



Trends in High School Language Offerings 2010 - 2013

Overview

One of the goals of the University of Washington's Mapping and Enhancing Language Learning (MELL) project has been to report on trends in high school language offerings. From 2004 to 2009, data were collected through MELL surveys completed by Washington high schools.

Since 2010, MELL has been utilizing data collected from the world languages enrollments reported in the OSPI Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS), a longitudinal data warehouse of educational data based on standardized state course codes. CEDARS records student "enrollments" at each school by state course code. These enrollments may represent actual seat-time classes in the school or credits earned by students through online courses, Running Start courses at the community college, or competency-based credits, i.e. credits earned by students demonstrating proficiency in the language. (For more information about CEDARS, visit <http://www.k12.wa.us/CEDARS/default.aspx>.)

Trends were initially reported in MELL Policy Brief #6: Trends in High School Language Offerings 2004-2007-2009, based on MELL survey data. CEDARS data were reported in MELL Policy Brief #12: Trends in High School Language Offerings 2004-2012. This policy brief highlights 2010-2013 CEDARS data.

Trends in Languages Offered 2009 - 2012

From the combined survey and CEDARS results from MELL Policy Brief #12, the main trends noted were:

- Expansion of schools reporting that they offered Spanish from 96 percent in 2009 to 99 percent in 2012
- Continued stabilization of other popular languages, such as French, above 50 percent, and German, Japanese, and American Sign Language (ASL), all above 27 percent

- Continued expansion of Chinese to almost 12 percent without impact on enrollments in other commonly taught languages
- Expansion of Latin from 2 to over 8 percent
- Continued low enrollment in Russian at just under 3 percent
- Expansion of new, less commonly taught languages in the state enrollment data such as Arabic, Korean, and Vietnamese due to the introduction of competency-based credit testing

Trends in Languages Offered as of 2013

Table 1 below shows trends in MELL data based on CEDARS enrollment data.

Table 1. Schools (Number & Percentage) that Reported Language Enrollments in 2010, 2012, and 2013 CEDARS Data

	2010(#)	2010(%)	2012(#)	2012(%)	2013(#)	2013(%)
Spanish	316	94.33%	481	99.18%	479	95.42%
French	182	54.33%	256	52.78%	252	50.20%
German	92	27.46%	139	28.66%	140	27.89%
ASL	72	21.49%	131	27.01%	136	27.09%
Japanese	96	28.66%	134	27.63%	119	23.71%
Chinese	34	10.15%	58	11.96%	68	13.55%
Latin	20	5.97%	41	8.45%	30	5.98%
Russian	9	2.69%	13	2.68%	24	4.78%
Vietnamese*					17	3.39%
Native	22	6.57%	11	2.27%	13	2.59%
Arabic	3	0.90%	9	1.86%	13	2.59%
Korean	2	0.60%	9	1.86%	12	2.39%
Somali*					10	1.99%
Tagalog*					8	1.59%

*Languages that had numbers under 1.5 percent of schools in previous years' data.

Note: For CEDARS, not all districts succeed in entering their world language enrollments accurately, so the data are not always complete.

In 2013, **Spanish** had a drop in the percent of schools reporting enrollments in CEDARS from over 99 percent in 2012 to just above 95. **French** has been relatively stable with a slight decline since 2010, but still remains above 50 percent of schools reporting enrollments. **German, ASL,** and **Japanese** have all declined slightly. **German** and **ASL** are still just above 27 percent, but **ASL** has overtaken **Japanese**, which has dropped to just below 24 percent. **Chinese** continues to grow steadily, reaching almost 14 percent in 2013.



The percentage of schools reporting enrollments in **Latin** has dropped from over 8 percent in 2012 to 2010 levels of around 6 percent.

Russian has increased to almost 5 percent in 2013. This increase is primarily due to competency-based credits earned by students in various locations around the state.

Schools reporting enrollments in **Native American Languages** have stayed stable since 2012 at just under 3 percent. This is still a major drop from over 6 percent of schools reporting enrollments in 2010.

Arabic is still growing over the course of this period to just under 3 percent of schools. This is almost entirely due to competency-based credits.

Korean was added to the table in 2012 because of the significant increase in schools reporting enrollments, and it has continued to grow moderately to just over 2 percent in 2013. It appears there are now two schools (Puyallup High School in Puyallup School District and Mt. Tahoma in Tacoma School District) that offered actual classes in 2013, up from one in 2012, while the rest of the schools awarded competency-based credits.

Vietnamese, Somali, and Tagalog reported enrollments in over 1.5 percent of schools in 2013 for the first time, due exclusively to competency-based credits. **Vietnamese** had the most significant increase to over 3 percent of schools in 2013. **Somali** was reported in just fewer than 2 percent of schools and **Tagalog** in just over 1.5 percent.

Impact of Competency-Based Credits

Since 2011, students in Washington State have had the opportunity to take nationally available language proficiency tests to demonstrate their ability to read, write, listen, and speak in a language other than English. They can potentially earn from one to four

high school competency-based credits in a world language based on their language proficiency level. These credits are now reported in CEDARS. For more information, see: <http://www.k12.wa.us/WorldLanguages/CompetencyBasedCredits.aspx> Notably, 25 or more student enrollments were reported in each of Nepali, Punjabi, Amharic, and Hindi languages for competency-based credits, with enrollments for these languages reported by at least 3 schools each. Note that one student who has earned 4 credits would appear as 4 enrollments in CEDARS (e.g., Nepali 1, Nepali 2, Nepali 3, and Nepali 4). Therefore the enrollment counts by themselves do not equate to numbers of unique students as individuals.

The strongest trend in 2013 is the continued expansion of less commonly taught languages in state enrollment data through competency-based testing.

Conclusion

As our data analysis continues to reveal trends in languages offered, we can examine the implications of these trends and formulate policies that will allow us as a state, and as businesses and citizens, to keep pace with the needs of our interdependent, global economy.

The strongest trend in 2013 was the continued expansion of less commonly taught languages, such as Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese, in state enrollment data. The emergence of these “less commonly taught” languages in the CEDARS data can be attributed to the fact that more school districts are awarding competency-based credits.

In the next few years, we will continue to follow the CEDARS data carefully to determine whether there is a trend in schools increasing or decreasing offerings in specific world languages.