



Language Policy

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Rationale

Emirates International School Meadows (EISM) is an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School. At EISM we create a challenging and motivational multilingual environment where the language of instruction is English. We view language as a tool for making meaning in the world. We believe that every student has an individual and a cultural set of experiences, skills and interests, which must be considered in the teaching and learning process.

Philosophy of language teaching and learning

Language wraps itself around, in, through and between everything that we teachers and learners do in the classroom.

(Ritchhart 2002: 141)

At EISM, we aspire to ensure all students are multilingual, able to foster positive communication in and beyond their community to connect meaningfully with our global world. Multilingualism and the development of critical literacy skills are considered key factors in ensuring successful access to the curriculum, an opportunity to make progress, the opportunity to foster international-mindedness through the promotion of cultural identity, intercultural awareness and global citizenship.

At EISM, all teachers are language teachers as language transcends curriculum areas. Through the IB language programmes, we aim to develop confident, curious, highly proficient and enthusiastic readers, writers, viewers, presenters, speakers and listeners. Language is always taught meaningfully and in context. These contexts vary, but often involve the use of real-life scenarios, native speakers, the local area and a wide variety of text types. We advocate the learning of language through inquiry, allowing students to make connections with context, to explore and investigate. The learning of any language is developmental by nature, building constructively on what each individual student knows to help move them forward.

As an international school situated in Dubai, we are strongly committed to providing students with access to Arabic language learning and utilising the host country and community for language and cultural experiences throughout the curriculum. Equally important to the school is the belief that each student should have the opportunity to maintain and develop their mother tongue(s). The acquisition of additional languages allows students to further reflect upon and explore different cultural perspectives.

At EISM we are committed to providing an inclusive and equitable learning environment. We aim to ensure access to the three IB programmes offered by the school for all students.

As an IB World School, we are committed to the following Practices:

- The school places importance on language learning, including mother tongue, host country language and other languages.
- Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning a language(s) other than their mother tongue.
- Teaching and learning demonstrates that all teachers are responsible for language development of students.
- Assessment at the school aligns with the requirements of the programme(s).
- Collaborative planning and reflection recognise that all teachers are responsible for language development of students.
- The school utilizes the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programmes.

Language Pathway Practices

These pathways collectively give an overview of the practices at EISM that are in place and being implemented to bring our philosophy statement to life and exemplify how the school brings about excellence in language learning.

The school places importance on language learning, including mother tongue, host country language and other languages. This is done in partnership with the KHDA where Arab passport holders study the Arabic language as a Language and Literature A discipline. Students backgrounds are taken into consideration when advising Language B pathways.

At EISM, language is taught holistically. Each programme has specific learning outcomes for the strands of

Speaking and Listening, Reading and Writing, and viewing and presenting appropriate to the student's level. We promote inquiry-based authentic learning through an investigative approach of different genres. EISM invests in qualified, professional language teachers for the language of instruction, host language and other languages.

Students are allowed and encouraged to use their mother tongue to access the curriculum. For instance, they may translate class work in their mother tongue and they are encouraged to share their learning and progress with their parents and other members of the community using their mother tongue. Furthermore, teachers post displays in each homeroom with native languages - miscellaneous items are labelled to normalise student's exposure to new languages and to spark intellectual curiosity.

Language In Practice

Whole School

Names of teachers in Arabic and English to recognise host country and language of instruction. Students and teachers invited to join the radio broadcast in their mother tongue.

The Mother Tongue Programme at EISM functions as a structured initiative aimed at accommodating linguistic diversity within our school community. At the beginning of each academic year, parents are surveyed to assess interest and identify specific language requirements. Based on the survey results, the Mother Tongue Coordinator collaborates with relevant language teachers to establish tailored programmes.

These programmes, which incur an additional cost, are organised as afterschool paid lessons. The Mother Tongue Coordinator coordinates with HR and the ASA Coordinator to allocate appropriate venues for these sessions. The languages available within the programme include Russian, French, Hindi, German, and Italian. The Mother Tongue Programme is designed to address the linguistic needs of our diverse student body in a structured and organised manner, promoting cultural awareness and language proficiency. The Russian primary club, as an illustrative example, incorporates a puppet theatre that showcases traditional tales, enhancing the language learning experience with cultural elements.

PYP (EY-Y6)

Students in Primary School are all required to study English and Arabic from EY-Y6. French language lessons begin in Year 4, unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as diagnosed and documented Learning Need. We encourage Primary School students to celebrate their mother tongue language as part of developing their own sense of identity and this is achieved through regular events in class, such as our Arabic week and the annual World Book Day.

The English as an Additional Language (EAL) Department provides support to students who are new to English and require support to access the curriculum. For most of our students, English is their second language; therefore, we have developed a phonics/grammar program taught as a stand-alone to support students.

As per the PYP framework, all teachers in Primary are considered as Language teachers. They play a main role in developing students' English language within the subjects they teach.

IB MYP (Y7-11)

Students are all required to study English, Arabic, and French or Spanish in Year 7-10 unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as diagnosed and documented Learning Need. In Year 11, Arabic passport holders continue to study Arabic Language and Literature as per Ministry directives and non-Arabic passport holders may choose between Spanish, Arabic and French. Students in Year 10 can only move to Spanish if Phase 4 fluency (Intermediate level) is achieved in French.

Students who join the school in MYP4 from another language of instruction are encouraged to continue studying their native language as a bilingual student, taking their native language as an MYP Language and Literature A option in their Language Acquisition schedule.

MYP Certification

In order to gain MYP Certification, all students must study a minimum of one language and literature course and Language Acquisition course (Lang. Acquisition is French, Arabic and Spanish) or, Two language and literature courses or, Two language and literature courses and Language Acquisition course.

English:

- All students follow their timetabled English language instruction each week (number of lessons and timings may vary depending on the year group).
- A Language Acquisition English programme exists for students who are weak in English Language skills. They follow the same course of study as other MYP students with modified use of language. Please note that all students are expected to be phased out of Language Acquisition English into a Language and Literature course after a year of support. Language Acquisition English is a support program, not the long-term pathway to English proficiency as students are withdrawn from MFL.
- English competency is a requirement for entry in EISM. For students entering the school with little English language background, the students are entered in the Language Acquisition programme in addition to the Language and Literature course.

Arabic Language and Literature:

- All students with Arabic passports are required to study Arabic Language and Literature as per the Ministry of Education guidelines up until the end of Year 12.
- The Arabic Language and Literature programme is for all students who are registered at the school with an Arabic passport. The Arabic Language and Literature classes are grouped by ability. Students are taught Modern Standard Arabic according to the Ministry of Education curriculum and requirements.
- Students receive a specified number of minutes learning time based on the compulsory expectations given by the Ministry of Education, this varies depending on the year group.
- Students wishing to complete their Personal Project in Arabic may do so.
- At the end of the MYP course, students will complete an IB MYP On-Screen Assessment for Arabic Language and Literature.

Native Language and Literature Option:

- Means tested for new students in MYP4.
- Students are supervised by staff while an on-site tutor delivers the programme. Students' progress in the subject are assessed in line with other students studying relative courses. Students receive 6 periods of instruction per week.
- Students receive the feedback and written report in line with the other students who are taught by on-site school staff.

Language Acquisition (Arabic, French and Spanish):

- All students are required to study Arabic Language Acquisition as per the Ministry of Education guidelines, up until the end of Year 10.
- All students are required to study French/Spanish Language Acquisition in Year 7-9. Students receive 2 periods of instruction per week.
- Arabic Language Acquisition students follow a course in Arabic as a foreign language, which aims to enable them to communicate effectively. The programme meets the needs of both students who have had little or no previous experience of learning the Arabic language as well as those who have studied the subject in Primary School.
- Students in Year 7-10 are placed in groups according to numbers of year studying Arabic.
- IB MYP Assessment Criteria for Language Acquisition are used.

DP (Y12-13)

All students in Year 12-13 follow the IBDP and are thus required to take two languages, (Studies in Language and Literature or Literature and Language Acquisition). IBDP language courses are taught 6 (HL) and 5 (SL) periods per week.

- Group 1: Studies in English Language and Literature or Literature (HL or SL)
- Group 2 Subjects: French B, Spanish B, Arabic A and B, French Ab initio, Arabic Ab initio, Spanish Ab initio.
- Ab Initio courses at the DP level will be for students with "little or no experience of the target language".
- Self-Taught Languages: These can be studied by students wishing to pursue a bilingual diploma. The student does not take a Group 2 language but instead has private tuition in his/her mother tongue, usually after school. A Self-Taught Language Supervisor is responsible for overseeing any student who opts for a self-taught language.

Host Country Language

The provisions for the promotion of the host country's language are embedded into the Ministry of Education's Arabic Language learning requirements. As per Ministry of Education (MoE) directives, all students who are enrolled at the school with an Arabic passport are required by law to study Arabic Language and Literature until the end of Year 12. Arabic Language Acquisition is not an option.

Fluency in the language is developed in the key areas of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening over the multi-year, progressive course of study. Arabic Language and Literature /Ministry of Education courses will be streamed by ability. All students registered at the school with an Arabic passport are required to follow the MoE Arabic course of study. Exemptions from Ministry of Education Arabic can only be gained by parental requests to the KHDA.

- The MoE sets the Arabic programme of study required for all grades. This includes the topics covered, syllabus details and textbooks to use. All students required to study Arabic Language and Literature are expected to meet MoE standards.
- Results of End-of-Year "Ministry" exams are sent to the MoE. They are expressed as a % rather than on a 7-1 scale.
- Ministry exams are no longer prepared by the MoE. Schools have been instructed to prepare the exams according to the MoE guidelines. Exams are kept in the event of a Ministry inspection.
- For Years 12-13, they also do examinations for the IBDP syllabus.
 - Grade 13 does the Ministry exam after the IBDP exams are finished.
 - Grade 12 does the Ministry exam in class time before the start of the end-of-year examination period.
- Responsibility for preparation of both exams is overseen by the Head of Arabic.

The host country's language is also promoted during school assemblies, different school events, signage throughout the school and as part of our UAE National Day celebrations.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

EISM has always welcomed students with little or no English language skills. Upon joining the school, these learners are assessed by the EAL Department, and receive the appropriate extra English language support to access the curriculum. They are placed in small groups which promotes a secure and happy atmosphere to encourage learning. Our EAL Department follows what is known as "the sheltered immersion system", whereby the EAL students are placed into an age appropriate class upon entering the school but receive intensive EAL instruction.

The EAL Department follows an EAL curriculum which teaches the language skills of listening and speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting. Emphasis is first placed on listening and speaking skills to allow the students to communicate with their peers and teacher. Once the students have developed these elementary skills, they then develop their reading, writing as well as viewing and presenting skills.

The department uses a variety of language programmes which have been researched and written specifically for EAL learners and incorporates the latest research-based methods of teaching EAL. These language programmes are linked with the year Programme of Inquiry (PYP)/Unit of Inquiry (MYP and DP). Advanced learners in addition will receive support and reinforcement to reflect the content of the mainstream classroom.

EAL learners may continue to receive EAL support for up to three years. Before exiting the program, the student's file is reviewed by the class teacher along with the EAL teacher where they agree that the student no longer requires the EAL programme. In the High School, the EAL coordinator requests termly reviews of student progress from all class teachers against specific EAL criteria to gain a holistic analysis of the students' main curriculum language development. This information is used to determine if the child is exited from the EAL support programme.

Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning a language(s) other than their mother tongue.

Differentiation in language lessons is based on best practice according to the standards and practices of the IB. All teachers respond to students' needs and may therefore provide individualised instruction guided in some cases by specific learning goals. Teaching strategies may include working in small groups, using different resources with different levels of language complexity, as well as changing the level of questioning and tasks for individual students. Students may also have choices so they can follow their own interests or use a preferred learning style. The school also follows the IB recommendations on student placement, in MYP students are placed in 'emergent' or 'capable classes. In addition to this, the School provides a range of specialist support including individual and group support.

Teaching and learning demonstrates that all teachers are responsible for language development of students

EISM focuses on the transdisciplinary nature of language learning by recognising and modelling the role of language in each subject as well as in the language of instruction, host country language and in other languages, and by developing an understanding of the IB objectives and pedagogical language of the programmes.

The basic skills for all types of communication - oral, written and visual - are explicitly planned for using our scope and sequence. When students are acquiring a language, our teaching is informed by incorporating four concepts: context, culture, reflection and fluency. Students are encouraged to think for themselves, recognise patterns, develop theories and construct meaning as they investigate language. As students' progress, teachers enable them to see language as a means of self-expression, exploration of self and others, as context driven, having multiple meanings, and involving at all levels of discourse a personal stance, from simple communication to the core of academic language.

Throughout the school there is an expectation that in order to foster an enjoyment and love of reading, students will be encouraged to read at home – from packaging and emails to quality literature – and will read a wide range of genres in school to understand their features. A variety of reading strategies will be introduced to support students in the mechanics of reading and comprehending the meaning of what they read. These include phonemic awareness, recognising patterns in text, decoding, making inferences, recognising a bank of sight words and etymological understanding. Teachers may also make use of guided reading and literature circles to develop students' reading skills.

The writing process of drafting, revising and finalising will be modelled and explored in all languages. The use of literature, games, role-play and multimedia will support students' understanding of different genres as well as developing their vocabulary, sentence construction, use of tense and punctuation. Using the text as a model, students and teachers can begin to analyse the features of different genres before jointly and individually constructing written or presented pieces. During the revision process, students will be encouraged to develop their knowledge of grammatical and spelling conventions by self-correcting, built on their learning through the phonetics system delivered within the Primary School. Finalising writing may involve students sharing writing with others, keeping it for themselves or publishing it for a chosen audience. From Year 6 and above, students cite, reference and use a bibliography by following the guidance from IBO as per the Academic Integrity guidance and school policy.

Assessment at the school aligns with the requirements of the programme(s)

Assessment is integral to teaching and learning at EISM. Using a range of tools and strategies, teachers are able to determine students' knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes towards language.

At the school, teachers use pre-assessment to determine what students already know, can do and understand. Formative assessment is used to check in and to give constructive feedback and or praise on learning. Summative assessments are used to gather evidence about student's learning at the end of a unit. Various forms of both formative and summative assessment may be used. Along with teacher assessment, students are often asked to peer or self-assess as well using the relevant IB criteria.

Assessments are reported to parents in different ways. Students receive written reports about their language learning. Parents are also invited to attend parent-teacher conferences and in Primary School, Learning Looks and Student-Led Conferences.

Collaborative planning and reflection recognises that all teachers are responsible for language development of students

Since students learn about language and through language, we understand that all teachers are responsible for the language development of students in the school. As a result, collaborative planning and reflection is built into the regular schedule of staff as well as it being the focus of staff meetings through the year. In this way, we are able to develop links between different subject areas and departments across the school.

Professional development of staff: all teachers as “teachers of language”

EISM pursues the belief and strategic policy that all teachers should regard themselves as teachers of language. This policy is led and supported by the English and Arabic Departments, in conjunction with the school’s EAL, Inclusion, other Heads of Department, classroom teachers and teaching assistants.

Targeted Professional Development sessions are provided by relevant teaching staff and external providers. This takes the form of internal CPD workshops and/or staff meeting slots. All staff are involved, and teachers recognise their individual responsibility to address the teaching of language through their own area of the curriculum. This can be evidenced for example through subject specific glossaries that clarify specific terminology for students or in the everyday teaching and learning where teachers focus on key words and language misconceptions that may arise.

The school utilises the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programmes

All language teachers are responsible for sourcing and purchasing a range of quality texts so that students can explore different genres such as recounts, stories, explanations or persuasive writing in different languages and at different levels. All Language Acquisition teachers are native speakers. Students also have access to a variety of online dictionaries to assist them including picture dictionaries and mother tongue dictionaries. Teachers also use family members to create real-life conversational opportunities for the students.

The use of ICT is an integral language learning tool, including the emerging utility facilities of AI to translate and give meaningful feedback that is similar to having a constant tutor. Students are encouraged to use iPads or laptops to access programs or tools to support their language learning such as Google Translate or voice-activated applications. The school library provides a resource to students with books available in various languages. Games, art, music, maps and artefacts are used to help students make connections in their language learning. Interactive Smartboards are also used to encourage a more interactive approach to teaching and learning in order to accommodate the various learning styles of the students, the school uses paid subscriptions such as ‘vocabexpress’, ‘linguascope’, ‘Think IB’ and ‘Read Write Inc’ to facilitate language development.

The community is considered a valuable resource to aid language learning. Students go on numerous field trips such as to museums, libraries, theatres and cinemas where they have an opportunity to use English and the host country language in context and gain an insight into the host country culture. Throughout the year, students are exposed to numerous celebrations linked to the diverse cultures within our community to promote international mindedness and an appreciation of the host country’s culture. The school also uses external providers to deliver ‘mother tongue lessons after school. Paid online subscriptions are also used to support and enhance opportunities for learning.

Parental Involvement in the Language Profile

As part of the admissions process, families new to EISM complete a language profile questionnaire which provides information on:

- The child’s first language
- Additional languages of study or fluency
- The language of the mother, father and/or guardian
- The language spoken at home
- The language of schooling
- Parent goals and preferences for their child’s language learning

The various language options are provided to parents, particularly in the High School upon enrolment. The Language learning requirements and options are noted above.

Parents are invited to celebrate and promote their mother tongue in our annual International Day celebrations.

Links to other policies

Admissions

Assessment

Academic Integrity

EAL

Inclusion

Learning & Teaching