



LANGUAGE POLICY

WESLEY INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

Philosophy

Language forms the basis of all communication and learning. Language acquisition is a lifelong process and is a central component of a student's intellectual and personal growth. Language embodies cultural expression, thus it must be valued as a key part of a student's identity. At Wesley International Academy (WIA), it is our belief that all teachers are language teachers. We create global citizens who embrace the diversity of our global community. We believe that the development of language and literacy skills are of the highest priority. Language is the main tool of learning and communication. Through meaningful communication, we promote international mindedness and interact with the world around us. Language is used to negotiate new meanings and construct knowledge about the world. The language of instruction at WIA is English. In addition, all students learn a second language, Mandarin Chinese, as an additional language through daily instruction during conducted by a Mandarin specialist teacher. Technology also plays a major role in language learning and communication through print media and the global network.

Purpose

The purpose of the WIA Language Program is to:

- ensure the delivery of the PYP Curriculum through authentic inquiry based language learning;
- help students obtain/maintain fluency in their native language and host language;
- support development of literacy skills and an understanding and application of the conventional aspects of English;
- develop intercultural awareness and respect by celebrating and valuing the cultures of the school and global community;
- promote enjoyment and appreciation of language learning; and
- to develop knowledge and understanding of another language other than the mother tongue.

Language Profile

In the 2015-2016 school year, WIA had a population of nearly 750 students ranging in age from five to fourteen. Approximately 4% of the students have a mother tongue other than English. Other languages spoken at the school include Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, French, German, Italian, Russian, Haitian Creole, Polish, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian.

Language of Instruction

The primary language of instruction at WIA is English. The transdisciplinary curriculum focuses on phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, writing conventions, reading comprehension, and speaking and listening. Teachers use a range of grouping styles, such as whole class, small group, independent, as well as cooperative learning to focus on skill development in language.

As a key component of WIA's charter, Mandarin Chinese is a vital part of the daily curriculum for all students in all grades, kindergarten through eight. Students learn to read, write, listen and speak fluently in Mandarin Chinese through curricula tailored for non-native Chinese speakers. Starting in



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3rd grade, students are placed in different classes according to their actual Chinese language proficiency. The study of Chinese culture is also integrated into the curriculum to foster an international perspective tying in with our International Baccalaureate program. Teachers maximize using Mandarin Chinese for majority of the instructional time and employ various instructional strategies to encourage students to practice by speaking Chinese inside and outside of the classroom. Teachers not only provide students with communication-focused classroom experiences, but also engage them through Chinese field trips, cultural performances, assemblies and community-wide cultural events throughout the school year.

Spoken Chinese

Starting in Kindergarten through 2nd grade, our curriculum places emphasis on cultivating students' basic listening and speaking skills. Songs, nursery rhymes, games and story-telling using the Chinese language are incorporated to help these young students comprehend words and phrases from discrete elements of daily life, simple questions, statements, high-frequency commands, and courtesy responses. By the end of 2nd grade, students will be able to understand short and some sentence-length statements. In addition, students will be able to exchange simple spoken communication by using formulaic expressions and keywords in highly contextualized situations.

Written Chinese

Learning Chinese characters are often mistakenly considered as an intimidating challenge due to its massive vocabulary and different writing system compared with the Western world. Although the Chinese writing system has distinguished features from English, we strive for engaging our students in an environment where the use of target language (oral or written) is purposefully reinforced through daily instruction. We believe that Chinese written proficiency has to rely on developing a perspective viewing how Chinese characters are presented through an object, sound, or concept. With the development of Chinese written proficiency, students are also given an avenue to appreciate and analyze higher levels of Chinese art, such as calligraphy and painting, in their future studies.

ESOL (English to Speakers of other Languages)

Approximately 0.9% of our student population receives ESOL services. Instruction is provided by a certified part time teacher within the classroom. In addition to the teacher assigned to provide ESOL services, there are four other certified ESOL teachers. These teachers received their training through Atlanta Public School (APS) district's ESOL certification program. Students are identified for possible ESOL services through the home language survey that is given to all students upon enrollment. If students speak a language other than English, the listening, speaking, reading and/or writing portions of the WIDA Access Placement Test (W-APT) will be administered. The students will be placed in ESOL if his/her English proficiency level is low on this test. Kindergarten through third grade ELL students receive a 45 minute ESOL segment daily. Fourth through Fifth grade ELL students also receive daily ESOL segments, totaling 50 minutes. ESOL offers support in reading, math, science, and social studies. Students exit the program once they pass the ACCESS test based on language proficiency. All teachers at WIA who have ESOL students enrolled in their classes receive an instructional profile on their students. Strategies and recommendations for accommodations, assessments and best practices are included in the profile to assist students in supporting ESOL students.



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Mother Tongue Support

WIA acknowledges the importance of a student's mother tongue in promoting personal identity, international mindedness, intercultural awareness and respect, and maintaining cultural heritage among all students. WIA supports the development, maintenance and enrichment of the mother tongue by encouraging families to continue speaking, reading, and writing their native language at home. WIA recognizes that a student's mother tongue is important in the development and sustainability of their heritage and personal identification. Therefore, students are able to share their own language and cultural experiences in class, and during assembly programs/pep rallies.

The mother tongue of the majority of students and staff at WIA is English. A home language survey is completed by all parents during the enrolment process to determine the languages spoken of all students. There are many resources housed in the school's library and classrooms that enhance and support the students' use of their mother language. WIA has access to a translation service through APS district. Classroom assignments, projects, programs, assemblies are all a part of the repertoire of activities that students are introduced to and exposed to as they extend their use of the mother tongue. During morning announcements, different groups are recognized for the achievements and contributions made to our society.

All students and staff at Wesley have the opportunity to learn Mandarin Chinese. The majority of the WIA Mandarin teachers are native Chinese speakers. In their instruction of the language, they share their cultural experiences and their mother tongue to support students, teachers and parents in their acquisition of a second language.

Administrators at WIA support staff, students and parents by providing a structured environment where learning can take place. Leadership holds teachers accountable for ensuring that students are exposed to the curriculum and standards and that they are receiving language every day and, that lessons are meaningful. Students are assessed to determine their proficiency in acquiring a new language.

Responsibilities of Stakeholders

Effective implementation of the Language Policy requires the cooperation of all stakeholders of the school community.

Role of Administration

- Make provision for students to learn a language (Mandarin Chinese), in addition to the language of instruction (English).
- Ensure that policies and procedures regarding the language acquisition are developed and implemented and are regularly reviewed.
- Place importance on language learning, including mother tongue, host country language and other languages.
- Provide a variety of professional development opportunities to enable teachers to be effective instructors of students with a range of language proficiencies, supporting mother tongue and host country language learning.
- Promote an embedded professional development model enabling collaboration concerning curriculum, instructional techniques, and assessment and student progress.



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- Observe teachers and provide constructive feedback on their delivery of instruction.
- Allocate funding and resources to support language development, and provide time for collaboration.
- Promote communication with parents concerning students' language development and provide translators when requested and available.
- Produce key publications in the most common mother tongue other than English.
- Keep the whole school community informed of the policy process and how they can make contributions.

Role of teachers

- Incorporate the teaching and learning of language into the programme of inquiry.
- Develop the skill of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and media literacy.
- Use language as a major means of communicating.
- Address the students' individual needs, with the range of language proficiencies, and where necessary, develop individualized programs and expectations.
- Place students in appropriate language instructional settings based on assessment data.
- Conduct formative and summative assessment of students' academic and language accomplishments and needs.
- Communicate clearly with parents regarding students' accomplishments and needs as they progress across the grades.
- Provide field trip opportunities and in-school experiences will enhance the PYP units of inquiry and embrace the language and culture of Mandarin Chinese and the mother tongue.
- Promote inquiry based authentic language learning.

All stakeholders

- Recognize that learning a language internationalism and multicultural understanding.
- Understand that language development at WIA is a shared responsibility of all stakeholders.

Review of the WIA Language Policy

The language policy of WIA will be reviewed by staff, school administration, and the language policy steering committee members at the beginning of each academic year. The steering committee consists of the Academy Director, PYP & MYP Coordinators, PYP Instructional Coach, Language Coordinator, ESOL teacher, Classroom teachers (PYP & MYP), School Counselors, and the Media Specialist. When discussing or reviewing the language policy, references should be made to the assessment policy, and the special educational needs policy.