

BRIDGING THE LANGUAGE GAP

Gaining confidence in learning and speaking a foreign language can be greatly improved if students are given the opportunity to practice foreign language skills at home.

Throughout the school year we will include ways for students to practice using the Spanish language at home and in other venues.

Further opportunities for parent and community involvement in Spanish Connection will be explored and encouraged throughout the development of the program. We believe this involvement will help to build strong bridges between students' foreign language skills, long-term educational benefits, and community enrichment.

Spanish Connection Coordinator:

Holly Studley

(360) 556-8291

Email: hstudley@mac.com

Larrabee Elementary School
1409 18th Stet
Bellingham, Washington 98225

Phone: (360) 676-6424
Fax: (360) 647-6885

Larrabee Elementary School

2009-2010

Spanish Connection

A cooperative program between
Western Washington University and
Larrabee Elementary School.



Eric Paige, Principal

(360) 676-6424

Spanish Connection

In collaboration with Western Washington University, Larrabee Elementary is including Spanish into the curriculum for K-2 students in Fall 2009. Spanish will be integrated into the music and Physical Education curriculum and will be provided two days each week.

Dr. John Underwood, Spanish and Linguistics professor at Western Washington University, is leading the project with hopes that students can gain a better understanding of foreign language during the elementary years. This is a time when strong language skills are easily developed. One of the long-term goals will include progression of the Spanish program each year so that eventually Spanish will be offered to all students at Larrabee, with the possible addition of other languages in the future.

This is a cooperative program that allows Western Washington University the opportunity to give back to the community. The students at Larrabee will be given high-quality instruction while Western students can gain experience from teaching.

By integrating Spanish into the curriculum through music and PE, we can introduce and reinforce a new language across a variety of existing disciplines without competing with the core curriculum.

Learning a Foreign Language

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

ACTFL American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

Statement of Philosophy

Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience. The United States must educate students who are linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad. This imperative envisions a future in which ALL students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language, modern or classical. Children who come to school from non-English backgrounds should also have opportunities to develop further proficiencies in their first language.

There are numerous benefits for children to learn a second language. Studies show that children who have studied a language at the elementary level score higher on tests in reading, language arts, and math. People who have learned foreign languages show greater cognitive development in areas such as mental flexibility, creativity, and higher order thinking skills, such as problem-solving, conceptualizing, and reasoning. Other benefits include: Increasing global understanding, improving college and employment potential, as well as improving many other social and political issues.

About The Interns:



Tiffany Salvador:

I am currently student teaching in my last year at Western. I will graduate in the spring with my Bachelors in Spanish with endorsements to teach K-8 education and English as a second language. My passion is working with language learners; I love supporting students through the challenging and rewarding process of learning a new language. I am so excited for the opportunity to teach Spanish to the students at Larrabee! My goal is to equip the students with language that will help them build community and friendship with people from other cultures.

Mikell Fox:

Hola! I am in my fifth year at Western Washington University and am majoring in both Spanish and Elementary Education. This year will be full of exciting new experiences as I will be student-teaching at a bilingual school in Burlington and co-teaching Spanish through music and physical education to students at Larrabee Elementary. I am excited to be a part of this new Spanish program at Larrabee! I first fell in love with the Spanish language and culture while working alongside Peruvian herders on a ranch in Montana. As a future teacher, I am enthusiastic about sharing my passion for Spanish by integrating it into the curriculum to help my students connect with and understand another culture. Through music and games, my students will learn a new language and grow as world citizens. Muchas gracias for giving me the opportunity to work with your children!



Questions & Answers:

Q: Will the inclusion of a foreign language program in the curriculum take the place of the FLAN after-school program?

A: No. FLAN will still be offered and encouraged. Additionally, since Spanish Connection will take place during regular school hours, it will not conflict with the FLAN after-school program schedule.

Q: What does adding the foreign language program cost the school or district?

A: Nothing. Currently this is a cooperative program in which Western students receive credit for teaching and Larrabee students receive high-quality instruction at no cost.

Q: Will Spanish be the only language offered?

A: At this time, yes.

The Spanish language is the second most-common language in the United States after English. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Spanish is the primary language spoken at home by over 34 million people aged 5 or older in the United States. It is also the fourth most commonly spoken language in the world.

One of the long-term goals of this program is to explore the options for teaching additional foreign languages.

Q: Why is the Spanish Connection only being offered to K-2 students?

A: Much publicized research suggests that language skills develop rapidly in children during these years. A long-term goal of this program is to offer curriculum to all students at Larrabee Elementary, K-5.