

Title of presentation:

What would it take to prepare critical Spanish heritage language (SHL) instructors?

Abstract for conference program

Considering the shift toward critical language awareness (CLA) as a primary framework for SHL instruction, this presentation discusses the recommendations of five educators from a well-established SHL program in the U.S. Southwest. Participants' views on the profiles of potential instructors and the aspects that facilitate/ constrain critical instructor preparation will be discussed.

Presentation description

In the last decade, prominent scholars (Beaudrie & Loza, 2021; Leeman & Serafini, 2016; Martinez, 2016; Parra, 2016) have called for the adoption of critical language awareness (CLA) as a primary framework for carrying out Spanish heritage language (SHL) instructional goals. Thus, research on preparing SHL instructors for critical teaching continues to necessitate the opinions and advice of current practitioners engaging in CLA efforts. This presentation hopes to contribute to this research by honing into the recommendations of five educators working in a well-established SHL program at a U.S. Southwest university. Drawing from my dissertation, I employed qualitative semi-structured interviews with purposely sampled participants. Using a culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP) (Paris, 2012; 2021; Paris & Alim, 2017; Paris, Alim & Wong, 2020) theoretical framework, I explored the participants' views on the profiles of potential SHL instructors, the roles of SHL program teams in instructor development, and the aspects that facilitate and constrain instructor preparation. Findings highlighted the dire need for 1) ideological alignment among SHL program stakeholders prior to engaging with CLA-based efforts and 2) tenure-track faculty and SHL/CLA specialists in language departments/programs. This presentation will inspire attendees to question further and discuss if and how ideological alignment can be achieved. Moreover, attendees will appraise why such alignment is a necessary precursor to new SHL instructor training.