

Designing & Refining Heritage Language Programs

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Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Tribal Land Acknowledgement



We would like to acknowledge the indigenous people who have stewarded this land since time immemorial and who still inhabit these areas today.

These slides were created on the lands of the Swinomish and Samish Tribes, and I honor with gratitude the land and waters themselves and these tribes.





Vision

Mission

Values

All students prepared for post-secondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement.

Transform K–12 education to a system that is centered on closing opportunity gaps and is characterized by high expectations for all students and educators. We achieve this by developing equity-based policies and supports that empower educators, families, and communities.

- **Ensuring Equity**
- Collaboration and Service
- Achieving Excellence through Continuous Improvement
- **Focus on the Whole Child**



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Equity Statement

Each student, family, and community possesses strengths and cultural knowledge that benefits their peers, educators, and schools.

Ensuring educational equity:

- Goes beyond equality; it requires education leaders to examine the ways current policies and practices result in disparate outcomes for our students of color, students living in poverty, students receiving special education and English Learner services, students who identify as LGBTQ+, and highly mobile student populations.
- ***Requires education leaders to develop an understanding of historical contexts; engage students, families, and community representatives as partners in decision-making; and actively dismantle systemic barriers, replacing them with policies and practices that ensure all students have access to the instruction and support they need to succeed in our schools.***



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Topics for Today

- Heritage Language Program Fundamentals
- Stages of Heritage Language Program Development
- Teaching and Learning Heritage Languages





Heritage Language Program Fundamentals

What are heritage languages?

“**Heritage Languages** are minority languages learned in a bilingual or multilingual environment. They include languages in diaspora [used] by immigrants and their children, aboriginal or indigenous languages, and historical minority languages that coexist with other standard languages... Heritage languages are precious linguistic, cultural, and personal resources for individuals and for society...” (Montrul and Polinsky, 2022)



Heritage Languages are learned in a
multilingual environment.



Languages in Schools

School Languages

Used in...

- Assemblies
- Parent meetings
- Common spaces by a *majority* of educators
- Student discipline and restorative justice conversations

Translation and interpretation provide access to these languages.

Languages of Instruction

- Content Classes
 - Languages used in Content Instruction for *all* students
- Multiliteracy Development
 - Language Arts (ELA, SLA, etc.)
 - English Language Development (ELD)
 - Heritage Languages
 - World Languages

Student/ Community Languages

- Student home languages
- Languages used by students in former schools or communities
- Community languages used outside the home environment



What are heritage language programs?

School-based heritage language programs **are**:

- a path to multiliteracy for Washington's *students*; AND
- one of the paths to dual language for Washington's *schools*; AND
- based in identity-affirming, equity-based instruction; AND
- different from other forms of language teaching; AND
- support the academic and linguistic development of multilingual learners.

School-based heritage language programs **are not**:

- one-size fits all
- only available to a certain age student
- instead of English language development for ML/English learners





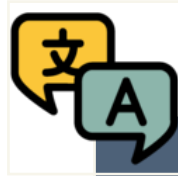
World Language (WL) Programs

- Designed for students who are new to the language.
- Begin with initial fluency and progress according to the ACTFL Scale.
- Heritage motivated learners can benefit from WL classes, but research shows that heritage speakers/users do not benefit from WL programs in the way that they benefit from HL programs.
- The teacher is the language model, but students learn with and from each other's practice.



Heritage Language (HL) Programs

- **Designed for ML Heritage Language Learners.**
- **Are accelerated literacy programs leveled by age/grade and current proficiency.**
- **Aim for grade level proficiency and use a combination of language arts, content-based, and inclusive instructional practices.**
- **Provide on-ramps to DL programs.**
- **Students and teachers are language models.**



Dual Language (DL) Programs

- Designed for ML/ English Learner students who are speakers/ users of the partner language.
- Are taught at grade level in both languages with designated language development and inclusionary practices.
- Multiple content areas are taught in the partner language according to the individual program's language allocation plan.
- Students and teachers are language models for the class.



Tribal Language Programs

- **All aspects of the Tribal Language Program are determined by the Tribe(s) on whose land the school district resides. For more information, see the Honoring Our Ancestors Act or contact the OSPI Office of Native Education.**



What are the benefits of heritage language programs?

For students:

- **Visibility and voice**
- **Connections to family, community and personal heritages**
- **Increased sense of belonging**
- **Increased academic achievement across languages**
- **Development of academic identity**
- **Stronger writing in all languages**
- **Opportunities for advanced and dual credit (7-12)**
- **Seal(s) of Biliteracy**
- **College and career opportunities in *all* their languages**

For districts:

- **Stronger connections to families and community organizations**
- **Ability to increase the number of ML educators in a school or the district as a whole**
- **Additional tier one supports for school improvement plan goals**
- **Primary language development and support for students who do not have access to dual language (*yet*)**
- **Primary language development and support for students who speak languages *in addition* to the languages of instruction**



HL Programs are **designed for people, not textbooks.**

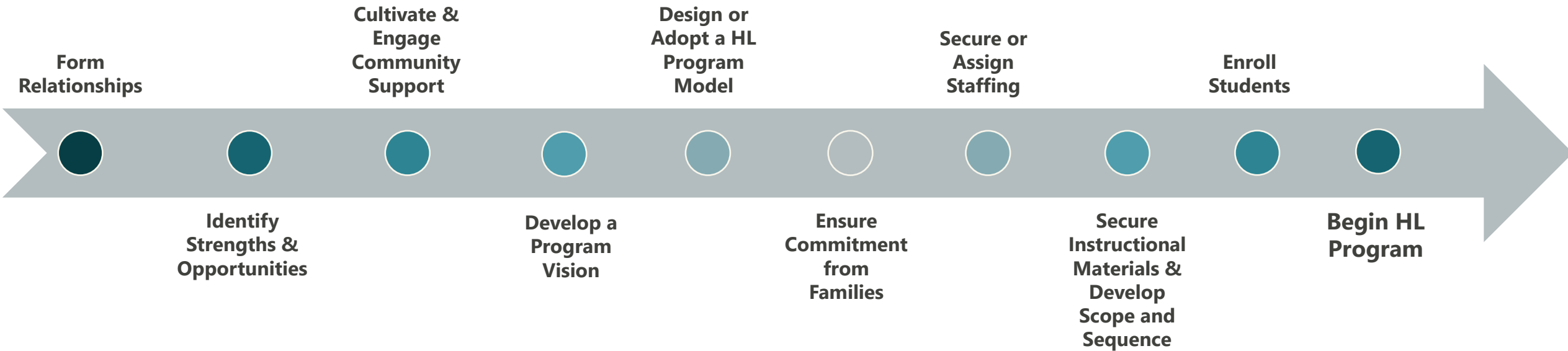
- **Heritage Speakers/ Users** have acquired their heritage language skills in their home or community. They have always been in a multilingual environment but have most likely experienced subtractive bilingualism.
- **Heritage Language Learners** are trying to regain or improve their understanding and use of a heritage language through formal study or in the classroom.
- Those who are **heritage motivated** have a cultural heritage connection to the language but have not had the opportunity to acquire the language in the home. In the classroom, heritage motivated students may have extensive knowledge of the social expectations and cultural dimension of the language but begin learning the language in a classroom setting. Heritage motivation is an essential aspect of language revitalization.





Stages of HL Program Development

Starting a Heritage Language Program



Organize by Phase

Connect

- Form relationships with students, their families, and the community.
- Identify strengths and opportunities through engagement.
- Cultivate school communities that are welcoming and engage community support for multilingualism.

Commit

- Develop a program vision with the community.
- Design or adopt a HL program model that can make the vision a reality.
- Ensure commitment from students and families.

Prepare

- Secure or Assign Staffing
- Secure Instructional Materials & Develop Scope and Sequence

Begin First HL Program Cycle

- **Enroll Students**
- **Begin HL Program**



Keys to Success

- Consistent community outreach, participation, and engagement
- Prioritize relationship building
- Plan to move at the pace of available human and curricular resources
- Consider rolling down, rolling up, or both
- Prioritize ML English learners who have not had access to instruction in their home or primary language and have persisted in the English development program
- Celebrate early and often
- Frame program development with questions, not answers



HL Programs build on student and community strengths.

Linguistic Strengths

- What languages are present in your school or district?
- What languages are present in the community, but are not visible in your school (*yet*)?
- What home or primary languages do ML/English learners who have been in program for five or more years use in addition to English?

Support for Youth & Dreams for the Future

- How could students who have not had access to DL in their maternal languages be supported towards full biliteracy?
- How could student languages be leveraged in their future studies and careers?
- How can connections to student and community roots strengthen the community's future?



HL Programs build on **identity** and **scholarship**.

Identity

- What is the profile of a successful program graduate? What do they know? Know how to do? Know how to be?
- How does the community describe a person who can communicate fully using the heritage language?
- How does strength in the heritage language support the student's other abilities and interests?

Scholarship

- How does the HL program connect to the rest of what the student is learning (including any English development program)?
- How is research into language teaching and learning, particularly heritage language acquisition, present in the program model?
- How does the HL program provide as many or more opportunities as world language programs?

HL Programs build literacy through caring adults.

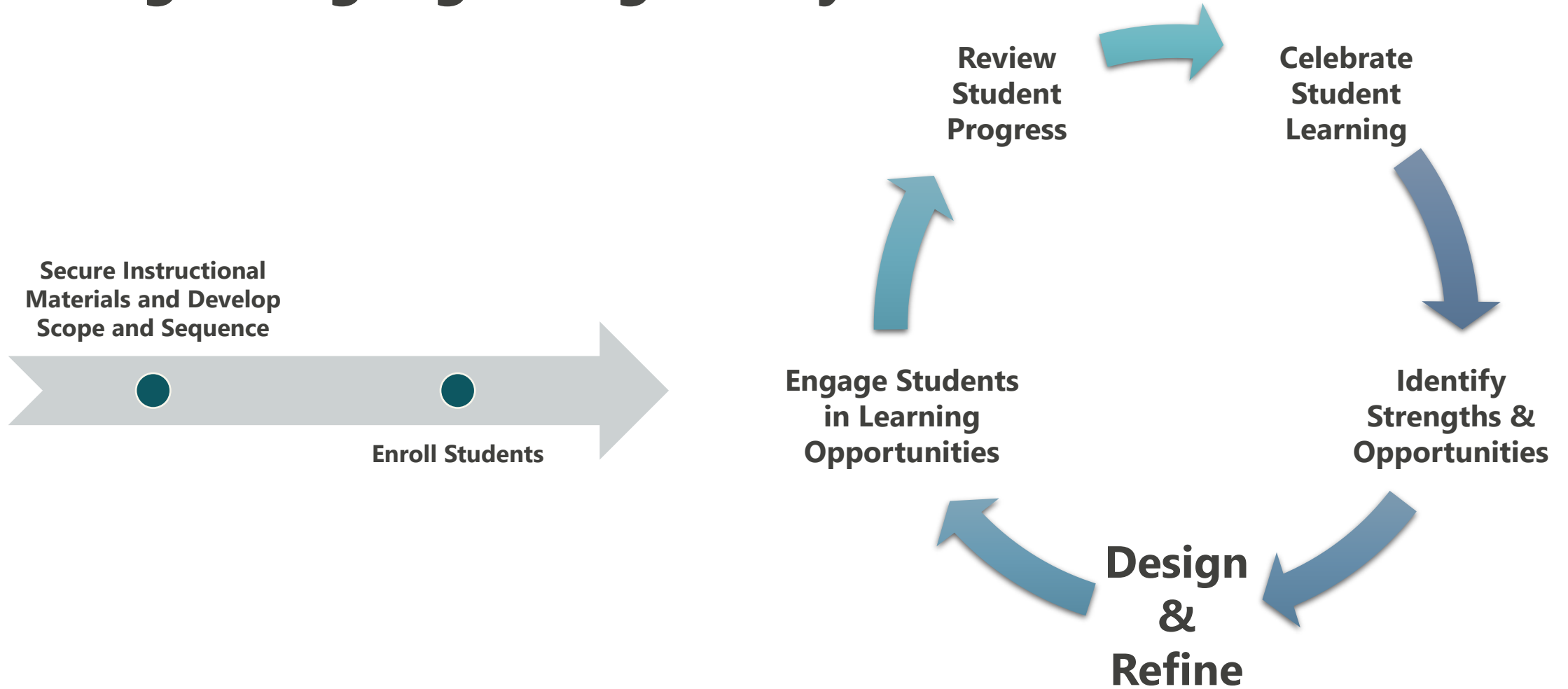
Literacy

- How are students recognizing and creating links between all their languages?
- How are inclusionary practices leveraged to accelerate learning for all students?
- What does it mean to teach for multiliteracy?

Caring Adults

- How is their role in the heritage language program accounted for and prioritized in the schedules of participating educators?
- How are teachers supported in their own use of and learning about the heritage language and heritage language acquisition?
- How are community leaders and elders welcomed into the learning environment?

Heritage Language Program Cycle



Moving past the first HL cycle with data.

Critical data points include:

- Number of participating students
- Number of family and community members who attend events and celebrations
- Gained written fluency and language proficiency
- Student reported belonging and academic identity
- Credits and Seals of Biliteracy earned
- Graduation rates for ML learners who participate in the program
- Exit rates for ML students who receive TBIP services and participate in the program
- Number of ML educators in total and who speak the heritage language
- Teacher satisfaction and engagement with teacher-leadership opportunities



Future HL Cycles: Untapped Student & Educator Capacity

When strong student outcomes *and* additional educator capacity is identified, program teams will need to explore the best way to honor students' learning.

One thing that should be considered is that:

**A Heritage Language is the language of instruction in a Heritage Language Program
-AND-
could be the partner language in a Dual Language Program.**



Dual Language Programs

Heritage Language Programs

School Languages

English

Student Language with Critical Mass
(Partner Language)

Languages of Instruction

English

Designated ELD, ELA,
additional content areas

Student Language with Critical Mass
Partner Language

PL Development, DLA,
additional content areas

Additional HL or WL (Student Specific)

Languages of Instruction

Dual or Monolingual Program

Literacy & Core Instruction

Heritage Language

HL Literacy
Identity, Culture, Community





Teaching & Learning Heritage Languages

Stories and Storytelling

Story-centered instruction is one way to engage in humanizing heritage language instruction.

- Telling their own stories provides opportunities for students to be seen as an recognize themselves as experts of their own experience.
- Fiction and folktales contain complex vocabulary, sentence structures, and discourse patterns
- Heritage learners have cultural knowledge that can unlock deeper themes and prompt discussion
- Storytelling provides opportunities for older students to work with younger students
- Oral traditions can be explicitly valued
- Retelling and pastiche are language tasks that can jump start students to higher levels of proficiency



Project Based Learning

Project based learning can provide:

- A framework for programs with multiple languages
- Information gaps where students can help each other to learn
- 4- to 6-week program cycles allow students to join at any time
- Opportunities for students to monitor their own learning, navigate social interactions, and produce final projects in their own voice
- Family and Community members can be sources in research or design processes
- Students can engage in self-directed learning to individualize instruction



Access through Spiral Instruction

- Repeat key concepts and topics over time in context with increasing complexity.
- Identify key skills or concepts that grade level instruction builds on. Introduce new concepts and review as needed.
- Place value on increasing skill level and capacity.
- Make connections to prior formal and informal learning or use of the concept or skill.
- Allow students to ask and answer deep questions in a diverse community of learners.



Image by [Helena Volpi](#) from [Pixabay](#)

For more information on why spiraling instruction works, see: Pashler, H., Bain, P., Bottge, B., Graesser, A., Koedinger, K., McDaniel, M., & Metcalfe, J. (2007). *Organizing instruction and study to improve student learning* (NCER 2007-2004). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://ncer.ed.gov>.

Inclusionary Practices & UDL

Engage all Learners

- Ensure accommodations are available on any placement testing/ interviews
- Explicitly place equal value on all forms of communication in all dialects/ varieties
- Communicate directly with Special Education case managers about the vision and value of the HL program
- Include HL educators in IEP, 504, or other student support teams

Leverage UDL to Accelerate Learning

- Teach typing to teach letter sound correspondence to older or secondary students
- Provide speech-to-text to all learners and help them decide when they will use it
- Utilize two modalities of a text to increase input (ie. audiobook/printed text)
- Create opportunities for choice with project-based and thematic learning
- Help students of all ages to create their own goals and monitor their own progress





Opportunities for Professional Learning

WIDA Self-Paced Workshops

2022-2023 Offerings

The WIDA Standards Framework: A Collaborative Approach

Classroom Teachers: Engaging Multilingual Newcomers

Engaging Multilingual Learners in Science: Making Sense of Phenomena

Developing Language for Learning in Mathematics

Social Studies: Engaging Multilingual Learners through Inquiry

Home Languages in the Classroom

Making Language Visible in the Classroom

Reframing Education for Long-term English Learners



Tribal & Heritage Language PLCs



Design by
Roger Fernandes

Tribal Language Educators' PLC

1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month | 4–5 pm

Kayla Guyett | kayla.guyett@k12.wa.us

Heritage Language Educators' PLC

2nd Tuesday of the month | 4–5 pm

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Connect with us!



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Visit us online on the [Dual Language Education and Resources](#) webpage!

