



Languages Taught in Washington's High Schools and Community Colleges

In an effort to learn what languages are offered at our state's community colleges, the Mapping and Enhancing Language Learning (MELL) project collected information, largely from web-sites, about the language classes offered at community colleges. The data reflect courses offered in the respective colleges during the Spring 2009 quarter or semester. Using this information, along with data from the MELL survey of high schools, we are able to get a picture of the learning opportunities available to students as they graduate from high school and go on to community college.

A Snapshot of Languages Taught at Community Colleges

After high school, many students in Washington continue on to community colleges rather than entering 4-year colleges or universities. Given this fact, it is important to learn what opportunities there are for students to continue their language learning in community colleges.

Table 1: Most Common Languages Taught in Washington's High Schools and Community Colleges

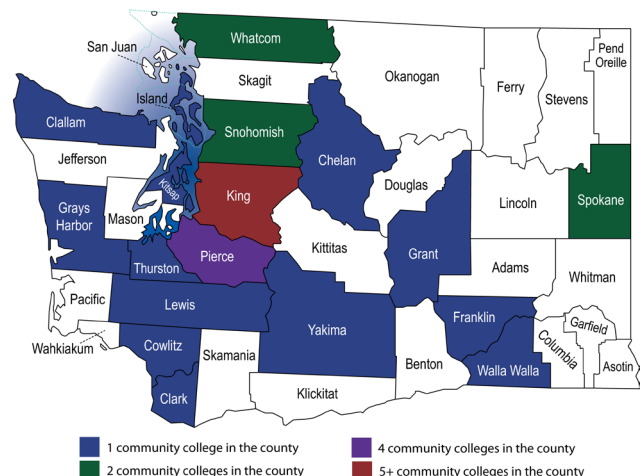
| Language | # of high schools | % of high schools | # of comm. colleges | % of comm. colleges |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Spanish | 302 | 95.57% | 28 | 88% |
| French | 168 | 53.16% | 24 | 75% |
| German | 89 | 28.16% | 16 | 50% |
| Japanese | 77 | 24.37% | 20 | 63% |
| ASL | 73 | 23.10% | 18 | 56% |
| Chinese | 22 | 6.96% | 14 | 45% |
| Latin | 8 | 2.53% | 1 | 3% |
| Russian | 7 | 2.22% | 3 | 10% |
| Native Am. Langs. | 7 | 2.22% | 2 | 6% |
| Arabic | 3 | 0.95% | 3 | 10% |

Note: The above table reflects data from 316 high schools reporting offering languages in 2009 and a total of 32 community colleges researched in Spring 2009. A few community colleges also offer Italian, Classical Greek, Korean, and Vietnamese.

There are 32 community colleges in our state, situated in 18 counties. [See Table 2.] The most common languages taught at these colleges are Spanish, French, German, Japanese, and ASL (American Sign Language).

Table 2: Community Colleges by County

| County | College |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| Chelan | Wenatchee Valley College |
| Clallam | Peninsula College |
| Clark | Clark College |
| Cowlitz | Lower Columbia College |
| Franklin | Columbia Basin College |
| Grant | Big Bend Community College |
| Grays Harbor | Grays Harbor College |
| Island | Skagit Valley College |
| King | Cascadia Community College |
| King | Green River Community College |
| King | Highline Community College |
| King | Lake Washington Technical College |
| King | North Seattle Community College |
| King | Renton Technical College |
| King | Seattle Central Community College |
| King | Shoreline Community College |
| King | South Seattle Community College |
| Kitsap | Olympic College |
| Lewis | Centralia College |
| Pierce | Bates Technical College |
| Pierce | Clover Park Technical College |
| Pierce | Pierce College (2 sites) |
| Pierce | Tacoma Community College |
| Snohomish | Edmonds Community College |
| Snohomish | Everett Community College |
| Spokane | Spokane Community College |
| Spokane | Spokane Falls Community College |
| Thurston | South Puget Sound Community College |
| Walla Walla | Walla Walla Community College |
| Whatcom | Bellingham Technical College |
| Whatcom | Whatcom Community College |
| Yakima | Yakima Valley Community College |



High School to Community College Pipeline

Spanish, French, German, Japanese, and ASL are also among the most often taught languages in our *high schools*, as can be seen in Table 1, as well as in *MELL Policy Brief #6: Trends in High School Language Offerings 2004–2007–2009*. In high school, students can start at the 1st-year level and sometimes continue on to the AP (Advanced Placement) level. In community college, these languages are taught anywhere from 1st-year level to 3rd-year level. One community college (Walla Walla Community College) offers 4th-year level Spanish.

Table 3: Number of Community Colleges that offer...

| Language | 1st year or higher | 2nd year or higher | 3rd year or higher |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Spanish | 28 | 23 | 7 |
| French | 24 | 13 | 7 |
| Japanese | 20 | 11 | 3 |
| ASL | 18 | 5 | 1 |
| German | 16 | 6 | 2 |
| Chinese | 14 | 6 | 0 |
| Russian | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Arabic | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Native Am. Langs. | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Latin | 1 | 0 | 0 |

Table 4: Number of Counties with Community Colleges that offer...

| Language | 1st year or higher | 2nd year or higher | 3rd year or higher |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Spanish | 19 | 16 | 5 |
| French | 16 | 10 | 4 |
| Japanese | 12 | 7 | 2 |
| German | 11 | 5 | 2 |
| ASL | 11 | 3 | 1 |
| Chinese | 8 | 3 | 0 |
| Russian | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Arabic | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Native Am. Langs. | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Latin | 1 | 0 | 0 |

Table 3 outlines the number of *community colleges* at which specific languages are taught and the number of years they are

taught (1, 2, or 3+). Table 4 outlines the number of *counties* in which specific languages are taught at the community college level (1, 2, or 3+). (Some counties have several community colleges, as in King, while some have no community colleges.) (See Table 2 and Map).

Looking at the list of languages from Spanish to Latin in the above tables, we can see that though opportunities exist to study languages at our community colleges, those opportunities are not equally distributed across our state. Only 18 of our 39 counties currently have community colleges. Furthermore, the opportunities to study any given language at a 2nd-year level or higher at a community college are even fewer.

MELL Policy Brief #7: Mapping Languages Taught in Washington High Schools — 2009 illustrates the distribution of world languages commonly taught in high schools across our state, mapped out by county. If we compare the counties in which a given language is taught at the *high school* level with the counties in which a language is taught at the *community college* level, we get an even clearer picture of the opportunities available to high school students as they go on to community college.

The information we collected shows that while Spanish is offered in high schools (sometimes 5 years or more) in all 39 counties it is only offered at the community college level at or above the 2nd-year level in 16 counties. (See Table 4). For example, several of the high schools offer Spanish for at least 3 years in Kitsap and Grays Harbor counties, but the community colleges in these counties only offer 1st-year level. This implies that high school students would need to restart at the 1st-year level or postpone continuing their language study until they arrive at a 4-year college.

The story is similar for other commonly taught languages. French is offered in high schools in 29 counties, while it is offered in only 10 counties at the community college level at or above the 2nd-year level. For example, students who have begun to learn French in Kitsap, Clallam, Franklin, Grays Harbor, and Thurston counties would not be able to continue to a higher level at a local community college, although they could retake 1st-year level.

In fact, any high school students learning German, Japanese, ASL, or Chinese in high school would most likely not be able to continue to a 2nd-year college level course in that language if they were to attend a community college. And those having studied Russian, Arabic, a Native American language, or Latin in high school would find almost no opportunity.

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. Web: depts.washington.edu/mellwa.**