

HT IB Language Policy

Purpose

Our language philosophy is that language is the foundation for communicating and inquiring and it is essential for the development of social, emotional and cognitive skills. Language permeates the whole curriculum; listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing are the necessary skills for knowledge acquisition and construction of meaning. Language is used and expressed differently in different contexts and for different audiences and it will change over time. Acquisition of language is an ongoing process as the child develops skills, knowledge and concepts to achieve fluency and proficiency. Furthermore, it enriches personal development and facilitates international-mindedness. It is important to respect and build upon a child's first language. Experience in one language will benefit the learning of other languages.

Beliefs and Values

- All teachers are language teachers
- Language is a social means of exploring and communicating meaning
- Language is a way of communicating thoughts, feelings, and experiences
- Using prior knowledge to build upon a child's repertoire of language skills
- Language learning is a shared responsibility of all teachers
- Multilingualism, multiliteracy, and multiculturalism are assets and are further developed through home and family languages, languages of the school, additional languages and literacy
- Text is not limited to conventional/traditional print as it refers to anything that provides readers, writers, listeners, speakers, viewers and thinkers with the potential to create meaning (Neilsen, 1998)
- Language learning enhances global understanding and develops sociocultural competence
- Translanguaging strategies help students make meaning of content and language across languages

Rationale

A language policy is an integral part of an IB World School. This policy outlines guidelines for the use of languages in the school and in communication with other parties. It is a working document that guides the learning practices for staff and students. There are significant implications to the implementation of the policy, including but not limited to, school operation, languages of instruction, the acquisition and development of learning resources. The use of languages can have a significant impact on student learning, in particular a student's view and understanding of culture, international mindedness, and language structure. Students should be provided with multiple, authentic opportunities to learn language, learn about language and learn through language.

Objectives

- support children in the Language of Instruction as outlined in the Alberta Education English Language Arts Program of Studies
- build confidence and competence as foundation skills in French, Spanish and Filipino, while building towards fluency



- provide support to help manage everyday experiences in the local environment for English-as-an-additional Language Learners (EAL)
- facilitate the process of learning new languages in the future
- express identity
- facilitate literacy, inquiry and communication
- support home and family language learning, so as to maintain and enhance a student's cultural links
- utilize the students' language diversity within school contexts to enhance the qualities of the Diploma Programme

These objectives are maintained by the following curricular supports in the school which include:

- Alberta Education Program of Studies literacy components in all subject areas offered in the school.
- Alberta Education Literacy and Numeracy / Literacy Documents
- DP curriculum and policy support documents
- Developing Academic Literacy in IB Programmes Document
- Guidance for Developing a School Language Policy Document
 - DP Subject Guides
 - DP Assessment: Principles and Practice Document
- Various additional subject specific language and literacy support materials and resources for different grades

Multilingualism

The term “multilingualism” in the IB refers to linguistic ability in more than one language, and recognizes that each of a student's languages may be developed to different levels, and within different contexts, depending on their social and academic experiences.

In addition, multilingualism has cognitive benefits (Kessler, Quinn 1980; Zelasko, Antunez 2000) relating to:

- attention and focus
- problem-solving thinking skills
- thinking about language

Multilingualism is significant in building international-mindedness as it gives students insight into the thinking and perspectives of the self and others. Language enables students to gather and compare points of view, and to show empathy, compassion and respect.

Instruction of English, French, and Spanish Languages at the IB Level

Within the context of teaching language, teachers strive to:

- promote inquiry-based authentic language learning
- focus on the transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of language learning
- incorporate the teaching and learning of language into the programme of inquiry
- develop the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and media literacy
- interrelate the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and media literacy
- promote consistency of practice in the teaching and learning of all languages.



In order to provide students with an authentic learning experience, teachers must use DP aims and objectives as well as the Alberta Education Programme of Study and Literacy protocol.

Language Acquisition Learning

The DP focuses on developing the elements that will encourage the child to continue their involvement in learning an additional language.

According to research these elements include the learner:

- having an established foundation in the first language
- having a positive experience in the learning of an additional language
- having attributes such as empathy and openness to risk taking
- participating in language instruction that seeks to develop skills in the five categories of language competency as defined by Canale (1983):
 - grammatical competence (referring to knowledge of vocabulary, sound and grammar)
 - sociolinguistic competence
 - discourse competence (linking elements of language together to take part in certain kinds of discourse, for example, conversation)
 - strategic competence (knowledge of appropriate strategies to use if communication breaks down and knowledge of how to learn language)
 - cultural competence (includes sensitivity toward attitudes, norms, behaviours and cultures in which the other language is spoken).

Supporting the development of these elements is our focus, with the ultimate goal being to have students use an additional language for the purposes of real communication.

The additional languages are utilized, where feasible, in other subject areas. Teachers create a positive atmosphere in the classroom and use the Learner Profile as a fundamental guide to support the development of the learner to be successful in an additional language.

Language Ab Initio Programmes

The chart below outlines the DP Language Acquisition course progressions that align with the language acquisition phases at our school site.

Spanish Ab Initio Courses	French Ab Initio Courses	Filipino Language Courses
Spanish 10-3Y (Pre-Requisite for IB) Spanish 20-3Y (Non-IB) Spanish 20-3Y IB (SL) Spanish 30-3Y (Non-IB) Spanish 30-3Y IB (SL)	French 10-3Y (Pre-Requisite for IB) French 20-3Y (Non-IB) French 20-3Y IB (SL) French 30-3Y (Non-IB) French 30-3Y IB (SL)	Filipino 10-3Y (Non-IB) Filipino 20-3Y (Non-IB) Filipino 30-3Y (Non-IB)

Challenging of Exams: Students at Holy Trinity may challenge a language exam and receive the appropriate number of credits. Students wanting to take advantage of this opportunity need to contact the Languages Department Head.

Language Pathways in the DP

- Students who want to achieve a full IB Diploma at the end of grade 12
 - o Must take French or Spanish Ab Initio from grades 10 through 12
 - o Must take six subjects and complete Theory of Knowledge, the Extended Essay and CAS (Creativity, Activity and Service).
- Students pursuing an IB Certificate do not have to complete Theory of Knowledge, the Extended Essay, or CAS (Creativity, Action, and Service) and can choose IB subjects that they feel best enhance their academic and career choices.

Assessing proficiency in English Language

Students who qualify as an English as an additional Language Learner (EAL) funding in our school division are assessed using the Alberta Education K-12 ESL Proficiency Benchmarks. All teachers are aware of the communicative and specific language strands, competencies, language levels and proficiencies within the EAL benchmarks to provide appropriate modifications to the student's individual programming. Students can be identified between levels A,B, 1 – 6 on the Alberta Education EAL benchmarks. All students are assessed for their primary and secondary language proficiencies in reading, writing, speaking and listening using a variety of formal and informal measures.

Both social and academic language acquisition is important for English language learners. Jim Cummins distinguishes between two important aspects of language development: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency.

BICS focuses on the conversational fluency of English. This is the language used in social situations when we chat informally with our friends about the events of the weekend (e.g., soccer match, family outings and celebrations).

CALP focuses on language required to achieve academic success. Academic language is necessary to engage in cognitively demanding learning tasks that are aligned with programs of study. When we explain concepts, give opinions, participate in a debate, summarize text or write a research paper, we are using CALP.

BICS and CALP develop simultaneously in the learning environment.

EAL Supports

Students receive EAL support in the classrooms through differentiated instruction practices and adaptations to programming, where necessary. Students who require many adaptations to programming will have an Individual Program Plan (IPP). All students have access to division family liaison workers who offer language translation and support services for students and their families.



References

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Ngo, Hieu. (2012). Cultural Competence in Alberta Schools: Perceptions of ESL Families in Four Major School Boards.

