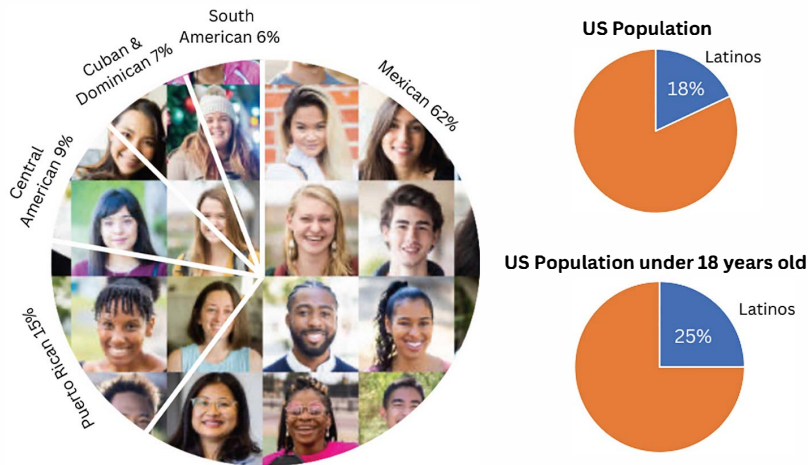


Why offer a Spanish for Heritage Speakers Program?

The Latino population forms a substantial part of United States schools:



People who grew up exposed to Spanish have different strengths and needs compared to people learning Spanish as a new language. Separate courses should be designed specifically for them, particularly at the beginning levels of instruction.

	Second language courses	Heritage language courses
Goals during years 1 and 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic communicative proficiency Intercultural competence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanding communicative repertoire Pride in heritage and in the variety of language the family speaks Expansion of knowledge of different varieties of language
Best approaches	Form-meaning connections grounded in authentic communication	Language arts combined with linguistic support

FAQs:

- Why can't they just be mixed into regular Spanish classes?*
When students can already communicate in Spanish, such classes are often a poor fit. Boosting their **academic Spanish** through language arts can increase their overall achievement in school.
- Don't heritage speakers get an automatic "easy A" in Spanish classes?*
No. Native English speakers don't get an automatic "easy A" in English language arts courses, either.
- We don't have enough heritage speakers to create a separate program.*
You may have enough to create one section, or to hold some separate sessions that meet their needs.
- Where can I learn more about course materials, placement, exams, etc.?*
Both [AATSP](#) and [ACTFL](#) have heritage speaker resources online. You can also check Dr. [Kim Potowski's website](http://potowski.org) at <http://potowski.org>.

Fast facts:

- Heritage speakers' Spanish levels vary widely according to when, where, how intensively, and in what contexts they have used Spanish. For example, some may use oral Spanish in familiar contexts and need to develop academic literacy. Others may be exposed to Spanish in various media but have limited opportunities to speak it.
- Developing heritage speakers' formal and academic Spanish abilities makes great sense because many have the basics in place already. For the same reasons that native English speakers take English classes to become strong communicators, informed citizens, and culturally aware individuals, heritage Spanish speakers can do the same in Spanish.
- Many U.S. Spanish speakers code-switch (mix English and Spanish). This is not "bad Spanish"! Code-switching is a natural practice that happens all over the world when two languages are in close contact.
- Teachers of heritage speakers should receive specialized preparation to understand students' linguistic and cultural profiles and be able to work with them effectively and respectfully.