

Escola Viva - Language Policy

The IB Diploma Programme aims to foster intercultural understanding and international-mindedness, therefore, catering for multilingualism is key to achieving these goals.

At Escola Viva, we believe that language is a means for people to develop and express their ideas and feelings and construct their individual and cultural identities. According to Bakhtin, language is realized by participants in the form of individual oral and written concrete utterances in the various areas of human activity. By interacting in a wide variety of social practices, people build an understanding of the world and learn to appreciate and respect other people's worldviews and cultural frameworks.

Language teaching aims to promote the learners' autonomy and confidence in using the language in different communication contexts, by developing their ability to interpret, express and negotiate meaning (Savignon, 1997), and every IB Diploma Programme teacher is key to promoting academic and social learning through language.

We believe that developing one's cultural identity and learning an additional language are not incompatible. On the contrary, we understand that people need to have a strong cultural identity in order to be able to interact and learn from different perspectives and worldviews. In this way, students will be able to appreciate the value of cultural diversity and the importance of avoiding stereotypes and the danger of a single story (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie).

Since English is the language used for international communication, it plays a major role in the development of intercultural awareness and understanding. Communicating in the English language provides students with the opportunity to participate in a globalized world, enabling them to build the knowledge and skills they need to critically exercise their citizenship and interact actively in both local and global contexts. In this scenario, language is more than an instrument of communication once it carries a set of beliefs and values, a worldview, which will confront other ways of thinking and acting. Furthermore, for exchange, sharing and understanding to happen, it is fundamental to be empathetic and put oneself in other people's shoes, learn from the unexpected and the unpredictable, and expand identity references, in accordance with the IB Learner Profile. In fact, the development of an intercultural attitude is directly supported by language and the ability to reflect on our own values and cultural heritage through the interaction with other ways of seeing and understanding the world.

Considering this view of language and the role it plays in the development of the learners' worldview and attitudes towards other cultures, values and beliefs, our approach to language teaching and learning emphasizes the following principles:

- Students need to develop their awareness of how languages are used and their importance to broaden their worldviews and their roles as agents of change.
- Language learning should contribute to the development of the students' intercultural awareness.
- Students should have the possibility of participating in authentic communication contexts involving both social interaction and academic purposes. By experimenting with and making use of language in different social roles and situations, students will develop different ways of expressing themselves and their critical thinking skills.
- Learning tasks should be relevant and meaningful for communication purposes and students should be able to connect new language content and skills to previous ones in order to communicate confidently.
- Language content and tasks should take into account students' needs and interests, as well as their social and cultural background, and encourage their active participation in their learning process so that they become independent and critical language users.
- Students are expected to be proficient in using language to learn and communicate ideas in other fields of knowledge.
- Students should be respectful of the fact that language reflects individual perspectives and backgrounds related to one's particular position, and therefore develop linguistic open-mindedness towards different social variations of language.
- Students and teachers should manage to make appropriate use of language to carry on IB DP courses and assessments.
- Students are expected to achieve at least a C1 level of English proficiency by the end of the IB DP.

Students with special access requirements will have their language learning goals adapted to meet their learning potential. In addition, they will be able to use different modes of communication to express themselves and their knowledge (linguistic, visual, aural, gestural, spatial).

In planning and managing classroom tasks, we use the principles and strategies of differentiated pedagogy so that students are able to cope with their learning challenges. In addition, we provide students with supervised self-study situations and resources (for instance, study guides and digital learning platforms) so that they can develop their language skills with more individualized assistance.

Bibliography:

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- Savignon. S. J. 1997. *Communicative Competence: Theory and Classroom Practice*. New York: McGraw Hill.