

# EDTECH SOLUTIONS OPEN OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORLD LANGUAGE LEARNERS

**Language proficiency is a key skill for students. It affects every area of their lives, from how well they do in school to their career options. This is especially true when it comes to world language skills.**

As businesses expand their global presence, the need for multilingual talent will surge. Indeed, those who possess world language competency will be highly sought after by job recruiters.

Students with strong world language skills can acquire a deeper understanding and appreciation of other cultures and engage more confidently with peers from different backgrounds.

Put another way: In an ever more diverse world, the road to opportunity in both school and career is paved with world language fluency.

The importance of world language learning places added pressure on teachers, curriculum directors, superintendents, and principals. While they have the zeal to instruct students in multiple languages, the resources aren't always available to support that effort.

For instance, there are not enough language teachers to handle the demand. Still other teachers are not given enough preparation to manage the wide range of student issues associated with language learning. And, some districts are unable to hire more language teachers because of fiscal constraints.

To address these urgent issues, many school districts are turning to technology-enabled language learning solutions. These so-called EdTech programs are a boon to schools—giving students more opportunities to study and supporting teachers' curriculum objectives.



This paper will explore how EdTech solutions for world language training can accelerate student progress, enhance instruction, complement in-class lessons, and lead to better academic and career outcomes.

**IMPLICATIONS OF INADEQUATE WORLD LANGUAGE TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

Many studies have shown that world language training can enhance students' overall academic performance. Equally important, world language skills will influence their career opportunities as well. Put another way: world language skills are a 21st century job requirement. A report from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences found that "proficiency in English is not sufficient to meet the nation's needs in a shrinking world."<sup>1</sup>

Even though the benefits of world language education have been documented, these sobering realities must be taken into account:

- **Teacher shortage.** According to a 2017 report from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, "For the third year in a row, more than 40 states plus the District of Columbia have reported a teacher shortage in world languages, an all-time high for the subject area since the Department of Education began collecting data over 25 years ago."<sup>2</sup>

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- **Limited job prospects.** Students who speak only English will dramatically limit their employment opportunities. A report from New American Economy "shows that employers increasingly desire workers who speak multiple languages, particularly in industries that provide services involving a high degree of human interaction."<sup>3</sup>
- **Insufficient training.** The shortage of teachers is compounded for many rural districts by unqualified instructors. For example, in the McDowell County school district in West Virginia, "Close to one in five teaching positions were filled by substitute or uncertified teachers in the 2016-17 school year, a high percentage for any school district."<sup>4</sup>
- **Outdated system.** According to a report from the National Education Center, the United States does "not offer equitable opportunity and access for world language training for all students..." It goes on to say: "Our outdated, fragmented, and inflexible system for producing world language teachers must be replaced..."<sup>5</sup>
- **Lack of graduation requirement.** While European schools typically insist that students receive foreign language instruction, there is no comparable requirement in the U.S. According to the Pew Research Center, "few Americans who claim to speak a non-English language say that they acquired those skills in school."<sup>6</sup>



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The demand for world language skills is surging, while the supply of necessary resources to meet it is often deficient. As many districts have found, technology-enabled language learning or EdTech tools can provide an efficient, pro-active solution. Let's look closely at this innovative strategy.

**BENEFITS OF LANGUAGE TECHNOLOGY**

The introduction of EdTech language learning tools in the classroom might give some educators, administrators, and even some parents concern.

Some may wonder whether they really promote skill-based learning or are simply shiny new toys with little educational value. Others question that they will lead to the downsizing of human teachers and undermine pedagogical goals. And still others fret that a top-down structured classroom is the only way that students can learn.

Non-traditional teaching methods are often viewed with suspicion. However, as many educators and districts have discovered, EdTech language learning tools offer a range of benefits.

For students:

- **Greater access for learning.** In addition to working with EdTech tools during regular class hours, students can also access their language lessons beyond the classroom to help build foundational skills. As a report from the U.S. Department of Education put it: "When carefully designed and thoughtfully applied, technology can accelerate, amplify, and expand the impact of effective teaching practices."<sup>7</sup>
- **Strengthens speaking skills.** Language learning tools let students practice their speaking skills for a more natural style. An article on speaking skills from the British Council says, "...speaking in class can be a lot of fun, raising general learner motivation and making the English language classroom a fun and dynamic place to be."<sup>8</sup>
- **Provides a global perspective.** Learning a global language will open the door to a wider perspective and raise students' awareness of other cultures. TCEA, a nonprofit association of educators dedicated to promoting learning through technology, posted: "When students have an opportunity to expand their global point of view through choices in their education path, they take ownership of their learning, find their voice, and share their experiences with others. And all of this takes place in an authentic learning environment."<sup>9</sup>
- **Promotes academic success.** According to EducationCorner.com, a site for education resources, "One study has shown that children who have studied a foreign language in elementary school tend to perform better on standardized tests than those who have not. Another study suggests that students who are taking





a foreign language class outperform academically students who are not taking a foreign language...."<sup>10</sup>

- **Increases employment prospects.** Businesses will actively recruit job candidates with strong language skills as those businesses continue to expand around the world. A report from New American Economy found that "...by 2020, proficiency in more than one language will be among the most important skills a job seeker can have...[leading] to enhanced job opportunities and higher wages for today's workers."<sup>11</sup>
- **Empowers students.** The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign

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**According to The Tech Edvocate that reports on the EdTech sector: "Through the use of education technology, teachers can tailor the course to meet the student's needs rather than risk leaving some students confused or some students bored."**<sup>13</sup>

Languages identifies benefits of world language learning to students at every stage of their life, including: sharper cognitive abilities, deeper awareness of cultures around the world, more opportunities to pursue college studies, and enhanced employment prospects.<sup>12</sup>

Helping students is just one side of the issue. Teachers who incorporate EdTech language learning tools will also come out ahead and find surprising advantages:

- **Enhances classroom instruction.** Rather than replacing in-class instruction, language learning tools actually complement and reinforce classroom lessons, giving teachers much needed support, expanding their instructional reach and content.
  - **Empowers teachers.** The ability to individualize instruction helps teachers reach and teach every student according to their needs and accelerate their learning. According to The Tech Edvocate that reports on the EdTech sector: "Through the use of education technology, teachers can tailor the course to meet the student's needs rather than risk leaving some students confused or some students bored."<sup>13</sup>
  - **Enables higher-order learning.** EdTech tools that promote language proficiency make it easier for teachers to develop students' critical thinking and judgment skills.
  - **Extra support.** EdTech tools work in all types of classrooms, such as traditional or blended, giving teachers added control and support to fulfill their education objectives in almost any type of learning environment.
  - **Closes the achievement gap.** By equipping their students with world language skills, teachers can help their students excel in all their subjects. Data collected by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
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finds that "Language learning correlates with higher academic achievement on standardized test measures."<sup>14</sup>

EdTech tools can reinforce in-person classroom lessons, abet teachers in their pedagogical efforts, promote social interaction among diverse groups, and equip students with valuable multilingual skills prized in a diverse world.

So, with all these advantages, where should school districts look for EdTech tools? And what should they look for? Let's take up these questions now.

**ROSETTA STONE SOLUTIONS FOR WORLD LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

Research shows that students who master a world language will narrow the achievement gap in school, take part more fully in diverse settings, collaborate on multilingual teams, develop a deeper awareness and understanding of other cultures, and hone skills sought by employers.

To support educators, administrators, and districts in this mission, consider the advantages that a technology-enabled solution from Rosetta Stone offers:

**FOUNDATIONAL CONTENT.** Students use an award-winning interactive program that develops fundamental world language skills, gets learners speaking immediately, and accelerates the drive toward speaking confidence.

- **Dynamic Immersion®.** Students begin learning and speaking their chosen world language immediately. Only the world language is used in the program, so students learn to readily adapt to real conversations.
- **Pronunciation assistance.** TruAccent® speech recognition technology guides a learner's pronunciation, helping students build confidence in their speaking abilities.
- **Live Tutoring.** Students talk directly and practice their skills with native language-speaking tutors in a safe, friendly environment.

**CLASSROOM BUILDERS.** A teachers' library of resources supports a higher degree of world language classroom integration with activity guides to reinforce online content.

- **The Teacher's Guide** expands teachers' instructional reach with complete lesson plans aligned with online lessons.
- **Student Activities** engage learners with differentiated reading passages, comprehension questions, workbooks, memory games, and more.

**IMPLEMENTATION AND PRODUCT TRAINING.** Training and Services teams work closely with administrators and educators to assist in a successful program launch and to monitor overall progress. One key goal is to implement online programs that will blend effectively with in-class teacher instruction.





**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.** Educators have access to training sessions on relevant world language topics.

**PLACEMENT AND PROGRESS TEST FOR GRADES 6-12.** Students complete an online assessment that teachers use to identify each student's best starting point in the program. This leads to better learning outcomes.

**FAMILY CONNECTION RESOURCES.** Resources include weekly language learning activities students and families can do together, and best practice tips for teachers to increase family engagement in classroom activities.

***Rosetta Stone offers up to 24 languages for school instruction, including English, Spanish, French, Mandarin, Portuguese, and many more to accommodate today's diverse student population. This enables teachers to learn a language spoken by their students' families.***

**ACCESS TO THE BRIDGE.** Teachers exchange ideas, ask questions, and share best practices in this favorite K-12 online customer community where language teachers connect with each other.

Rosetta Stone also provides further support for world language training with additional EdTech features:

- **Administrator tools.** Easy-to-understand reporting tools allow teachers to track and measure student and group progress quickly.
- **Mobile apps.** Students can practice and learn their lessons, inside and outside the classroom, with Rosetta Stone mobile apps for portable digital devices.
- **Anytime/anywhere accessibility.** Students can access their lessons at any time and in any location—in the classroom, at home, in a wired hotspot—and on almost any digital device, ensuring steady and sustained progress in their language proficiency.
- **Flexible solutions.** Schools can get language training programs customized to meet their particular needs and challenges for the best use of district-wide resources.
- **Scalable programs.** Districts and schools can scale a program easily to serve the greatest number of students in the most efficient way possible.
- **Wide language choice.** Rosetta Stone offers up to 24 languages for school instruction, including English, Spanish, French, Mandarin, Portuguese, and many more to accommodate today's diverse student population. This enables teachers to learn a language spoken by their students' families.

Rosetta Stone can provide customized eLearning language programs to provide greater opportunity for students, educators, and districts. Let's see how one school leveraged these programs to meet their world language education goals.



ROSETTA STONE RESCUES A DISTRICT'S WORLD LANGUAGE PROGRAM

The Bethel Public School District in Fairfield County, Connecticut, prides itself on offering world language courses to its student population: nearly 3,000 students in grades PK-12.

However, a language teacher shortage forced them to rethink how they could continue to give their students the competitive advantages that a world language education provided.

They settled on a technology-enabled language program from Rosetta Stone. Every student received a Chromebook with the ability to access the digital language learning instruction from Rosetta Stone.

The results of this initiative after one year of implementation were encouraging:

- More than 90 percent of students enrolled in Digital Spanish A passed—a substantial jump from the previous year

**Chris Troetti, the principal of Bethel High School, said: "We've seen such an improvement in our students enrolled in language courses since incorporating Rosetta Stone into our curriculum. Not only are students passing the course, they are truly engaged in the work."**

- Six students who participated in the independent study program received language credits in French, Italian, Hindi and Korean
- The school district began offering additional Spanish courses when the school year resumed

Chris Troetti, the principal of Bethel High School, said: "We've seen such an improvement in our students enrolled in language courses since incorporating Rosetta Stone into our curriculum. Not only are students passing the course, they are truly engaged in the work. As we strive to ensure every student is equipped with the skills – bilingualism included – required for life after graduation, we're excited to continue to expand our language offerings using the program."<sup>15</sup>

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH LANGUAGE TRAINING

Teachers and administrators work very hard to ensure that the students in their care receive the best education to thrive in school and acquire the skills to carry them through to successful careers.

To give them unlimited opportunities in their education, their careers, their lives.

Too often, the demand for world language education outstrips the resources and capabilities of school districts and the teaching community.

Many are overcoming this unsettling reality and promoting student achievement



through the implementation of technology-enabled language learning solutions.

With that laudable goal in mind, Rosetta Stone has innovative programs to help.

Go to the Rosetta Stone [portal](#) to get more information specially prepared for teachers, directors, principals, and superintendents.

Or [contact Rosetta Stone now](#) to request a consultation about setting up a world language training program for your school.

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