

A National Survey of Heritage Language Education Programs in the Netherlands



Are you interested in making a difference in the lives of multilingual families? Would you like to gain experience working for a non-profit organization? This internship will allow you to develop skills in bridging science with the needs of minority language groups in the Netherlands. You will learn how to build and draw from meaningful and dynamic partnerships with diverse groups, such as parents, teachers, language communities, libraries, expat support centers, school boards, other non-profits, and international partners.

We are currently seeking two motivated MA students to join us at the [Heritage Language Education Network](#). The aim of the internship is to develop and carry out a plan for expanding our network of HL programs beyond Eindhoven/Brainport via a digital survey that would collect valuable data about the current landscape of heritage language education in the Netherlands.

Background

There is an estimated 11% of the Dutch population (2 million people) who were born in the Netherlands as children of at least one foreign-born parent, and there is an estimated 8% of the population that speaks a language other than Dutch at home (CBS). Many foreign-born parents want their children to integrate into Dutch society but also to speak the home language well.

Heritage language (HL) programs – also called "mother tongue schools" – are usually non-profit, grassroots initiatives operated by parents from a non-majority language community in order to maintain the language and culture of their children's heritage. HL programs provide invaluable education to multilingual children that the mainstream school is not able to provide. HL programs face persistent challenges such as finding volunteers, teachers, funding, locations, and lesson materials for a unique student population.

Heritage Language Education (HLE) Network's mission is to improve and increase opportunities for multilingual children to develop the language they speak at home. By working closely with local and international partners, we bring HL programs together, give voice to the common issues faced by these groups, and raise public awareness about the societal benefits when multilingual children develop all the languages they speak.

HLE Network has built up a network of HL programs in the Eindhoven region. It is now time to expand this network across the Netherlands! With a nationwide network, we can provide more contacts to the HL programs in the Eindhoven region, we can provide a central directory of HL programs for the entire country, we can reach more HL program managers and teachers to invite to our professional development and networking activities, we can gain insight into the current situation of HL education in the Netherlands, and we can – importantly – raise public awareness¹. It is time to "check the pulse" of these many grassroots organizations, now that many pandemic restrictions have been lifted.

¹ "Raising public awareness about heritage languages, classes, and schools is crucial to strengthening the overall quality and impact of heritage language teaching and learning. The public needs to understand that through these language programs learners can maintain and develop their proficiency in the language, and, as a result, serve as local, national, and international linguistic resources. . . raising public awareness is needed because the public is often unaware of the wide range of language learning opportunities available through heritage community programs. . . Part of the difficulty of raising public awareness about the variety, quality, and extent of heritage language education . . . is a lack of data for most languages on what heritage language classes are being offered, to whom, at what levels, and where. The difficulty of obtaining this information is one of the challenges facing researchers and program implementors. . . In order for language educators to obtain and maintain public support for heritage language schools, the public needs to be made aware and reminded of their existence and value (pages 149 – 150)."

Peyton, J. K., Ranard, D. A., & McGinnis, S. (Eds.). (2001). *Heritage languages in America: Preserving a national resource. Language in education: Theory and practice*. Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems Co.

What is expected of each student

The number of hours you will devote to the project will depend on your university's internship module as well as whether or not you will combine the internship with a thesis (see Research, below). The size of the project requires two interns. These individuals must have attention for detail, intercultural communication skills, an excellent command of both English and Dutch, a willingness and ability to do creative detective work (to find the HL programs), the ability to work reliably and independently with a range of online tools, and overall, a genuine commitment to and interest in the project.

During this internship you will:

- Familiarize yourself with the history of integrated HL education in the Netherlands (e.g., OETC, OALT)
- Familiarize yourself with scientific literature about community-based HL education, particularly studies that have surveyed HL programs
- Examine existing databases of HL programs (e.g. in Australian states, Zurich)
- Develop a realistic, organized, and efficient plan to expand our network of HL programs in the Netherlands
- Design a survey² to collect information about HL programs in the Netherlands
- Exercise practices that protect privacy when collecting data
- Reach out to HL programs across the country to complete the survey, which will entail emailing, calling, and visiting program managers
- Compile the collected information into a usable online directory

Other potential tasks (time permitting):

- Help create general promotional material for HLE Network in English and Dutch
- Assist the Managing Director with administrative tasks pertaining to communication (website, newsletters)
- Help represent HLE Network at events

Practical issues:

- The student will be expected to log their work clearly and to agree to a confidentiality policy.
- The internship is unpaid.
- HLE Network does not have an office. It is possible to carry out the internship remotely, but some appointments in Eindhoven or in other cities will be necessary/desirable. For this reason, it is expected that the students will each have an OV Card through which free travel is possible.
- It is helpful if the student is available for some meetings in the evening.
- We are currently requesting funds from the Eindhoven municipality for one laptop, but it should be assumed that both interns would have to work using their own laptops.

Research/Thesis

The internship project easily lends itself to a unique thesis topic. A thesis based on the data collected is optional, but is encouraged. The student would have to decide before the start of the internship whether or not they will carry out a thesis using data collected via the survey, so that the research questions are known when designing the survey.

When

Spring/Summer semester February 2023 – June 2023

Students who are interested in the internship but would like to start earlier than 2023 may also contact us to explore possibilities.

Who

Internship supervisor at HLE Network:

Dr. Gisi Cannizzaro (Managing Director) in conjunction with Diana Angelova (Chair of the Board)

How to apply

Send a CV and letter of motivation and details of availability to hlenet.org@gmail.com.

² Example of the survey used by the U.S. national coalition: www.surveymonkey.com/r/HLProgram