



World Language Education

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INTRODUCTION

As Paly students progress through their academic years, many choose to stop their language courses as soon as graduation requirements are fulfilled¹. However, many studies have shown that proficiency in a second language not only has many cognitive benefits² but also can open doors to travel and career opportunities³.

My goal with this project was to pinpoint why students do not take language courses through the highest level course they can achieve, and to navigate student feedback about what causes these classes to be less appealing than other academic electives.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

For my inquiry method, I took an Action Research participatory approach as I have identified that students choosing to drop out of language courses is an increasing problem and I want to do something to stop it. Through this series of questions sent out to Paly students ranging in language levels, I got feedback on the current system existing in the world language department.

I collected both qualitative and quantitative data. For qualitative data, I collected adjectives about how students described their experiences through focus groups.

DATA AND FINDINGS

What is one thing you would change about your language class?

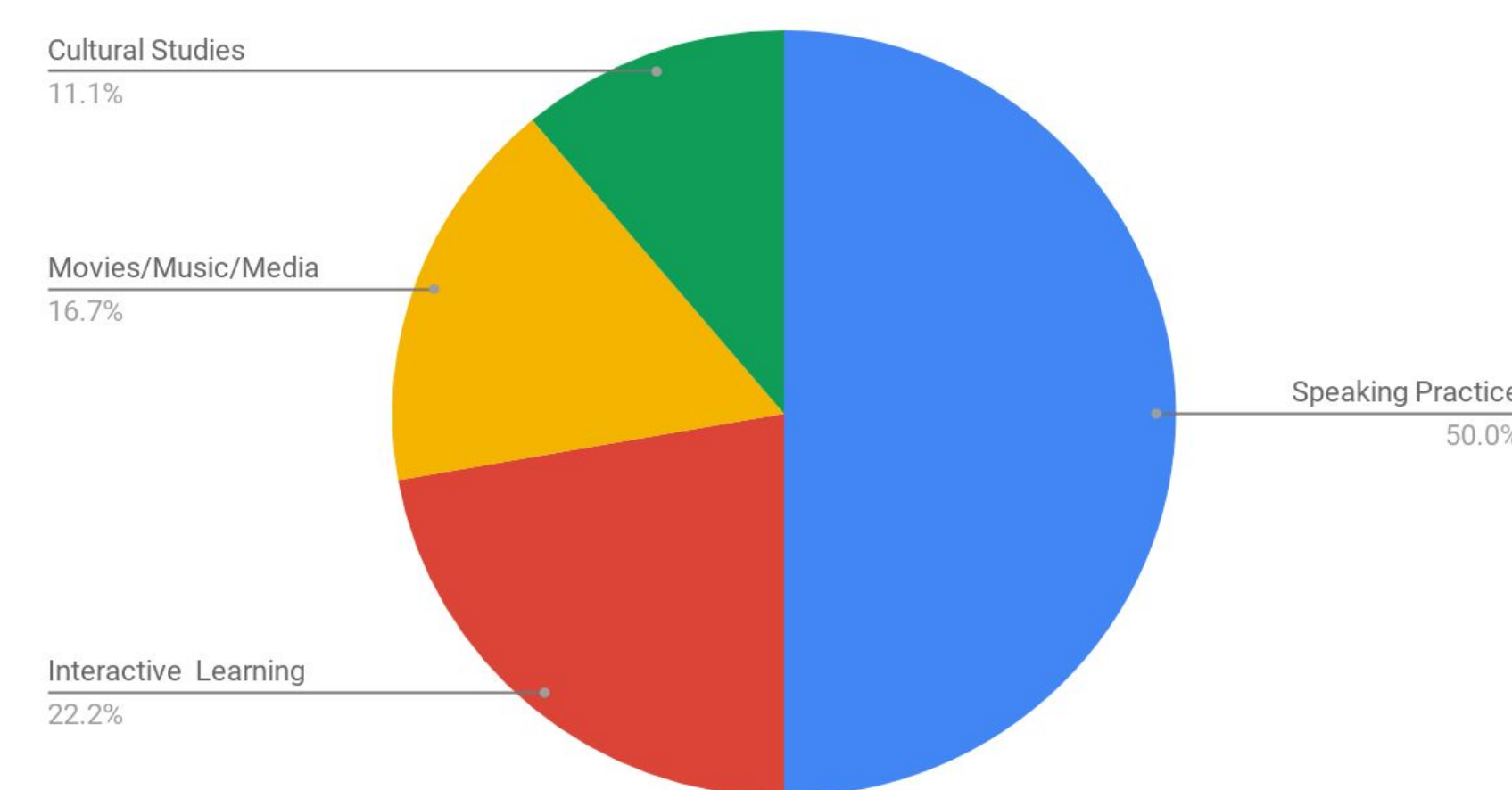


Figure 1

How would you rate your ability to speak in the language you took?

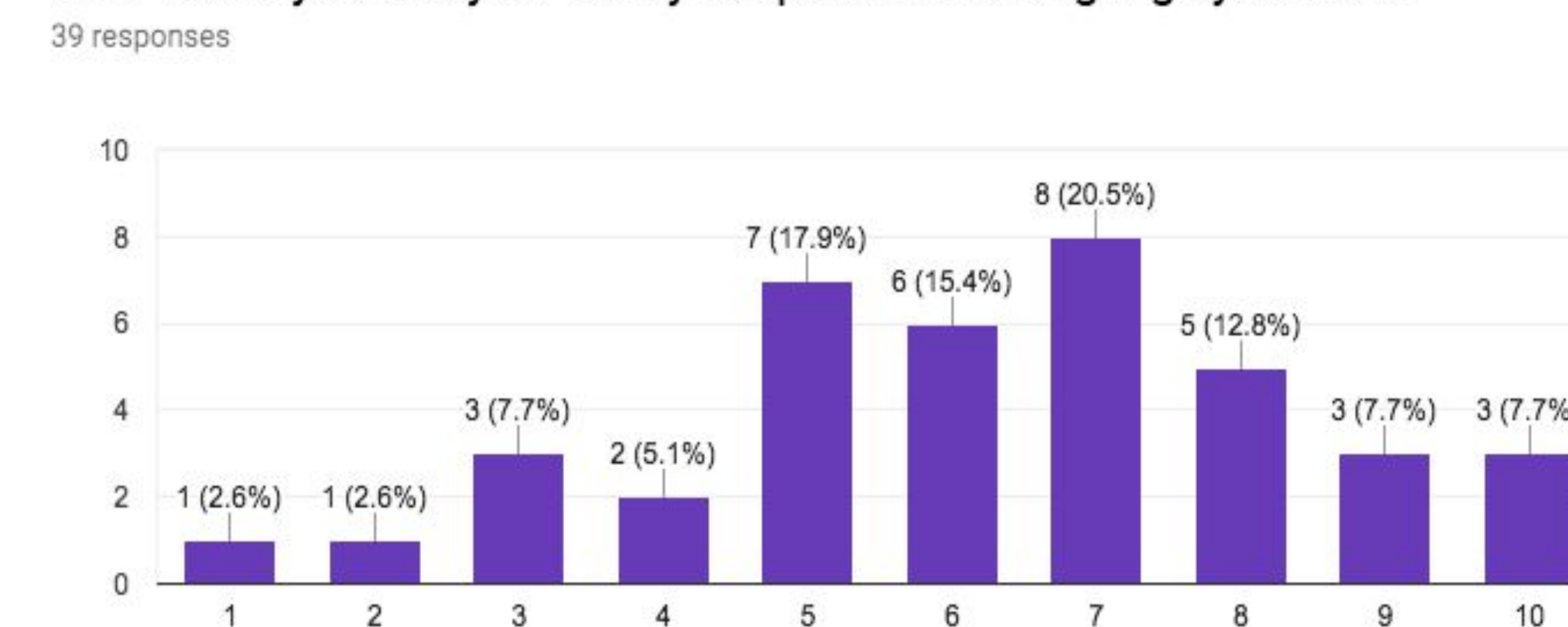


Figure 2

In Figure 1, survey results of Palo Alto High School students found that the majority stated that more speaking practice in the classroom would be incorporated into their ideal language class. Students also stated that more cultural immersion via music and movies was something they found effective in previous classes and would like to see more of in the future.

In Figure 2, Palo Alto High School seniors reported how they would rate their ability to speak the language that they learned in the language courses they took at Paly. Without including the population of students who took their language since elementary school, many students who completely their language course in 4 years at Paly rated their ability to be a 5 (or below) out of 10.

DISCUSSION, ANALYSIS, AND EVALUATION

Overall, the conducted survey experienced some response bias as a small sample of the senior class elected to take it.

However, the distinction of language course choice is still apparent with majority choosing to drop after the UC/CSU recommendation of 3 years is completed.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND NEXT STEPS

Overall, foreign language proficiency is a highly useful skill that many American students are failing to see the value of. With improved and more interactive courses along with a push for more accessibility nationwide, I believe that we will see speaking confidence and course interest rise.

How many years did you take a language?

39 responses

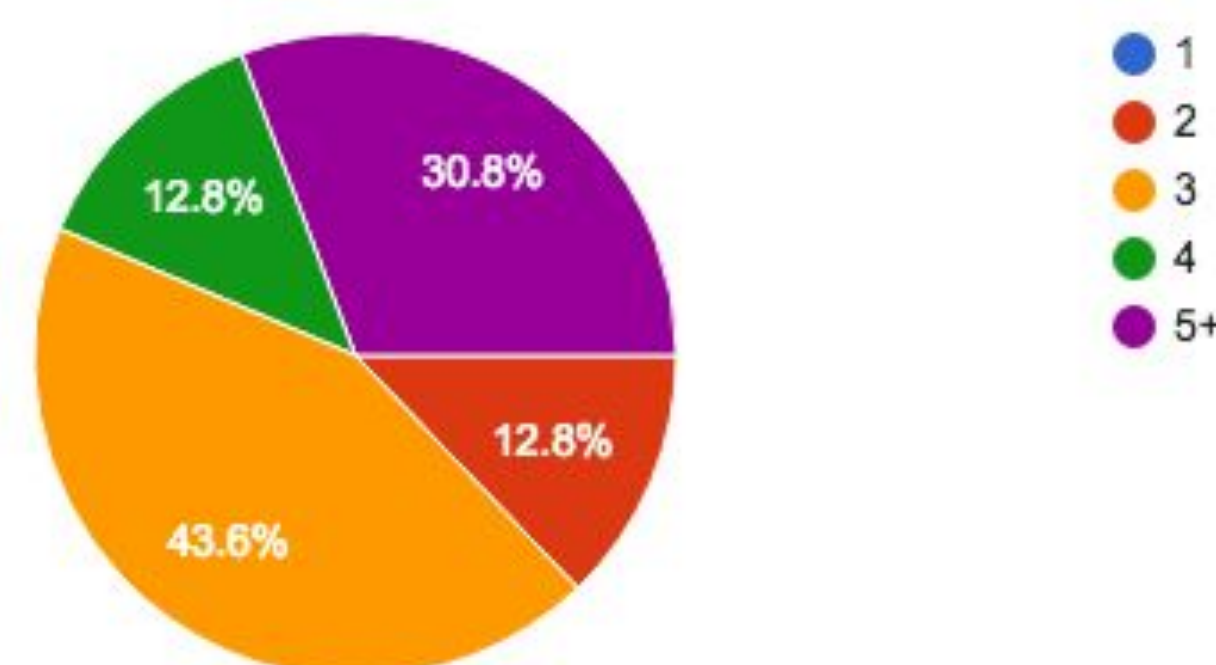


Figure 3

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS / REFERENCES

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As a student who has come out of PAUSD with 6 years of language class, I agree with many of my classmates that the way world language is taught in school could be improved drastically, and I hope to initiate that change in the future.