

ONE LANGUAGE, TWO TONGUES

The American Education system should teach more of the Mexican Dialect of Spanish

story by Jesus Lara Rivera

Imagine a student: 16 years speaking, writing and reading Spanish. Yet as the first minutes of a high school Spanish class begin to unfold, he immediately notices this isn't his Spanish.

Words like vos, bolígrafo and piso both annoy and confuse him; like learning English all over again. Every new word or old word that means something completely different than what he learned as a kid hits him like a cannon. One right after the other.

As the class finishes, his head throbs with pain as it was just hit with a sudden but powerful blow, a blow that brings a quick realization: he's not good at his own language.

Throughout the district, students learn the Spain dialect of Spanish, which confuses much of the non-Spanish population at schools who normally speak the Mexican dialect of Spanish. This leads many students to feel left out or not smart enough to understand a language many of them grew up with.

This is how many Hispanic and Latino students feel in Spanish classes at Northwest and around the district. They find it difficult to understand and comprehend the school's Spanish classes, which is why the school should strive to change its curriculum.

Spanish has many dialects that spread all over the world, each one different but similar, much like American English is similar but different to British English. For instance "chips" in Britain means what American English speakers call fries.

Here in the U.S., Spanish is taught as the Spain dialect, which in a way makes sense right? It's the more proper and formal version of the language, yet it isn't the most spoken.

According to Rosetta Stone,

Peninsular Spanish, which refers to the Spain dialect, is only spoken by about 43 million people in the world. This number is dwarfed by the overwhelming majority of people who speak other dialects. There are 210 million people who speak the South American dialect, and about 124 million people that speak the Mexican dialect, and lastly 39 million people speak the Central American dialect.

Even without the numbers, the Spain dialect of the language doesn't really help here in the U.S., mainly because Spain is an ocean away while Mexico is in the same continent.

According to the US Department of State, the number of Americans living in Mexico is estimated to be 1.6 million, and they listed Mexico as the top travel destination for US travelers.

The United States and Mexico are far more intertwined than the United States and Spain, which is why it makes sense that the Mexican dialect should be taught in schools rather than the Spain dialect.

To resolve the Spanish issue, the district should change the dialect that it teaches and make it so that more Hispanic or Latino students feel included. For starters, the people who teach the language should truly understand it. Having someone who grew up around or engulfed themselves in the language would make it so students could ask questions and get a sure answer rather than a "maybe".

Technically, the school has already kicked off this process; they hired a native speaker, Josue Aguilar Bautista, who knows and teaches the language as is. But this is a small step to truly promoting change, and there are still many classes here that don't have more

knowledge in the dialects that truly matter at our school.

But nowadays, there aren't a lot of teachers, and trying to find one that meets these requirements is going to be practically impossible, but it can be done. There are people out there that are qualified to teach Spanish in these ways but they are rare, and the district needs to concentrate on hiring these people.

Changing the dialect would make a big difference, but one that is needed.

Now, there is a class that teaches the different dialects of Spanish, but sadly the class is not open to people who seek to learn Spanish — the class is only open to people who already speak Spanish at home.

This is a great step towards integrating other dialects but this is a small change that doesn't affect the grand cause. After all, the dialect is only taught to those that already speak the language which doesn't really help the grand masses from learning.

Change needs to happen.

THE VOTE

14	/	0	/	0
Agree		Disagree		Abstain

design by Bella Alvarado

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