

Que Tomar: Duo an Quatre Années?

Most students took either two or four years of language to meet college expectations.

Every student could take French, Latin or Spanish. According to *collegeboard.org*, many colleges required at least two years of credits in the same foreign language and some required more.

The French and Latin track involved students moving through levels one through four. Spanish offered a similar structure to French and Latin as well as levels 2.5, 3.5, Honors Spanish 4.0 and Advanced Placement Spanish Language.

French teacher **Breanne Buchanan** saw most French students taking two years.

“Unless you really fall in love with the language or have a solid reason for continuing with the language it’s just something to check off the list unfortunately,” Buchanan said.

Buchanan said in French 1.0 had just under 80 students and for French 2.0 around 70 students enrolled in the classes. Only 21 students enrolled in French 3.0 Buchanan said.

“It’s hard though when you have things like CAPS and other year-long classes that take up chunks of time that students say, ‘I would take it but I have to take these three classes and something else that I just don’t have time,’” Buchanan said.

French student junior **Victoria Snell** said she encouraged students to take a language, even for just two years.

“Learn what you can and you never know how it can better benefit you in the future” Snell said.

After moving to France for two years Snell said she came back wanting to learn more about the language. Snell enrolled in Advanced

Placement French Language but participated in the Honors French 4.0 class and received different work from the other students.

“I’ve definitely learned a lot more than if I would only take it for like a shorter amount of time,” Snell said. “I feel like with four years you kind of learn more language you get more and more of a feel for the culture.”

World language department head and Spanish teacher **Andrea Smith** said students should take four years of a language.

“It’s going to help you in the long run,” Smith said. “Especially if you don’t know what you want to do in college and you get to college and you have to find out that you need some sort of language and you’ve only had two years your freshman and sophomore year and you’ve had two years off you’re going to kind of have to start over again.”

While several students only take two years of a foreign language, Smith said she thought a lot of students saw the practicality in learning another language.

“I think that naturally lends itself to them wanting to continue because they can see what they could do with another language,” Smith said.

Spanish 2.0 student and sophomore **Cade Cowdrey** said he took Spanish for only two years to learn a new language and because colleges like to look at foreign languages. Cowdrey said he would take more than two years, but needs to fit in other credits.

Even taking Spanish for only two years, Cowdrey experienced benefits from learning another language.

“I’ve noticed my sentence structure has gotten a lot better taking Spanish,” Cowdrey said.

Latin teacher **Caitlin Rose** recommended students took classes that matches their interests and ultimate goals. However, she encouraged all students to keep going for all four years.

“Your experience in a language is so much greater the more knowledge that you have in it,” Rose said.

In addition, she said colleges desired language experience because learning another language teaches the brain to learn in a different way.

“You have to process differently when you’re processing in a different language, and it’s not easy,” Rose said. “When colleges can look back and can see you dedicated time to something that wasn’t easy, maybe you’ll dedicate time and energy and effort to being the best that you can be when you’re a college student.”

Besides this, Buchanan said it helped students’ circumlocution and grammar too.

“Obviously there is an impact on your fluency, your verbal ability in English as well,” Buchanan said.

Rose said Latin changed how students thought and how they viewed literature. Smith said learning a world language helped build soft skills colleges looked for in students.

“It not only helps with being able to communicate with people, but because they see the connections between other disciplines with language it helps with your communication skills in general,” Smith said.

Truly taking any amount of language, especially for all four years, changes students’ perspectives and thought processes Smith and Rose both said.

“One of the biggest benefits I think is just having the opportunity to think outside the box and see things from a different perspective...it gives you a more global view of the world and just makes you appreciate differences,” Smith said.