



# Languages Taught in Washington's High Schools and Community Colleges – 2016

Since 2010, the Mapping and Enhancing Language Learning (MELL) project has examined what languages were offered at our state's community colleges and what opportunities were available to students for continued language study as they graduate from high school and go on to community college. This is a continuation of the information gathered in 2010 and 2013. The data about language classes offered at community colleges have been largely collected from college course catalogs online and reflect courses offered in the respective colleges during the 2015-2016 academic year.

## A Snapshot of Languages Taught at Community Colleges – Spring 2016

According to the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) [<http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu>], there are 34 community colleges in our state, situated in 18 counties. [See Table 2.] Of those 34, 32 include world languages in their course catalog. Table 1 reflects data from 32 community colleges reported on in 2010, 34 community colleges researched in Fall 2013, and 34 community colleges researched in Spring 2016.

**Table 1: Most Common Languages Taught in Washington's Community Colleges**

Language	2016(#)	2016(%)	2013(#)	2013(%)	2010(#)	2010(%)
Spanish	32	94%	31	91%	28	88%
ASL	29	89%	23	68%	18	56%
French	26	76%	23	68%	24	75%
Japanese	23	68%	22	65%	20	63%
Chinese	20	59%	19	56%	14	45%
German	16	47%	18	53%	16	50%
Russian	9	26%	7	21%	3	10%
Arabic	8	24%	5	15%	3	10%
Native American Languages	4	12%	3	9%	2	6%
Korean	3	9%	4	12%	2	6%

**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	Bellevue College
King	Cascadia College
King	Green River College
King	Highline College
King	Lake Washington Institute of Technology
King	North Seattle College
King	Renton Technical College
King	Seattle Central College
King	Shoreline Community College
King	South Seattle College
Kitsap	Olympic College
Lewis	Centralia College
Pierce	Bates Technical College
Pierce	Clover Park Technical College
Pierce	Pierce College Fort Steilacoom
Pierce	Pierce College Puyallup
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 College

## Changes from 2013 to 2016

Following the same pattern as from 2010-2013, a majority of the most commonly taught languages saw an increase in the number of schools offering courses in 2016. ASL shows the largest overall increase, with entries increasing 12% from 2010 to 2013 and an additional 21% from 2013 to 2016. It has taken over French as the second most offered language in community colleges, in part due to its adoption by technical colleges that traditionally offered few, if any, foreign language courses.



French, which showed a considerable decrease in offerings from 2010 to 2013, is now above the number of offerings it had in 2010 with 76% of community colleges showing a listing in 2016. Native American languages have uniformly increased by 3% since 2010.

Languages considered by the US Government as “critical” languages, such as Chinese, Russian and Arabic, have all progressed since 2010. Although the development from 2013 to 2016 has been slower than between 2010 and 2013, Chinese and Russian have continued their pattern of growth with offerings at 59% and 26% respectively. Arabic is now offered in more than twice the number of colleges than it was in 2010, from 10% to 15% in 2013 to 24% as of 2016.

German and Korean are the only languages whose numbers were reduced. German lost the gain that it had seen in 2013, dipping below 50%. Korean has decreased by 3% since 2013, but is still up from its entries in 2010 at 9%.

Table 3 outlines the number of community colleges at which specific languages are taught and the number of years they are taught (1 or 2) in Spring 2016. One year of college level language is considered the equivalent of three years of high school level courses. However, there is no statewide standard on proficiency levels targeted in college level language courses.

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

Language	1st-year or higher (2016)	1st-year or higher (2013)	2nd-year or higher (2016)	2nd-year or higher (2013)
Spanish	32	31	26	19
ASL	29	23	12	9
French	26	23	17	11
Japanese	23	22	15	11
Chinese	20	19	8	4
German	16	18	6	6
Russian	9	7	2	1
Arabic	8	5	0	1
Native American Languages	4	3	2	1
Korean	3	4	0	0

### High School to Community College Pipeline

MELL Policy Brief #16: Mapping Languages Taught in Washington High Schools — 2014 illustrates the distribution of common world languages taught in high schools across our state, mapped out by county. If we look at the counties in which a given language is taught at the high school level and compare that to the counties in which a language is taught at the community college level, we get a picture of opportunities that exist or don't exist for high school students as they go on to community college. Note that some middle school (grades 6-8) world language classes qualify for high school credits and may be included in the high school enrollment data from OSPI CEDARS.

World language offerings in K-12 schools has changed little compared to offerings at the community college level. Spanish continues to be offered in 94% of the high schools that teach world languages. French is still the second most common language taught in high schools at 49%; German is at 26%; Japanese is at 23%; ASL is at 23% (down slightly from 27% in 2013); and Chinese is at 10% (also down from 14% in 2013).

Spanish is now offered almost universally at an equal percentage of high schools and community colleges (94%). Community colleges, however, are decidedly more likely to offer more than one language than high schools. The second most commonly taught language in high schools, French, is only available at 49% of high schools, whereas the second most commonly taught language in community colleges, ASL, is offered at almost 90% of colleges. The growth that ASL has seen in community colleges has not been matched at the high school level, where only 23% of schools show enrollments. The next most commonly taught languages (Japanese and German) are offered in only about a quarter of the high schools, but are taught in 68% and 47% of colleges, respectively. The critical languages such as Chinese, Russian, and Arabic have continued to expand in community colleges, but are taught in less than 10% of high schools.

In the next few years, we will continue to follow the trend of high schools and community colleges to determine if the discrepancy between high school and college foreign/world language offerings continues.

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 project to collect data on world language learning and teaching in Washington K-12 schools and colleges. 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 partnering with the UW Language Learning Center and the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to track and report data on world language teaching trends in Washington State. For further information, visit: <http://depts.washington.edu/mellwa/index.php>.