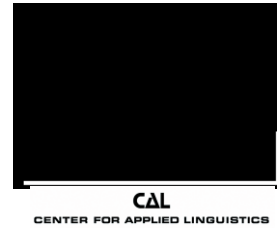


FINGERTIP FACTS

Preliminary Survey Results: 2008 vs. 1997

National K-12 Foreign Language Survey

Draft data. Please do not cite.



Amount of Instruction

Six percent (6%) fewer elementary schools are teaching foreign languages than a decade ago (25% vs. 31% of all elementary schools). Elementary schools not providing language instruction cite budget cuts, shortage of teachers, and constraints from NCLB (because of priority for math and reading) as the major reasons for not teaching languages.

The percentage of **high schools** teaching foreign languages has stayed steady over the past decade at about 91%. The percentage of **middle schools** offering languages, however, has decreased from 75% to 58%.

Private vs. Public Schools

Private elementary schools have maintained language instruction over the past decade better than public elementary schools. The percentage of private elementary schools offering languages decreased slightly, from 53% to 51%; the percentage of public elementary schools decreased significantly, from 24% to 15%.

Innovations

There are pockets of innovation around the country where **elementary schools** offer language instruction resulting in **high levels of proficiency**. Improved instrumentation used to assess language learning performance shows students achieving high levels of proficiency in the more intensive language programs. These intensive programs—such as foreign language immersion and two-way immersion—teach subject content (mathematics, science, etc.) in the second language.

Languages of Choice

Spanish continues to be the overwhelming favorite in elementary and secondary schools (taught at 88% and 92% of schools, respectively, that offer languages). **Chinese and Arabic** are on the rise: They are offered at a higher percentage of elementary and secondary schools than a decade ago. Traditional favorites, French and German, are offered at fewer schools than a decade ago. Latin is down at the secondary level and up at the elementary level.

Integration of National Standards

Teachers at both elementary and secondary public schools have increased the integration of the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning and/or state standards into their teaching over the past decade. Standards use has increased from 58% to 76% in public elementary schools; public secondary schools' use of standards has increased from 58% to 89%.

Data were collected for the National K-12 Foreign Language Survey during the 2007-2008 school year in an effort to obtain a national picture of language teaching in public and private elementary and secondary schools. Replicating previous CAL language surveys (1987 and 1997), the survey was sent to a nationally representative sample of over 5,000 schools. Principals and language teachers were asked to respond to a 4-page questionnaire. A response rate of 76% was obtained. Margin of sampling error is +/- 3%. For more details, watch for the published report in 2009 and visit the survey Web site for updates: www.cal.org/flsurvey. Funding was provided by the U.S. Department of Education, Title VI, International Research and Studies Program. Nancy Rhodes, Survey Directory (nrhodes@cal.org), and Ingrid Pufahl, Survey Coordinator (ipufahl@cal.org), Center for Applied Linguistics, 202-362-0700.

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