The mission of the Washington International School is to provide a demanding international education that challenges students to become responsible and effective world citizens.
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Reviewed and revised September 2014 (to be reviewed again in 2017)
Language Philosophy, Core Values, and the History of the School

A. Language Philosophy

Washington International School challenges students to become responsible and effective world citizens. Intensive language learning is fundamental to this goal. Language learning promotes a dynamic framework with which to understand other cultures and perspectives. WIS students are expected to attain a confident level of oral and written proficiency in more than one language.

The ability to communicate in more than one language facilitates an individual’s movement beyond the first language and home culture, increases awareness of the world, and ultimately enables one to participate more fully as an international citizen. The learning process involves learning language(s), learning about language(s), and learning through language(s). Students learn about language and through language to foster knowledge, understanding, sensitivity, and appreciation of cultures, values, and traditions.

B. Core Values

*International Education*

Washington International School introduces students to the world’s cultural heritage through a rigorous curriculum, international in its approach to people, knowledge, values, and skills. Commitment to intensive language learning is fundamental to the program.

*Global Citizenship*

Washington International School believes that global citizenship requires engagement with diverse cultural perspectives. The school strives to instill in students a commitment to active service and a sense of responsibility for local, national, and world communities.

*Individual Integrity*

Washington International School encourages individual self-discovery and self-expression that values honesty and civility among all members of the community.

C. History of Language Instruction at the School

Washington International School was founded in 1966 by Dorothy Goodman to meet the educational needs of Washington’s international community and American families seeking a rigorous international education. Informed by scientific research on the capacity of the human brain to acquire multiple languages, especially in the early years, and marketing research that focused on the educational needs of international families in Washington, she imagined a school in which children could become functionally multilingual and at the same time well...
informed about world history, geography, literature, and cultures. From the first full academic year, the curriculum was offered in English, French, and Spanish, and the Dutch program was added in 1977 (with full accreditation by the Dutch government in 2000).

The School's founding followed shortly after the incorporation of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), which itself grew from international school efforts to establish a common curriculum and university entry credential for geographically mobile students. WIS was among the first 60 schools to adopt the IB Diploma curriculum.

PART 1: LANGUAGE IN THE PYP at WIS (Pre-K - Grade 5)

Overview

The Primary School at WIS provides a strong, challenging curriculum in two languages embracing the principles of the Primary Years Programme (PYP).

The Primary Years Programme is an inquiry-based programme, which emphasizes the development of students as world citizens through a focus on attitudes and attributes of a learner. Curriculum is organized around six transdisciplinary themes of global significance to develop transdisciplinary skills, and within each unit of inquiry, central ideas and lines of inquiry are explored so that students develop conceptual understanding in addition to knowledge and skills.

An important aspect of the programme is the learning of an additional language, as well as the promotion of students' mother tongues. Although the school’s common language is English, the other school languages of French, Spanish, and Dutch are of equal importance in the students’ learning experience through the PYP.

1. Language Program

Full Immersion Program in Early Childhood (Pre-K and Kindergarten)

Our students become skilled and knowledgeable through differentiated, inquiry-based learning in all core academic subjects. Students in Pre-K and Kinder follow a full immersion program in either French or Spanish. At times, students’ other language is used to enhance additional language learning, following best practices for dual language teaching. This may include one of the school’s official languages or a student’s mother tongue.

Dual Language Program in Grades 1-5

Students in Grades 1-5 spend approximately half of their academic learning time in English and half in French, Spanish or Dutch. Single Subject teachers teach in French and Spanish when possible, and all language teachers are native speakers of their language of instruction.

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and media resources are in all school languages to support the programme and dual language learning.

**English as an Additional Language (EAL) in Grades 1-5**
Students with two or fewer years of English language instruction will usually need more, intensive, small group language instruction. The EAL program ensures newcomers and others with limited/no acquisition of English skills access to the English language and curriculum. New learners of English may be pulled out of the classroom for targeted instruction with the EAL teacher, and as students become more proficient in the skill areas of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing students join the immersion English classroom to experience learning, supported through differentiated instruction and EAL support. As English is the language of the host country and the common language of our school, students need less time in individualized instruction with the EAL teacher, and benefit from being in the English immersion classroom from the beginning of the year.

**Spanish/French as an Additional Language (SAL/FAL) in Grades 2-4**
SAL/FAL targets beginning speakers who are new to the program in Grades 2-4 but proficient in English academics. As students have varying levels of experience in the language, and are learning in a multi-age classroom, differentiated instruction for FAL and SAL is of utmost importance. Students learn in small groups based on language ability in the skill areas of reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing.

As students gain proficiency in the language, their learning needs are better met in an immersion environment. When assessments demonstrate that students are ready to join the immersion classroom, they are transitioned into that setting. As proficiency in the skill areas increases, students might have consistent ‘visits’ to the immersion classroom during specific times. When they are ready to fully transition, a formal review process by a member of administration, the Spanish/French language support teacher, and the SAL/FAL teacher, and the immersion teacher will be conducted after which they are formally moved into the immersion class. Depending on the student, continued support in the SAL/FAL classroom for specific skills may continue.

1.1 Language Curriculum

The Primary School at WIS provides a language curriculum for Pre-K through grade 5, embracing the principles of the PYP. We teach through the language(s), about the language(s) and in the language(s) using an inquiry-based, transdisciplinary approach. The language scope and sequence from the International Baccalaureate Organization has been adopted for all school languages. Reading, writing and oral language documents show a developmental progression, and document students’ growth through the Primary Years Programme. American English is used to teach spelling conventions; international students with other English
standardized spelling conventions are supported. Conventional French and Spanish spellings are taught.

1.2 Assessment

Ongoing formative assessment informs instruction, differentiated through small groups, open-ended tasks, and differentiated learning materials. The school’s Assessment Policy outlines our philosophy and approach to assessing student learning in the languages. A set of formal school assessments, including oral, reading, and writing assessment, are conducted at the beginning and end of each school year. This data is used in various ways to inform ongoing instruction.

1.3 Language Proficiency

The language programs at the Primary School are designed to reinforce each other so that skills and concepts taught in one language, support those taught in other languages. We strive to make every student proficient in two or more languages. All students will have the knowledge of and the ability to use two or more languages, but not all of them to the same extent. Students vary in their ability to learn an additional language; some will achieve functional proficiency in the target language while others will become truly multilingual.

1.4 Student Language Profiles

For each student who is admitted to our school, we collect information about the child’s language profile, including the number of years the language has been spoken and in what settings and the home language(s). This information adds to our understanding of the learner as he/she develops in our dual language program.

2. Language Support and Enrichment

Student Support in the Languages

Washington International School believes that all students are able to attain their greatest success when they learn in an environment that takes individual needs and learning styles into consideration. The Student Support Team’s goal is to ensure that all students are able to achieve their academic potential, that student academic and social-emotional needs are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner, and that students are supported through a collaborative network of educational personnel and programs.

The Primary School Student Support Team (SST) consists of the Primary School Principal, the Primary School Associate Principal, the Primary School Assistant Principal, the Learning Specialist, the English, French and Spanish Support Teachers, and the Counselor.

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The learning needs and special strengths of students are identified through a variety of forms of assessment, including informal teacher observation and checklists, grade-level assessments in reading, writing, spelling and math, standardized tests, and, when appropriate, external professional evaluations. At times, student needs are identified in response to parental concerns. The team collaboratively identifies individual student needs as well as in-class learning support strategies, additional learning support, and other interventions, which are shared with the student’s parents. The Student Support Team also monitors learning support provided to individual students through the following support structures:

- **Reading Support in English, Grades 1-2:** A Reading Recovery-trained teacher provides individual and/or group reading support to first and second graders in pull-out settings and, where and when appropriate, in the classroom.

- **Language Support in French and Spanish, Grades 1-5:** The primary school employs two more support teachers, one in Spanish and one in French. Both are experienced teachers and native speakers of the language who provide in-class and out-of-class support for individuals and small groups in French and Spanish.

- **Learning Specialist:** The learning specialist works with teachers and students in all grades to provide strategies to address identified learning needs.

- **After-School Support:** Students who stay in extended day care after school participate in "homework club" and a small percentage receive after-school tutoring with a primary school teacher.

**Visiting Language Assistant Teachers**

The School makes annually every effort to welcome native French and Spanish speakers to spend the academic year among Primary School students and faculty offering language support and cultural enrichment. These exchanges have included Fulbright scholars and teachers sponsored by the French and Spanish embassies. They provide opportunity for cultural enrichment as well as language support in the classrooms.

**Auxiliary Programs**

WIS makes every effort to enrich and extend language learning throughout the summer for both WIS and non-WIS students alike. The summer program affords students exposure to another language or extension of their language abilities in English, French and Spanish in an authentic way. Summer programs offer various levels of instruction. The academic focus in the summer program gradually increases after the age 8.

WIS students in Extended Day Care are supervised and can receive academic support from teachers of all four languages of instruction.

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WIS offers other languages in the after school program when there is a demand and available resources.

**After School Tutoring**

At times, a student benefits from additional one-on-one instruction in an instructional language outside of the school day. When a teacher believes that a student needs this additional support, the teacher refers the case to the Student Support Team to approve the tutoring. When possible, current teachers at the school are used as tutors, and the class teacher and tutor communicate consistently regarding the student’s progress.

**Parents as Partners**

The ongoing language development of WIS students is the shared responsibility of all teachers, parents and students. Through ongoing communication, teachers communicate expectations and offer suggestions to reinforce language learning through at-home support.

**Other Opportunities for Authentic Language Experiences**

Authentic resources are available to families in the primary school library, as well as online resources on our library website and technology support. Community events in all school languages are communicated to families through various means, and assemblies and field trips are planned in all school languages throughout the school year.

Mother tongue is supported through celebrations of learning, the connection of a wide range of language speakers in our school community, and student-led conferences, where children are encouraged to bring their mother tongue into the school experience.

**3. Admissions**

As a tool for intercultural understanding, language is an important component of the WIS curriculum. WIS graduates are proficient in at least one language in addition to English; many are functionally or fully bilingual. All students in Grades 1 through 12 study at least two languages, one of which is English. WIS does not offer an English only program. The options that are available to students vary by grade level, as indicated below.

**Language Immersion Program – Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten**

WIS offers a total Language Immersion Program in French or Spanish. Experience in French or Spanish is not needed. Many children enter WIS for Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten speaking only English while others are fluent in or have some knowledge of Spanish or French. Still others speak English and another language. Kindergarten applicants who do not speak French

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or Spanish at home should have age-appropriate comprehension of and oral expression in English.

**Dual-Language Program – Grades 1 through 5**
WIS offers a Dual-Language Program in English/French, English/Spanish, and English/Dutch. Students spend half of their academic instruction time in English and the other half in French, Spanish, or Dutch. Parents of children applying to the Grade 1 English/French or English/Spanish program should note that applicants are required to have prior knowledge of French or Spanish. See below for additional options in Grades 2 to 4.

**French or Spanish as an Additional Language – Grades 2 through 4**
French as an Additional Language (FAL) and Spanish as an Additional Language (SAL) are open to applicants to Grades 2 to 4, even if they do not already speak French or Spanish.

**English as an Additional Language (EAL)**
English language support is available; however, because of the dual-language curriculum, students eligible for EAL must be fluent in Spanish, French or Dutch.

**PART 2: LANGUAGE IN GRADES 6-10**

**Grades 6-10**

1. **Curriculum**

**Overview**

The curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs for grades 6-10 have been designed and implemented with the aim of providing opportunities and experiences that reinforce WIS’s mission statement.

The curriculum:
- is student-centered, inquiry-based program whose key concept is making connections
- promotes the IB learner profile
- encourages interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning
- puts emphasis on developing the students into responsible world citizens
- is organized around six key spheres: Information Fluency; Communication; Connections; Diversity; Responsibility; Action

**A. Language Curriculum**

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The academic program at WIS provides a framework for language learning for students in grades 6-10. Course planning is based on Teaching for Understanding concepts from Project Zero.

**B. Language Program/Language Proficiency**

WIS offers discrete language programs. The program recognizes that a balanced education requires discrete language instruction in each language group combined with an emphasis on the inter-relatedness and holistic nature of knowledge.

**C. School Culture and Language**

The learning of all languages of instruction is valued equally and used as a medium of instruction during the school day. Our language goals remain strong within the context of a prominent Anglophone-based culture. Our teachers are native speakers of the target language taught in the classrooms. Between 60 and 80 percent of our faculty and staff speak more than one language, although English is the common language used for most collaborative activities, planning meetings and communications within the school.

**2. Admission Grades 6-8**

*Admissions Grades 6-8*

1. Dual-Language Programs English-French and English-Spanish (Grades 6, 7, 8)
The program is for those who are fluent/highly proficient in French or Spanish. Classes in history, geography, and language and literature are taught in French or Spanish. All other subjects are taught in English.

2. Beginning French Program (Grades 6 and 7)
No previous experience is required. All other subjects are taught in English.

3. Intermediate French Program (Grade 8)
Requires 2 to 4 years of previous French instruction, including speaking, reading and writing. This program includes daily classes in French language and literature. All other subjects, including history and geography, are taught in English.

4. Intermediate/Advanced Spanish Program (Grades 6, 7, 8)
This program requires three to six years of previous Spanish instruction. This program includes daily classes in Spanish language and literature. All other subjects, including history and geography, are taught in English.

5. Dutch Program (Grades 6, 7, 8)
The program is for native speakers. Students study language and literature in Dutch and all other subjects in English.

6. Beginning Chinese Program (Grade 6)
No previous experience is required. This course is available only as a second second language option.

7. Chinese Program (Grades 7 and 8)
Requires one to two years of Chinese instruction. This course is available only as a second second language option.

8. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) (Grades 6–8)
Middle School students whose first language is not English are expected to have a strong foundation in English (intermediate to advanced level). ESOL support is available on a tutorial basis; however, because of our rigorous academic program, students must be proficient at or near grade level (in reading, writing, and speaking). If a student has never studied English or if his or her English skills are not yet at or near grade level, please contact the Admissions Office to discuss program recommendations.

3. Second Language Support Grades 6-12

A. Parents as Partners

We view the ongoing language development of WIS students as the shared responsibility of all teachers, parents and students. With this in mind, teachers communicate expectations and offer additional suggestions (recommendations) such as learning labs, subject labs (MS), private tutoring, trips, and clubs (MS) to reinforce language learning. Parents of all students, particularly of students who would benefit from additional language support, are expected to take advantage of opportunities.

B. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
Currently there is no formal ESOL program in the Middle School and Upper School. Students needing ESOL support receive individualized attention. See 2B8 and 2C3 above.

C. Spanish as a Second Language (SSL)
At the Middle School level, students have the option of being placed in the Spanish Regular or in Spanish Intermediate/Advanced Program. Placement is determined by teacher recommendation and entrance exam as determined in the late spring of the grade 5 year. At the Upper School level, students can enter both 9th and 11th grade as beginner Spanish students.

Currently there is no French Intermediate Program in the Middle School at grades 6 or 7, nor is there any French Beginner Program offered in the Upper School.

4. Language Support

All students in Spanish Regular, Spanish Intermediate/Advanced, and French Regular have the option of taking Enrichment in the target language for five additional periods per cycle.

Additional language support is found in the 8th grade language trips, after school MS Subject Labs, and after school MS Clubs. WIS tutors and private tutors are available for language support in both the Middle School and Upper School. Language events and field trips are organized at all levels.

5. After School and Summer Language Camp

WIS makes every effort to enrich and extend language learning throughout the summer for both WIS and non-WIS students alike. The summer program affords students exposure to another language or extension of their language abilities in English, French and Spanish in an authentic way. Summer programs offer various levels of instruction.

WIS offers other languages in the after school program when there are both a demand and available resources.

PART 3: Diploma Program (DP)

Grades 11-12

1. Curriculum

Overview:

The IB Diploma Program is a challenging university preparatory course for the final two years of high school. A comprehensive and intellectually stimulating course of study, the IB Diploma is recognized by colleges and universities through the world, often leading to preferential admissions and advanced standing for DP students.
The program provides a balanced educational experience with a global perspective, designed for committed, academically capable students. Unlike students at most other DP schools, all WIS students follow the full DP, earning either an IB Diploma or Certificates at graduation. (See the IBO Web site, at www.ibo.org, for more information)

A. Language Curriculum/Program

Academic Subjects
Students select one subject from each of six subject groups. At least three, and not more than four, subjects are taken at Higher Level (HL), and the remainder at Standard Level (SL). Flexibility in choosing Higher Level concentrations allows students to pursue areas of special interest while meeting requirements for university entrance.

B. Group 1 – First Language (Language A)

Each DP student must complete a Language A course; there are two choices, Literature and Literature and Language. WIS offers Language A courses in English, French, Spanish, and Dutch. Over 50 other Language A courses can be offered on a tutorial basis. Students learn oral and written communication skills and develop respect for the literary heritage of the language. All courses provide a broad perspective through a world literature component.

C. Group 2 – Second Modern Language

A variety of course options reflect the range of linguistic backgrounds of students enrolled in the DP. Each course focuses on communication between speakers and writers of that language. Language B courses provide second language learning through a communicative approach for students with two to five years of study in that language. Students develop skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing through a wide range of literary and nonliterary texts. Ab initio courses, available at Standard Level only, are designed for beginners. Students are prepared to use the language appropriately in different settings.

A second Language A course may be taken by bilingual students to satisfy the Group 2 requirement. (On average, over 60 percent of WIS graduates earn the Bilingual Diploma.)

2. Admission Grades 9-12

1. Beginning and Intermediate Language Options (grade 9)
Beginning Spanish: This program does not require any prior experience.
Intermediate Spanish: This program is for students with two to three years of previous instruction in Spanish.

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2. Advanced Language Options (Grades 9–12)
Students take progressively higher levels of language and literature classes in Spanish, French, Dutch, or another approved language. All other classes are taught in English. New students in Grades 9 and 10 are expected to place into ongoing intermediate, advanced, or fluent language classes. WIS does offer a beginning language option in Grade 11 (ab initio) for those without prior exposure to the language (French and Spanish preferred). Additional fees apply.

3. English for Students of other Languages (ESOL, Grades 9–12)
Upper School students whose first language is not English are expected to have a very strong foundation in English (advanced level). ESOL support is available on a tutorial basis; however, because of our rigorous academic program and the fact that DP examinations are conducted in English, students must be proficient at or near grade level (reading, writing, and speaking). If a student has never studied English or if his or her English skills are not yet at or near grade level, please contact the Admissions Office to discuss program recommendations.

4. Admissions Language Testing (Grade 6-12)
As part of the admissions process, all applicants applying to enter one of our ongoing language programs take a written test in that language. The tests are designed to ensure that an applicant’s skill level is on grade level. The tests are written and evaluated by WIS teachers and include sections on reading comprehension, grammar, and writing.

PART 4: Review Process

The Language Policy will be reviewed at least every three years. In each division, language coordinators, representing all grade levels within the division, will review and suggest any needed changes. The Academic Council will then review the document in its entirety to either accept the changes or suggest others. If discussion is needed, language coordinators will provide further input before the document is finalized and shared with the faculty.