**Supporting Spanish as a Heritage Language in Christchurch**

### The importance of heritage language maintenance:

Heritage language learners who retain their heritage language are more likely to experience:

- positive cultural identity development
- strong sense of belonging
- greater family cohesion
- positive relationships with their parents and relatives.
- High educational achievement.

Heritage language learners experience higher levels of academic achievement when they develop additive bilingualism and biliteracy.

"Continued development of both languages into literate domains is a precondition for enhanced cognitive, linguistic and academic growth". (Cummins, 2000, p.37)

In order to develop biliteracy, heritage language learners need to have access to resources and books in their heritage language.

### Factors affecting heritage language maintenance:

Heritage language maintenance in the second generation is affected by:

- language policies and schooling practices in the receiving country
- the existence of an ethnic community with language resources and support
- the opportunity to attend a bilingual school or ethnic community language school
- use of the heritage language at home”

(León & Suárez; Nesteruk, as cited in McCabe, 2014, p. 3).

### Creation of a Spanish library for the Hispanic community of Christchurch:

- **April 2014:** Creation of Aotearoa Hispanic Association (AHA)
- **June 2014:** Application to the Christchurch City Council to get funding so set up a library of Spanish books.
- **October 2014:** Celebration of “Día de la Hispanidad”; inauguration of the premises of AHA in the Christchurch Community House; purchase of the first Spanish books, including dual-language books.

### Dual-language books

- are a tool to contribute to better metalinguistic awareness and better literacy engagement.
  (Naqvi, McKeough, Thorne & Pfitscher, 2013)
- provide opportunities for culturally and linguistically responsive teaching.
- can facilitate language learning because students have a chance to observe similarities and differences in Spanish and English through cognate relationships. (Cummins, as cited in Szilágyi, Giambi & Szecsi, 2013)

### Literature reference list


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