

As a future French teacher, I am often asked, by parents and students, if teaching French is a lucrative and wise choice, especially in light of the many cuts that foreign language programs currently face. Though I could respond curtly, I instead enjoy informing them of the prevalence of the language. Contrary to popular belief, French is not a dying language, and in fact has a very promising future. Currently French is the official language of twenty-nine different countries and is spoken by over two hundred million people throughout the world: it has been the official language for many Olympic games, is one of the six official languages of the UN, and is even the native language of various parts of our western hemisphere.

A lot of people think English is becoming the dominant language of the world, and though English is spoken by a majority of the international population, it is important to remember that English is often not the mother tongue of many inhabitants of the world. Just last week I was introduced to two senior high school students from Cameroon; their first language is French and they can only speak rudimentary English. I am in the process of teaching them English now but this was evidence that the French language is still how a lot of people communicate- and for many, the only way. Too often Americans assume that English is the most important language. Learning about other cultures, especially francophone cultures, provides not only cultural enrichment but also a greater knowledge of the world we live in.

A commonly overlooked benefit of French is how the knowledge of the language can ameliorate one's ability to speak and understand different facets of the English language. The French language is derived from Latin, and many words that we use in English have been adopted from French. For example, in English the adjective "sage" is not commonly used and may be difficult to understand, but in my French classes everyone knows the word *sage* as an adjective meaning wise. I used this adjective as an example because I remember it appearing on my SAT test, and I was able to know the meaning because of my familiarity with the French language.

All of this contributes to the future of French and why it remains important, not only as a subject to be taught in our schools and also as an important language. My high school currently has to turn students away from the French program because there are

simply not enough seats. This is both a good and bad aspect of the current state of French education: good because it shows a continued interest in French, but bad because we are unable to meet the needs and interests of students. Many schools have one French teacher for every three Spanish teachers, but with the interest in French expanding, French will be a vital language for the overall knowledge and cultural advancement of English speakers.

