



# Washington State's World Language Offerings at High Schools and Community Colleges – 2020

## A Snapshot of Languages Taught at Community Colleges – Fall 2020

Washington state is fortunate to have 34 community colleges located in 18 counties (Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) [<http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu>] - See Table 1.)

Of the 34 colleges, 32 include world languages in their online course catalogs. Table 2 reports data from 32 community colleges from Fall 2013, Spring 2016 and Fall 2020.

**Table 1: 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

**Table 2: Most Common Languages Taught in Washington's Community Colleges (% out of 32 of 34 colleges)**

Language	2013(#)	2013(%)	2016(#)	2016(%)	2020(#)	2020(%)
Arabic	5	15%	8	24%	7	21%
ASL	23	68%	29	89%	25	74%
Chinese	19	56%	20	59%	19	56%
French	23	68%	26	76%	22	65%
German	18	53%	16	47%	12	35%
Japanese	22	65%	23	68%	21	62%
Korean	4	12%	3	9%	3	9%
Native American Languages	3	9%	4	12%	2	6%
Russian	7	21%	9	26%	4	12%
Spanish	31	91%	32	94%	32	94%

## Changes from 2016 to 2020

In 2020, none of the most commonly taught languages experienced an increase in the frequency of course offerings. This change represents a decline in language offerings when compared to prior years. Fewer schools offered courses in over half of the languages in 2020 compared to 2013. All but two languages saw a decrease, with Spanish and Korean remaining stagnant at 94% and 9%, respectively.

Native American languages decreased their offerings by half, from 12% to 6%, though one community college reported offering two different Native American languages.

ASL, French, and German experienced a notable decline in offerings, dropping by four colleges each. ASL decreased by 15% from 2016 to 2020, a contrast from the increase of 21% from 2013 to 2016. Despite the reduction, ASL remains the 2nd most frequently offered language in community colleges, followed by French. German continues to experience a downward trend, with 53% in 2013 to 47% in 2016, and 35% in 2020.

Russian experienced the largest drop from nine colleges in 2016 to four in 2020, decreasing by 14%. Other "critical" languages such as Chinese and Arabic saw a smaller decrease, reducing by 3% each.



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 and 2020. 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 (2020)	2nd-year or higher (2016)	2nd-year or higher (2020)
Arabic	8	7	0	0
ASL	29	25	12	7
Chinese	20	19	8	2
French	26	22	17	10
German	16	12	6	2
Japanese	23	21	15	10
Korean	3	3	0	0
Native American Languages	4	2	2	1
Russian	9	4	2	1
Spanish	32	32	26	21

\*Some schools reported to offer two years of a language only offer the first quarter of the 2nd year.

### High School to Community College Pipeline

The MELL 2019 High School County Maps page highlights 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.

Table 4 compares the number of high schools reporting enrollments in a number of languages in 2019 to the 2020 numbers for community colleges.

Spanish remains to be widely offered at an almost equal percentage of high schools (92%) and community colleges (94%). However, community colleges are more likely to offer more than one language than high schools, although high schools also record competency-based credits earned through testing.

The second most commonly taught language in high schools, French, is only available at 46% of high schools; compared to ASL, the second most taught language in community colleges, which is offered at 74% of colleges. Though the percentage of ASL offerings in community colleges has decreased since 2016 (89%), its prevalence remains unmatched at the high school level, with only 25% of high schools reporting enrollments. The next most commonly taught languages (Japanese and German) are offered in 18% of high schools, but are taught in 62% and 35% of colleges, respectively. In both community colleges and high schools, offerings of critical languages such as Arabic, Chinese, and Russian have all declined.

**Table 4: Number of High Schools compared to Community Colleges that offer...**

Language	H.S. 2019(#)	H.S. 2019(%)	C.C. 2020(#)	C.C. 2020(%)
Arabic	1	<1%	7	21%
ASL	220	46%	25	74%
Chinese	45	9%	19	56%
French	220	46%	22	65%
German	91	19%	12	35%
Italian	2	<1%	0	0%
Japanese	87	18%	21	62%
Korean	6	1%	3	9%
Latin	14	3%	0	0%
Native American Languages	19	4%	2	6%
Portuguese	1	<1%	0	0%
Russian	17	4%	4	12%
Spanish	445	92%	32	94%
Tagalog	1	<1%	0	0%
Vietnamese	3	<1%	0	0%

Given the discrepancies between languages offered in high schools and community colleges in Washington it is not really possible to speak of a "high school to community college pipeline." It is probably more accurate to think of community colleges as operating in parallel to high schools. Quite likely, many students who decide to study a language in community college are doing so because they did not happen to study a language in high school, and perhaps they need the credits in order to transfer to a four-year university. In future MELL research we would like to study the pipeline from high schools to four-year universities. Is there such a pipeline, or are most students who take a language in the university choosing to study a language different from what they studied in high school?

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), and East Asia Center (EAC) 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>.