



Community Language School (CLS) Year-round programs

Audience

The Community Language School serves language learners ages 3-16 as well as pre- and in-service language teachers throughout Michigan. Most participants are from the Greater Lansing area. We also collaborate with Detroit Public Schools. In 2011, over 700 children and their families participated in our programs (a 20% increase from last year) and more than 350 MSU students were involved in service-learning as part of our language offerings.

Funding

CLS is self-sustaining through participant fees. All programs offered at elementary schools are free of charge to the students. Long-term on-campus programs are fee based. The College of Arts and Letters and the Center for Language Teaching Advancement support programming by donating facilities, supplies, and volunteers in kind. In 2011, special programs were funded through an MSU internal grant from the Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives.

Objectives

The CLS mission is to raise global citizens who are competitive on the job market through demonstrated foreign language proficiency and with an appreciation for diversity and different cultures.

Our goals are to

- create awareness among schools and parents about the importance of early language acquisition and appreciation of other cultures;
- introduce and motivate children to language learning and achieve cultural awareness and at least minimal language proficiency;
- offer alternative learning and teaching opportunities;
- provide a training venue for pre- and in-service teachers and those who seek practical applications for their futures in foreign language teaching; and
- offer alternative ways to use language for community volunteers.

Description

CLS provides community-based preK-12 language and culture programs and also offers service-learning opportunities for upper high school and undergraduate students. Learning opportunities include

- enrichment programs at area elementary schools;
- culture events on and off campus;
- weekly academic classes for preschoolers, elementary, middle, and high school students on campus;
- language summer camps on campus; and
- professional development workshops for teachers.

In 2011, languages offered included Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Hausa, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Urdu, and Uzbek.



Outcomes

Students, their parents, teachers, and volunteers are surveyed at the end of each program.

- 100% of summer camp participants agreed that learning about cultures and languages on MSU's campus made them want to study at MSU in the future.
- 98% of parents agreed that CLS provided a positive language and culture learning experience for their children.
- 95% of volunteers agreed that they gained important hands-on practice with the target language their regular MSU classes do not provide.
- 94% of teachers agreed that the skill sets acquired in CLS will transfer to future employment opportunities.

A study measuring proficiency gains is under way. Delayed post-tests are necessary in order to measure such gains. One of our students, a sophomore in high school, placed into GRM 102 at MSU after taking German at CLS. Other middle school students placed in level 2 classes at their high schools.

Additional Significant Information

CLS received a Curricular Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Award through MSU's Center for Service-Learning and Civic Engagement. We were also featured in the 2010 President's Report. Our programs were featured in the Lansing State Journal and State News. Scholarly articles appeared in The ETAS Journal, Frühes Deutsch (Early German), and the Central States Report.

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