



International School of the Gothenburg Region

Language Policy

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Philosophy Statement

We at ISGR believe that language is essential to the intellectual, psychological, and moral development of our students. It helps students inquire into and investigate the world effectively, come to conclusions and make sense of what they encounter, and share their opinions and revelations, as encouraged by the “communicator” descriptor in the Learner Profile. In addition, language acquisition and development has been proven to dramatically benefit cognitive development. As such, in our mission to create globally-minded lifelong learners, language must play a central role. Language must be a fundamental aim of our instruction. In our teaching, which should be inquiry and concept based, and encourage critical thinking, teachers must strive to develop language through a variety of teaching styles, differentiated instruction and across disciplines.

Policy Statement

ISGR recognizes that language is central to learning. We also recognize that all teachers are in practice language teachers and as such need to have the appropriate support. ISGR’s mission statement stipulates that it “encourages its students to become democratic, responsible, knowledgeable world citizens, who are capable of interacting positively and productively with others.” As a result, language becomes an integral part of that interaction. Within the school, many languages exist side by side and students are encouraged to compare their languages and the cultures associated with them. Providing quality education in English for children from a variety of cultural backgrounds implies from the school’s side a commitment to providing support for students that are weak in English, the recognition of the important role that teachers play in developing language acquisition and a belief in the importance of mother tongue development. Additionally the school is committed to supporting students with special educational needs and/or speech impediments. Language should be taught in all classes. Students should be



challenged to develop through reading and writing, speaking and listening, and presenting and viewing. Language receives specific focus in Language and Literature, Language Acquisition, and mother-tongue instruction. Language lessons at ISGR not only provide a medium for the acquisition of language, they also promote the development of the whole child. This occurs as a result of the fact that it is not only language that is promoted but also the recognition and understanding of the culture that accompanies it. Throughout their language studies students also attempt to explore, when appropriate, the links with other subject areas. As ISGR accepts students with a wide variety of linguistic backgrounds, it is extremely important that its language policy is inclusive, thus allowing the students to build up their language skills to a level at which they can then pursue English as an academic language.

Language Acquisition

Language Acquisition classes serve many functions. Second language acquisition has been shown to aid cognitive growth. In addition, language acquisition classes reinforce a connection to the world outside our local/native culture, by helping students to discover and engage in other cultures. Language acquisition classes can also be a potential benefit to a student body that is particularly mobile, often moving between countries. Language acquisition classes offered in the middle years include Swedish, Spanish and French. Refer to appendix A for placement guidelines.

English as an Additional Language

English as an additional language at the school are classes that are designed to support students who have limited language skills in English. The main goal of EAL classes at the school is to prepare students to join with mainstream classes in English. In the PYP there are beginner and intermediate designations with mixed grade levels. In the MYP there are beginner and intermediate designations organized by grade level. This type of instruction is usually done either done out of class setting and in smaller groups or with the student remaining as part of their usual class depending on the level of instruction needed. The inclass support for EAL students comes from the class teacher's ability to differentiate for their students learning needs. ISGR takes into consideration the fact that EAL students benefit from the modelling of the English language within the regular class setting through content integrated learning. Students joining the school with a beginner-intermediate level of English language skills attend EAL classes in place of language acquisition classes (Swedish, Spanish or French) or in some cases from specialist classes for a period of time.



Handwriting

Handwriting is promoted in the school as one of the skills necessary for visual communication. The school acknowledges that students produce a variety of different forms of handwriting dependent on previous school experience and therefore the school's approach to teaching handwriting is differentiated. The school has a recognized system of handwriting which is known by all staff and is taught to students who have not yet developed a consistent handwriting style. In practice, this means that handwriting is taught in kindergarten, first and second grades. When the student is unable to practice a consistent handwriting style, they are taught the school recognized handwriting style in grades 3-5.

English as the Language of Instruction

English is the language of instruction within the school. To experience success in other areas, students need to have a certain level of competency within this language. English lessons have an obvious role to play in teaching and reinforcing language skills needed in other mainstream subjects. However, subject teachers are also language teachers and develop students' language skills. It is especially important to take into account those language skills required in particular subject area(s). In addition to this, teachers are responsible for adapting their materials and teaching styles to take into account the needs of students who are not native English speakers. Subject teachers are encouraged to correct mistakes in English as well as content of written work, and to provide missing vocabulary where appropriate. Teachers should encourage students to speak English in class except in language acquisition classes, but should be aware that students may benefit from help from another student in their mother tongue. The school believes that students should be encouraged and feel that they can use their mother tongue, or other acquired languages, as a tool, and a resource, even when the language of instruction is English.

Language and Literature classes achieve all the goals of language instruction - connectedness to the world, allowing for interpretation and analysis of texts, and enabling effective sharing of ideas. It also serves as a key tool and link between disciplines. Since the main language of instruction is English, it helps connect disciplines. Language and Literature indicates that the language is taught in a way appropriate to students, for whom that language is their mother tongue as one of their mother tongues who have reached native or near native competence in the language. English and Swedish in the MYP are currently taught as Language and Literature.



Curriculum

The school promotes a transdisciplinary approach to language learning. In the Primary Years Programme language is linked to all aspects of the curriculum through the development of reading, writing, speaking, listening and media literacy skills. Language learning is developed with the context of the 6 units of inquiry. Language curricula is guided by the IB Language Scope and Sequence. Thus, the school carefully takes care of meeting the aims and objectives of the program. In the Middle Years Programme language is linked to all aspects of the curriculum and specifically taught through language acquisition courses and language and literature courses. Language is linked in both the PYP and MYP programmes with the Global Contexts and Transdisciplinary Themes. The school has developed course outlines according to grade level in the PYP and MYP for language. The course outlines are intended to ensure continuity and development of the language courses offered by the school and are constantly being revised and updated. Due to the diverse educational backgrounds of the student population at the school, the teacher will adopt his/her course outline appropriately. Differentiated instruction and assignments are integral in meeting students at their readiness level in language learning. The curriculum is adapted as new links with other subject areas are developed, and reflects current events where applicable.

Mother Tongue and Host Country Language

The school values the importance of mother tongue language learning as well as host country language learning as it develops international mindedness. The school offers mother tongue classes for students who are non native English speakers. The classes are organized and held at the school after school hours. The host country language, Swedish, is offered to students in kindergarten and Grade 1 one hour per week and to students in grades 2-5 two hours per week. The classes are differentiated by grouping and aim to teach the host country language and culture. The host country language is offered as a Language and Literature course to native speakers and a Language Acquisition course to non-native speakers in grades 6-10. All Swedish classes are offered for three hours per week in grades 6-10.

Special Education Needs



There is a process in place for students who require additional learning support in language. The process includes a referral from the classroom teacher, a student support meeting including the special education teacher, class teachers, nurse, counselor, deputy principal and principal, and a parent meeting. When the student's needs are identified, a support plan is created to help the child access language at their level. This is reviewed regularly by the special education teacher and principal.

Assessment

Assessment in language, like all other subject areas within the school, is carried out in accordance with the school's assessment policy guidelines. These guidelines follow the general principles of the IBO Primary Years and Middle Years Programmes. The school develops assessments around the approaches to learning and transdisciplinary skills group 'communication' to monitor language development. Teachers are required to assess students at all stages of the learning process including pre-assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment. Students are encouraged to utilize self assessment to reflect on their language learning and development. The language section of the student report is structured around the IB Language Strands and IB Language Scope and Sequence. Students are assessed on designated learning outcomes and skills that are set by each grade level and follow a continuum of development. The school believes that both formative and summative assessments are most beneficial to the student and teacher when differentiated to match student's language learning level.

Admissions

The school includes a language profile in the application to the school to identify language learning needs early on and to provide a smooth transition into the school for both the student and teachers.

Review Process

The language policy was under review in 2014-2015 where a committee of teachers along with the MYP and PYP coordinators reviewed the philosophy and policy statement using Guidelines for school self-reflection on its Language Policy to guide the process. In 2016 an updated version of the Language Policy is shared with the teachers and parents for review and



feedback. In 2016 the Language Policy is reviewed and updated based on staff and parent feedback. The language Policy will be reviewed every three years. The next review will be in January 2019.

Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities for the implementation of and review process include the following members of the school community:

Principals: Ensure the implementation of the Language Policy.

PYP Coordinator: Plan review process, documentation, plan with Language subject coordinator for team review sessions, collaborate with MYP and DP coordinators. Communicate the language policy to all stakeholders.

MYP Coordinator: Plan review process, documentation, plan with Language subject coordinator for team review sessions, collaborate with PYP and DP coordinators. Communicate the language policy to all stakeholders.

Language Subject Coordinator PYP: Review teaching and learning practices and documentation in conjunction with the educational leadership team.

Language Subject Teachers MYP: Review teaching and learning in conjunction with the educational leadership team practices and documentation.

Parents: Provide feedback on the Language Policy and be familiar with its contents.

Teachers: Provide feedback on the Language Policy and be familiar with its contents.

End.

Appendix A: Language Acquisition and Swedish Placement

Language Acquisition and Swedish - Placement Guidelines



Language Acquisition Placement:

- To the best of our ability, students will be placed in the phase group that is most appropriate to their level/experience in the language.
 - At times, schedules will not allow perfect placement. We will, for example often have phases 1 & 2 in the same class and phases 3 & 4 in the same class.
 - We will always do our best to structure schedules and teacher workloads (even making mid-year changes where possible) so that the correct phase will be available to each student.
 - There is an expectation that students will progress through the phases in a Language Acquisition course.
 - If a student starts in phase 1 in MYP 1, the aim is that he/she will move to phase 2 in MYP 2
 - If a language acquisition class has multiple phases in it, then the student may be in the same “course” on his/her schedule for two years in a row. It may say, for example, “French, phases 3&4” on the student’s schedule in MYP 3 and MYP 4. However, if the student completed phase 3 in MYP 3, the expectation is that he/she will move to phase 4 in MYP 4.
 - Student movement between phases will be subject to teacher discretion. If a teacher determines that a student is unable to achieve at the highest level in his/her current phase, then the teacher may make the decision to move the student down a phase. Similarly, if a student progresses very quickly to the point that his/her current phase is no longer sufficiently rewarding, the teacher may make the decision to move the student up a phase.
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Swedish Placement:

- Students will complete a diagnostic check when they first arrive in the MYP.
- Based on the results, students will be placed in either Swedish Language Acquisition or Swedish Language and Literature.
 - The student’s previous placement in Swedish in PYP will not determine their placement in MYP. We hope and expect that students will continue their Swedish progression, but MYP will place students according to their performance on the diagnostic.
 - If a parent disagrees with the Swedish placement, they are welcome to discuss the placement with the Swedish teachers and, if necessary, the MYP Coordinator or Deputy Principal.
- Students can also move between the classes. If a student completes phase 4 of Swedish Language Acquisition and is very successful, that student may leave



Language Acquisition and move into Swedish Language and Literature the following year.

- Student placement/movement is subject to teacher discretion. If a teacher feels that a student is not placed in the correct class, then the teacher may, in consultation with the MYP Coordinator or Deputy Principal, move that student. Parents must be notified of this change in advance.