language functions that are linked to students' personal and professional interests as, per Carreira, HL instruction must "validate lived experiences, [and] show these experiences as rich and important."

Next, Elizabeth Goulette (Madonna University) in the fourth chapter, "Heritage Language Learners in a Mixed Class: Educational Affordances and Constraints," provides insight into the experiences of HLLs of Spanish in an eighth grade mixed-level Spanish class. Through a six-month ethnographic case study, the author was able to identify the Spanish teacher's labeling practice that sorted students into distinct groups of either "Spanish-dominant" or "English-dominant." Goulette, as participant observer, noticed that these imposed labels both restrict learning opportunities for some students and provide advantages for students across the two groups. As such, this narrow framing of students' linguistic skills and cultural affiliations did not acknowledge the language resources of students (Hornberger & Link, 2012) which led to a lack of instructional support for the advanced "Spanish-dominant" group that was also physically separated from the rest of the class.

Carreira, when addressing pressing issues in the field, discussed teacher training as a priority as "we cannot move the field forward without teachers who can teach with best teaching practices across languages." Goulette's chapter underscores the ways in which classrooms can impact HLLs when best practices are not employed. When students are not allowed to "fully explore and negotiate their own social identities in the classroom" (p. 73), the consequence is that certain academic opportunities are only granted to a select group of students.

Both of these studies show the importance of knowing your students. Car-

reira mentioned that through project-based learning, she is able to connect with her students. Students' needs and interests are not monolithic, nor are they universal. The chapters in this section highlight the diverse needs of HLLs across different levels of instruction. Differentiated instruction for mixed classes (Carreira, 2016) that builds on students' linguistic repertoires and taps into their funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) addresses some of the issues raised in the two chapters. Together, Chapters 3 and 4 support the including of and responding to student-centered perspectives in both Spanish HL research and classroom practices.

In the following section, Chapters 5 and 6 turn our attention to the role of writing in the HL classroom. In the fifth chapter, Ariana Mrak (University of North Carolina) surveys the research on teaching writing in "Developing Writing in Spanish Heritage Language Learners: An Integrated Process." Her theoretical framework draws insights from the field of New Literacy Studies, which argues that literacy is not limited to the discrete skills of reading and writing, but is also influenced by orality to a certain degree. Mrak proposes an integrated approach to writing within a critical pedagogy framework. She presents the concept of critical language awareness as a socially responsible pedagogy that empowers HL speakers to use their sociolinguistic knowledge to decide which variety of the language is best suited for the multiple contexts and communities in which they experience the language.

While being interviewed, Carreira stressed the importance of multiliteracies in the teaching of heritage languages: "It's a living language. It's a concept of multiliteracies—different types of reading and writing skills for different purposes, contexts, situations, and needs." Mrak's chapter thoughtfully contextualizes the concept of multiliteracies as an effective pedagogy for teaching writing to HL learners. The chapter concludes with specific recommendations for developing literacy skills through conversational discourse, descriptions, narratives, evaluations, and arguments.

Clara Burgo's (Loyola University) "Writing Strategies to Develop Literacy Skills for Advanced Spanish Heritage Language Learners" is Chapter 6 in this special issue. The author provides a thorough review of the literature and outlines specific activities that could be incorporated into an advanced Spanish course. In particular, she emphasizes a process-oriented approach to writing in which students are able to compose and edit multiple drafts after receiving instructor feedback. Burgo supports holistic assessments of HLLs' writing, and she provides recommendations that encourage a social approach to teaching writing that incorporates students' personal narratives (e.g., autobiographies) and writing for their community (e.g., distributing a newsletter locally).

Both Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 emphasize the need to develop HL learners' literacy skills by first building upon the students' existing linguistic assets, including their strengths in interpersonal speaking. In addition, both chapters acknowledge the importance of critical pedagogies and the exploration of the role of power as it relates to literacy. Although the two chapters share some similarities, they are both included in this volume due to their unique contributions to the field. Both chapters acknowledge the importance of power; however, Mrak delves deeply into this theme and paints a vivid picture of how critical pedagogy can be applied to the teaching of writing to HL learners. Mrak makes innovative interdisciplinary connections among

such concepts as New Literacy Studies, critical language awareness, and multiliteracies. She challenges critical educators to “help learners negotiate power relations in order to construct their identity as legitimate speakers of the language of study” (p. 85). Burgo focuses on strategies for scaffolded instruction using culturally authentic texts and holistic models of feedback. Burgo is particularly concerned about guiding HL learners to distinguish between registers and genres by incorporating assignments and resources that those learners would find easily accessible. She writes, “Since [HL learners]’ writing tends to imitate their speaking, they need to be exposed to assorted genres of academic texts, and instructors need to find the appropriate strategies to maximize their learning experiences using authentic resources whenever possible” (p. 103). Burgo posits such strategies as chronical writing, oral history, and project-based learning informed by inquiry to achieve such goals. Carreira also praised project-based learning, saying that it is “very differentiated and uses real-world language—language that will be useful to [HL learners] and further their language skills in an area where they are going to use the language.”

During her interview, Carreira highlighted how the field of HL education “has moved from a deficit model of teaching the standard language in a linguistic-oriented way to more student-centered, meaningful language use such as project-based learning.” She later commented, “I’m often surprised by the level of interest in linguistic research that tells you what [HL learners] don’t know.” Taken together, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 help readers realize Carreira’s vision by offering important and unique insights on how to combat some of the marginalization and disempowerment that have traditionally been associated with the teaching of literacy skills to HL learners. Moreover, both chapters link theory to practice by providing specific examples throughout.

In Chapter 7, “Streamlining the Placement of Spanish Heritage Language Learners,” Patricia MacGregor-Mendoza and Gabriela Moreno (New Mexico State University) ask the field to consider students’ linguistic and cultural knowledge when making decisions about placement into courses. Their placement test assesses *ser/estar* (Spanish copular verbs), spelling, reading, and the subjunctive. The 17 items across these four areas tap into students’ literacy and real-world experiences using Spanish. Their recommendations for using a small-scale in-house placement test are adaptable to any Spanish HL program, and could be particularly helpful for universities that offer multiple courses in their HL sequence.

Carreira, during her interview, articulated the importance of “using real-world language in a wide range of contexts” in classes that endeavor to meet the needs of HLLs. In turn, as MacGregor-Mendoza and Moreno signal, real-world uses of Spanish should play a role when assessing HLLs for placement purposes. The authors’ approach to placement testing also aligns with Carreira’s focus on “meaningful language use” that does not seek to show what students “do not know grammatically.”

This special issue concludes with “Global Initiatives in North Carolina: The Impact on Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners.” In Chapter 8, Charlotte R. Hancock (University of North Carolina), Kristin J. Davin (University of North Carolina), John A. Williams, III (Texas A&M University), and Chance W. Lewis (University of North Carolina) discuss dual language programs and their link to heritage language education. The authors address the proliferation of dual language programs

that offer instruction in English and a partner language (e.g., Spanish, Mandarin, etc.). These programs cater to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, who are often HLLs of the partner language, and students for whom the partner language is not their home language. The researchers document the ways in which state-level initiatives in North Carolina encourage the growth of world language and dual language programs across school districts. Specifically, Hancock et al. demonstrate the state's commitment to meeting the academic needs of all students through equity. For example, North Carolina education officials want to increase the number of CLD students who earn the nationally-recognized Seal of Biliteracy diploma endorsement. This perspective, according to the authors, helps prepare students "for a globally-competitive world that [values] language other than English" (p. 147).

As Carreira noted, HL instruction needs to incorporate a "language arts style... Specifically, we need to target literacy development." K-12 dual language programs that focus on biliteracy, bilingualism, and sociocultural competence have been shown to be of benefit to all students. Moreover, as Hancock et al. signal, these programs "can close the achievement gap most quickly" (p. 136) for CLD students. In addition to a focus on literacy, Carreira called for an approach that emulates how we teach "social studies and history and science... It's the ability to talk about a wide range of topics." Dual language programs can help meet this goal for HL and L2 students who receive content instruction in more than one language.

We would like to state again how delighted we are to present this collection of manuscripts that focus on various aspects of *Spanish Heritage Language Learning* in this Special Issue of *Dimension 2020*. We would also like to acknowledge the efforts of several individuals who helped shape this volume. In addition to the tremendous efforts of the members of the Editorial Board who helped review and edit the chapters, we would like to thank the additional reviewers and proof-readers needed to sort through the great number of manuscripts submitted for this Special Issue including Melisa (Misha) Cahnmann-Taylor, June Carter, Madelyn Hernandez, Tim Jansa, Kaishan Kong, Raul Llorente, Ji Ma, and Oscar Moreno, who are all from research universities. Thanks to the combined efforts of many individuals, we hope this Special Issue brings attention to the innovative programmatic changes and best teaching practices presented in these chapters to recognize and support the varied needs of heritage language learners beyond the Spanish language. The ultimate goal of this special issue is to stimulate discussion in the field on supporting the increasing number of heritage speakers, native speakers, and dual language immersion students enrolled in language programs to further the development and maintenance of languages other than English.

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