

EF Academy Language Policy - Torbay

Persons involved in the development of the Policy

Trevor Spence - Headteacher

Debbie Chatterton – IB DP Coordinator

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Frequency of Review: 2 Years

GENERAL LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY

The EF Academy community is made up of people of various national and cultural backgrounds who come together to study, learn and create long-lasting bonds. At EFA, diversity in all forms is celebrated and recognized as a wealth of opportunities for growth and enrichment. As languages are an integral part of such diversity, we recognize the value for all members of our school community in being able to develop skills in additional languages, while maintaining the mother tongue. Acquisition of more than one language opens access to different cultures and perspectives and helps facilitate international mindedness.

For this reason, as well as provision for learning English we strongly encourage our students to learn another language.

English is the language of instruction and access to learning is therefore dependent on the student's ability to comprehend and communicate effectively in this language. Consequently, a primary goal of our programme is to bring all students to a level of competence in English, which enables them to access the curriculum fully and effectively. All teachers (except those who teach other languages) are responsible for supporting students in reaching this goal. The school provides professional development to assist teachers in carrying out this aspect of their role.

School Language Profile

The language of instruction at EF Academy is English, but many, in fact most, of our students are not native English speakers. For most of our students their mother tongue is not English and many speak one or more languages at home. With this complex language situation in our school population, language learning is an important part of our curriculum and therefore it is important to identify the language profile of each student.

As the community language at school, English will be used for all school publications and meetings and parents are encouraged to learn English in order to be more fully involved in the school community and their child's learning. Wherever teachers or school staff are able to communicate with parents in other languages we will encourage them to do so, but it is not feasible for us to make special provision for any other languages on a regular basis.

Role of Language

EF Academy students experience an enriched language immersion education in which English is the primary language of instruction and one of the many languages of social interaction. All subjects (other than language classes) are delivered in English. Since the school community language at school is English, the use of other languages may exclude some students or parents

from the dialogue. We therefore expect that English will be used where interaction involves large groups of students or parents.

However, when small groups are involved in project or practical work, it can be appropriate for them to exchange ideas and explore concepts in their mother tongue. Even though the end product will be presented in English, the preparation phase (researching, discussing, reflecting, etc) can be carried out in the students' mother tongue in order to facilitate understanding of the matter.

However, there will be times where communicating in their mother tongue will be beneficial. Student may, for example, wish to talk in their mother tongue with friends from home at break time. This helps or students cope with some of the geographical barriers being far from home. There may also be times in the classroom where it helps, for example translating a word into their mother tongue as a way to aid recognition and understanding, explaining a concept to another student etc. In the classroom the teacher, aware of the primary goal of English language development, will control when and where it is appropriate for the mother tongue to be used.

At all times, students should be aware of our school philosophy and the fact that speaking their mother tongue may exclude others. Teachers and other members of the school community will encourage students to reflect on and adapt their use of mother tongue and English according to the task at hand and the peers they are working with.

A high level of English language proficiency in cognitive and academic language is the linguistic goal of the curriculum. English as an Additional Language (EAL) support is provided as necessary

In the DP, students may take English as either a Group 1 (A1 course – literature) or Group 2 (Language B), depending upon the student's preference, level of proficiency and literacy in English and his/her overall program. Please refer to the appropriate IB Subject Guides for more information on Language curricula.

Since it is the goal of the school to educate students to become highly competent and fluent speakers, readers and writers of English, the school expects students to work hard to achieve this goal and parents are expected to support their children through this process.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

EF Academy strives to create a supportive, non-threatening and inclusive environment where students can successfully develop their English language proficiency.

AS the vast majority of our students have English as a second or additional language then our core curriculum is designed to support ESL in all classes.

Where a student requires additional support to their peers then the additional ESL support program consists of both in-class support and additional lessons. The type of support students receive in the ESL program is determined through regular collaboration between the ESL department and classroom teachers.

When it is evident that a student is encountering significant difficulty with their English language acquisition and development, we may recommend that the student transfers to the Prep course where the focus is purely on English language development.

Additional languages taught in the school

The aims and objectives of learning additional languages differ from the aims and objectives of learning English. This means that, while we aim for each student to reach his or her highest level of literacy and proficiency in these languages we do not aim for full language proficiency in the DP. Native speakers of languages other than English have the option of taking their mother tongue as an A1 School Supported Self-Taught language in the DP, although there is currently a Spanish and German mother tongue teacher on staff offering Spanish and German A1.

Mother tongue, the language(s) most frequently spoken at home

Research into language acquisition has overwhelmingly demonstrated that learning in an additional language is directly related to the student's competence in their mother tongue. Consequently, all students should be provided with the opportunity to become proficient in their mother tongue, both as regards comprehension and expression in oral and written forms, and for cognitive and conceptual learning. Students are encouraged to use their mother tongue, when appropriate, in the classroom to support them in their learning.

Other students also have the option in the DP of taking their mother tongue as an A1 School Supported Self-Taught language.

Assessment

In language we assess the following areas: oral language – listening and speaking, written language – reading and writing, visual language – viewing and presenting. In accordance with the IB Standards, the following language assessment practices have been implemented across our IB programs.

Language Pre-Assessment

All teachers will assess students' prior knowledge, skills and understandings in an appropriate way before embarking on new learning experiences.

Formative Language Assessment

- A balanced range of strategies will be employed during the teaching and learning process to
- inform teachers and students about how language learning is developing.

- Students are provided with regular and prompt feedback to inform and improve their learning
- Formative assessment and teaching are directly linked and provide feedback that is
- responsive to student needs and informs teaching practice.

Summative Language Assessment

- Summative language assessment happens at the end of a teaching and learning experience
- and is planned for in advance.
- The language assessment is designed so that students can demonstrate their language learning in authentic contexts and apply it in new ways.
- Summative language assessment may take a variety of forms including portfolios,
- conferencing, miscue analysis, writing sample analysis, response journals, presentations,
- projects and examinations.

Below are program-specific guidelines which ISM follows to assess language. Language assessment, as in all other subject areas within the school, is carried out in accordance with the school's Assessment Policy.

DP Assessment

At EF Academy, individual Diploma subject teachers and students have a series of mandated tasks to be completed over the two year span of the course, both written and oral. The IB supplies general criteria to be followed for each task, which should be issued to the students well in advance, and thoroughly explained. Students should have access to examples of good practice, and be made aware of comments in the Examiners Reports regarding their subjects. Individual IB Subject Guides detail each required task and the associated grading criteria, and EF Academy teachers issue these to all IB Diploma candidates well in advance of task deadlines.

Hence at EFA Diploma students, from the start of their courses, will be aware of the required skills, the coming assessment tasks and the best way to succeed based on the IB criteria.

Review Process

Each school site will appoint a representative who will be responsible for coordinating the implementation and evaluating the effectiveness of the Language Policy. This group will meet biannually in order to carry out this on-going review process.