



# Online Language Learning Through the Digital Learning Department

## Overview

In 2011, the Mapping and Enhancing Language Learning (MELL) project collected information on world languages offered through the Digital Learning Department (DLD) of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) (<http://digitallearning.k12.wa.us/>). The DLD was formed in 2009 as the office responsible for managing a statewide approval process for multi-district online learning providers in Washington, and it provides all school districts in the state with equal access to 600+ online courses available through an easy registration system that saves time and money. Students are able to register for online courses offered through the DLD at their schools; they cannot register on their own.

Students have a variety of reasons for choosing to learn a language via an online course. Some students face scheduling conflicts or have an interest in learning languages not offered at their school or want to continue study of a language at a level (such as AP–Advanced Placement) not offered at their school. There are very specific requirements for online world language providers, for example, certificated Washington teachers with an endorsement in that Designated World Language must conduct these courses and students must choose from these DLD approved providers. Usually, the courses are paid for by the district using basic education funding.

The information regarding online language learning through DLD from 2009-2011 is summarized in this policy brief.

## Online Course Offerings and Providers

According to the 2011-12 Course Catalog, the DLD offers 112 “foreign” (i.e. world) language courses from four approved online course providers: Apex Learning (18), Aventa Learning (40), Federal Way Internet Academy (4), and National Connections Academy (50). Most of the courses (92) are for students in

grades 9-12; the remaining are for grades K-6 (6), grade 7 (16), or grade 8 (21). Of the high school level courses, both Spanish and French include Levels 1-4, AP, and Honors 1 and 2. German offers Levels 1-4, while Japanese, Latin, and Mandarin Chinese offer only Levels 1-2.

## Course Demand by Language and Course Completion Rates

The tables below summarize the data for 2009-10 and 2010-11 about online course demand by language based on enrollments and course completion rates.

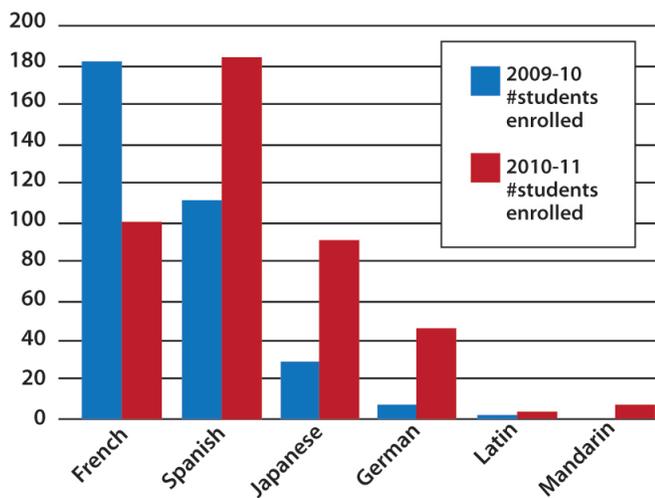
### 2009-10 Demand for online world language courses and completion rates *by language*

Language	# Students Enrolled	% of Total Enrolled	# Students Completed	Completion Rate
French	182	55.3%	139	76%
Spanish	112	34.0%	76	68%
Japanese	30	9.1%	21	70%
German	4	1.2%	0	0%
Latin	1	0.3%	1	100%
Mandarin	0	0.0%	0	0%
Total	329	100%	237	72%

### 2010-11 Demand for online world language courses and completion rates *by language*

By Language	# Students Enrolled	% of Total Enrolled	# Students Completed	Completion Rate
Spanish	184	44.3%	104	57%
French	101	24.3%	81	80%
Japanese	72	17.3%	33	46%
German	51	12.3%	35	69%
Mandarin	5	1.2%	2	40%
Latin	2	0.5%	2	100%
Total	415	100%	257	62%

## Comparison of student enrollment between 2009-10 and 2010-11



Demand for online courses in world languages over the past two years has increased. In 2010-11, 415 students enrolled in an online language course, up from 329 in 2009-10. The numbers also indicate that the most popular languages are consistently Spanish, French, and Japanese, although German had a substantial increase in enrollments in 2010-2011.

The number of students who enroll in a given course is higher than the number of students who actually complete the course. Of the 329 students enrolled in any given DLD language course in 2009-10, 72 percent completed their course. Of the 415 students enrolled in language courses in 2010-11, 62 percent completed their course.

## Course Demand by Level and Course Completion Rates

The tables below summarize the data for 2009-10 and 2010-11 about online course demand by level based on enrollments and course completion rates.

## 2009-10 Demand for online world language courses and completion rates *by level*

By Level	# Students Enrolled	% of Total Enrolled	# Students Completed	Completion Rate
Level 1	187	56.8%	134	72%
Level 2	102	31.0%	74	73%
Level 3	23	7.0%	21	91%
Level 4	10	3.0%	4	40%
AP	7	2.1%	4	57%
Total	329	100%	237	72%

## 2010-11 Demand for online world language courses and completion rates *by level*

By Level	# Students Enrolled	% of Total Enrolled	# Students Completed	Completion Rate
Level 1	207	49.9%	132	64%
Level 2	147	35.4%	91	62%
Level 3	41	9.9%	29	71%
Level 4	8	1.9%	2	25%
AP	12	2.9%	3	25%
Total	415	100%	257	62%

The high enrollments at Levels 1 and 2 suggest that students are primarily using online language courses to satisfy the two-year world language requirement for admission to a four-year college in our state. While there is currently no state requirement for world language credits for high school graduation, world languages are part of the career and college-ready pathway, and a number of districts are beginning to implement a two-year world language high school graduation requirement within their districts. It will be interesting to see if this development leads to even greater growth of online courses in world languages.

The Mapping and Enhancing Language Learning (MELL) project was initiated in 2006 by four National Resource Centers at the University of Washington's Jackson School of International Studies, which received funding through the U.S. Department of Education's Title VI program to launch a four-year project to collect data on world language learning and teaching in Washington K-12 schools. The Center for Global Studies (CGS), Center for West European Studies (CWES), East Asia Center (EAC), and the Ellison Center for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies (REECAS) are working with the UW Language Learning Center, Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Washington State Coalition for International Education, and Washington Association for Language Teaching (WAFLT) to establish an understanding of world language teaching trends in Washington state. With funding from the Title VI program grants and a State Innovations grant from Longview Foundation, the MELL project is creating a series of policy briefs based on the data collected through the MELL surveys of schools. For further information, call the Language Learning Center at 206.543.0563 or email [mellwa@u.washington.edu](mailto:mellwa@u.washington.edu). Web: [depts.washington.edu/mellwa](http://depts.washington.edu/mellwa).