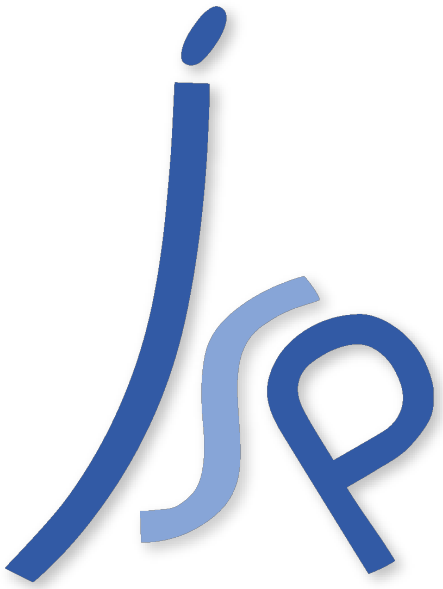

International School of Paris

Educating *for* complexity

International School of Paris

Language Policy

Policy Manager: Director of Learning and Strategic Development
Reviewing Committee: Educational Leadership Team + Language Department Leaders
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Vision Statement

Educating for Complexity

Mission Statement

As the leading International Baccalaureate World School in France, we prepare students to engage with and succeed in a complex world.

Guiding Statements

Our Guiding Statements further articulate our Vision and Mission. They provide a set of commitments that make explicit why and how we will educate for complexity.

	1. Learning For Complexity (LC) We prepare students for the opportunities and challenges of living in a dynamic, interconnected, rapidly evolving world.
	2. Embracing Diversity (ED) We explore and celebrate differences and similarities to create an inclusive culture that can engage globally.
	3. Inquiry, Innovation And Learning (IIL) We develop the values, skills and strategies to face complex issues in new and different ways.
	4. Learning To Be Well (LTBW) We understand the importance of balance in personal development and in building and maintaining safe, positive relationships.
	5. Global Citizenship (GC) We share a responsibility to act individually and collectively to create a fair and sustainable world.
	6. Language Learning (LL) We promote effective communication, the development of identity and the appreciation of other cultures through the learning of languages.
	7. Experiential and Service Learning (ESL) We provide authentic and relevant learning experiences that shape our lives and impact the lives of others.

High Quality Learning Definition

High quality learning is a social and experiential practice. It sparks students' curiosity and stimulates their natural creativity. It inspires them to strive for excellence and to take ownership of their own inquiry and research. It shapes the learner and the learning community, nurturing growth and new understandings.

Introduction

Language wraps itself around, in, through and between everything that we teachers and learners do in the classroom. (Ritchhart 2002: 141)

ISP is an International Baccalaureate (IB) World school. At ISP we create a challenging and motivating 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 cultural set of experiences, skills, and interests, which must be considered in the teaching and learning process. Our sixth (of seven) guiding statement is Language Learning: We promote effective communication, the development of identity, and the appreciation of other cultures through the learning of languages. We believe that the acquisition of additional languages allows students to further reflect upon and explore different cultural perspectives.

Our school community - in terms of both families and faculty - is culturally and linguistically diverse, with a limit of 33% in any grade level coming from any one nationality. Students are able to experience the richness of language daily through interacting with others and learning about their backgrounds and cultures.

At ISP, we believe that language transcends curriculum areas, and so that all teachers are language teachers. Through the IB language programmes, we aim to develop confident, curious, highly proficient, and enthusiastic readers, writers, viewers, presenters, speakers, and listeners. Language is taught meaningfully and in context. These contexts vary but 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, explore, and investigate. The learning of any language is developmental by nature, building constructively on what each student knows to help move them forward.

ISP 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, the national language, and other languages, and by developing an understanding of the IB objectives and pedagogical language of the programmes.

At the Primary School, all teachers review the language scope and sequence to ensure that it is as

relevant and comprehensive as possible. Teachers then plan collaboratively, during grade level meetings, grade meetings, meetings with the PYP coordinator, and with EAL and learning support staff.

In the Secondary School, timetabled curriculum planning time (CPT) allows teachers to meet together as a teaching faculty. This may be done as whole staff meetings or divided into smaller meetings where teachers meet in department groups, language groups, or interdisciplinary groups. During these meetings, teachers plan what will be taught, reflect on best practices, and consider the needs of individual students. They also discuss articulation, transitions, and progression between all three IB programmes and ensure that the delivery of the programmes is consistent and current with developments in the IB.

Throughout the school, there is an expectation that 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. In the Primary School, we recommend that students engage in reading every day at home. This may be done in a student's home/personal language. 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 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 develop 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. Students will be encouraged to develop their knowledge of grammatical and spelling conventions during the revision process by self-correcting. Finalising writing may involve students sharing writing with others, keeping it for themselves, or publishing it for a chosen audience.

To enable students to develop accurate language use and self-correct errors, they will be introduced to different strategies to investigate words and groups of words. These include spelling strategies such as syllabification, saying the word as it looks, and mnemonics, to a deeper understanding of language in context, such as collocation. Teachers encourage students to make connections between words in different languages.

At ISP 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.

Language Pathways: Practices at ISP

These pathways collectively give an overview of the practices at ISP 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 home/personal language, national language, and other languages.
- All students learn English within the curriculum.
- All students from Nursery to Grade 10 learn French within the curriculum.
- At ISP, language is taught holistically. Each programme has specific learning outcomes for the strands of speaking and listening, reading and writing, and viewing and presenting as appropriate to the student's levels. We promote inquiry-based authentic learning through an investigative approach of different genres.
- The school invests in qualified, professional language teachers for the language of instruction, national language, and other languages.
- Students are allowed to use their home/personal language to access the curriculum, where necessary. For instance, they may complete research or class work in their home/personal language and they are encouraged to share their learning and progress with their parents using their home/personal language.
- Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning a language(s) other than their home/personal language.
- Teaching and learning demonstrate that all teachers are responsible for the language development of students.
- Assessment at the school aligns with the requirements of the programme(s).
- Collaborative planning and reflection recognises that all teachers are responsible for the language development of students.
- The school utilises the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programmes.

English Language Learning

As the language of instruction, English plays an important part in the life of the school. All students will study English, either as a learner of the language or as a student of language and literature.

The placement of students will be based on the school's assessment of their level, as guided by the practices outlined in each programme. Where possible, students will follow the programme best suited to their needs in their English class, but in exceptional circumstances (e.g. to be able to be awarded an MYP Certificate or IB Diploma), the school recognises that it may be in a student's holistic interest to follow a Language and Literature course when their language level would normally dictate them following a Language Acquisition course.

French Language Learning

As an international school located in Paris, we are strongly committed to providing students with access to French language learning and using the community for language and cultural experiences throughout the curriculum.

In addition to the mandatory French requirement, the Secondary School offers two French enrichment courses in Grades 6 to 10. For native and near-native speakers there is the opportunity to take a class on Francophone cultures and societies (Cultures et sociétés). Students beginning their acquisition of the French language may opt to take an extra class to focus on authentic oral communication and interaction with the country and culture (Initiation au français).

Home/Personal Language Learning

Because educational research indicates that students who maintain their home/personal language will have better access to learning when working in a second or third language, we believe that it is important that we provide the opportunity for students to access their home/personal language. We greatly value students continuing to learn in their home/personal language. When a student's personal/home language is not offered by the school, we will support the family in finding a tutor who will be able to support the student in continuing to learn and engage in their home language. The school will provide pedagogical support, finance electronic or physical resources, and provide a place for the lessons to take place.

The school will provide that tutor with the materials and training to deliver a suitable course which will appear on student transcripts. Lessons will be scheduled during the regular school day in the Secondary School and as an extended curriculum activity in the primary school. The parent(s) will assume the responsibility of paying the tutor for these services. The school will place families with common language goals in contact with each other so that costs can be shared. This is a private arrangement between the tutor and the families for which the school has no responsibility. When external tuition is organised as a replacement for one of the Language A or B course requirements for the IB MYP, tutors are required to provide evidence of student learning for the IB MYP language requirements and IB MYP Diploma in Grades 9 and 10.

Each year, there might be home/personal languages that are sufficiently popular that the Secondary School may consider contracting a tutor ('autoentrepreneur') for the academic year. The Secondary School will consider a maximum of two additional school-supported mother-tongue language classes each academic year. The decision to meet the costs of a mother-tongue class is always at the discretion of the Head of School and is based on the following criteria:

- the class needs to be sustainable, by which we mean it is of sufficient size and that the families are committed to ISP for the academic year;
- the school must be able to source a tutor with appropriate teaching credentials and professional

references, and who has successfully passed a police background check; and,

- priority will be given to languages with high demand (class size) based on enrolled students on September 1 of each year, and those that provide continuity of learning in the Secondary School.

Language Continuum

In the Secondary School, language is divided into studies in language and literature (Language A) and language acquisition courses (Language B). A student is required to take at least two languages. One of these has to be a language and literature course. ISP students have the opportunity to study up to three languages. These courses are offered according to the student's level in the language of instruction, English, the national language, French, and in Spanish. Language acquisition courses are also offered in Mandarin; in special circumstances, students may have the option of following a different language acquisition course in the Diploma Program. Japanese and Korean language and literature courses are also offered.

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.

Differentiation in language lessons is based on best practices according to the standards and practices of the IB. All teachers respond to student's needs and may therefore provide individualised instruction guided in some cases by specific learning goals and Individual Learning Plans (ILPs). 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 interests or use a preferred learning style. The school also follows the IB recommendations on student placement, where possible. In addition to this, the school provides a range of specialist support including profiling, individual support, speech and language specialists, etc., which is outlined in the Learning Support Handbook.

All students' language needs are determined through initial and ongoing assessments throughout the year. Within classes, teachers differentiate for the range of students' needs. For example, in the Primary School, students might be placed in flexible ability groups. In homerooms, students may be grouped by ability for reading groups, but work in mixed-ability groups for other tasks. The Primary School also offers an 'initiation to English' program for students in need of extra support. In the Secondary School, students are placed in language classes according to the IB's continuum of language learning phases. The school has a flexible placement plan that allows student movement at specific points during the school year, notably within the first month of school in September, and, for Grades 6 - 9, at the end of Semester 1. In

grades 6 to 9, beginners in English (Phases 1 & 2) will have a reduced subject load to allow them to receive further tuition in English so that they can focus on acquiring the language necessary for success in Secondary School.

Assessment and Reporting

Assessment is integral to teaching and learning at ISP. Using a range of tools and strategies, teachers can determine students' knowledge, skills, understanding, and attitudes toward 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 or praise on learning. Summative assessments are used to gather evidence about students' 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.

At the Primary School, students are regularly assessed using the expectations from the school's language scope and sequence. Achievement of different learning outcomes will be recorded and passed on throughout their schooling at ISP to facilitate each student's learning. At the beginning of tasks, criteria are shared or created by the students so that learning goals are clear.

In the MYP, units are designed with a significant concept, a global context, and a unit question in mind. Assessment tasks are linked to these big ideas and allow students to show a developing understanding of the global context; summative assessment is an opportunity for students to discuss the unit question using what they have learned.

Assessment at ISP is in line with the requirements of the IB programmes and is comprehensively outlined in the Assessment Policy. In the MYP, level-specific criteria are used based on each phase outlined by the IB from students newly acquiring a language to those at a mother-tongue level. In addition, ISP uses age-appropriate modified criteria using the interim objectives set out by the IB for grades 6-8 and using the end-of-program objectives for grades 9-10. Task-specific rubrics are also created for each assessment and are shared with the students. In the DP, criteria are also level-specific and based on the course chosen and the level at which the course is taken.

Students may be referred for further assessment within the school to enable teachers to gain further information about a student's strengths, interests, and areas in need of development. In some circumstances, Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are developed for students depending on their learning needs. This may include modified assessment criteria for the student. Any such cases will be discussed with the student, parents, respective IB programme coordinator, and the Wellbeing Team.

Languages of the Community

Teachers are responsible for sourcing 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 varying levels. Students also have access to a variety of dictionaries to assist them including picture dictionaries and home/personal language dictionaries. The language team leaders collaborate with the librarians to order and catalogue books in different home/personal language languages for the library and as classroom resources.

Students have access to other resources such as physical and online newspapers and magazines –that they can also subscribe to in a variety of languages, which help them to be aware of current affairs, foster an interest in reading, and develop confidence, fluency, and comprehension. The use of ICT is an integral language learning tool. Students are encouraged to use technology to enhance their learning, and the school provides access to platforms to support their language learning. Lastly, games, art, music, maps, and artefacts are used to help students make connections in their language learning. Interactive technology is also used by teachers to encourage a more interactive approach to teaching and learning to accommodate the various learning styles of the students.

The community is considered a valuable resource to aid language learning. As part of Paris as a Classroom, students go on numerous field trips such as to museums, libraries, theatres, and cinemas where they have an opportunity to use the French language in context and gain an insight into the national culture. Guest speakers such as storytellers or representatives from different organisations are frequently invited into school, and they may speak in English, French, or a student's home/personal language. 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 France's culture.

To source qualified external tutors for home/personal language and self-taught languages, the Secondary School actively uses local resources such as embassies and libraries, as well as liaising with parents.

The involvement of parents is important in our school. They can expose students to different home/personal languages through visits to the library and classrooms and during days such as Languages Week, Home Language Day, and International Day. Presentation and communication skills in all languages are showcased to parents and other members of the community through projects such as the grade 5 Exhibition, the grade 10 Personal Project, Without Walls week, the art vernissage, and school productions using local venues and associations.

Monitoring and Review

ISP will review this policy on a 2-year cycle, and monitor all accompanying procedures on an annual basis to ensure that they reflect best practices. When necessary, ISP will make changes and introduce these to all staff.

Reference to Other Policies and Documents

- Assessment Policy
- Learning Support Handbook