



مدارس الإمارات الوطنية
Emirates National Schools

Abu Dhabi City Campus Primary Years Programme Language Policy

Policy Developed: Spring 2013
Next Policy Review: June 2014

Emirates National Schools, Abu Dhabi City Campus' Mission Statement

The mission of ENS Abu Dhabi City Campus, an internationally-minded learning community, is dedicated to the development of inquiring, critical thinking, globally responsible citizens who are challenged to realize their full potential through authentic learning experiences

The International Baccalaureate's Mission Statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Language Philosophy

As a school campus working towards full implementation of the three IB Programmes, we are mindful of the overarching significance of the IB Mission Statement in all we do. We use English and Arabic languages as a medium of inquiry, providing opportunities to challenge, nurture and develop both first and second language speakers. Emirates National Schools' Abu Dhabi City Campus (ENS Abu Dhabi City Campus) recognises that language is the foundation of all learning. Students learn language, learn through language, and learn about language. Within the interrelated components of the curriculum, students make sense of these experiences and construct meaning.

We understand that because our students come to us with varying levels of readiness, they will all progress at different paces. ENS Abu Dhabi City Campus values differentiated and varied instruction, and embraces multiple learning styles. Teaching through all academic content areas aims to integrate the skill areas of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting. Toward that end, we consider all teachers to be language teachers and the language development of our students to be the shared responsibility of teachers, parents and students. ENS understands that the most conducive environment to language learning is a positive and encouraging one, wherein students have the opportunity to engage in authentic and meaningful learning experiences.

At ENS Abu Dhabi City Campus, all teaching and learning is driven by the idea that through language, we are encouraging intercultural awareness and new perspectives. We strive to develop a culture of curiosity, as well as an appreciation of the richness of our world's diversity. We strongly believe that through this exploration of language, students develop as deeper, independent thinkers; as responsible, understanding global citizens; and as better communicators in our multilingual world.

Language of Instruction

The Language of Instruction (LOI) in ENS Abu Dhabi City Campus is English: throughout the school, all subjects, with the exception of the UAE National Curriculum (Arabic, Islamic Studies, and UAE Studies) are taught through the medium of English. All students in grades KG1 – Grade 12 experience a rigorous English-medium language program that aligns with the American Common Core English Language Arts and curriculum standards. With extremely high expectations for student success in English and Modern Classic Arabic, it is our aim that all students become fully bi-literate in Arabic and English Language Arts. The school also delivers the Abu Dhabi Education Council Arabic Language Standards to every student. A third language, French, is introduced in Grades 6-8 and offered as an option for students in Grades 9-12.

Expectations for the Learning of Language

All students will be:

- Provided ample opportunity to read, write, listen, and speak across the curriculum.
- Taught literacy skills in context.
- Taught strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, respond to, appreciate, and construct texts.
- Taught through a variety of technological and information resources.
- Encouraged to express themselves orally and in writing, and in different situations using a variety of media.
- Encouraged to share and develop their work within social contexts.
- Encouraged to see language as a tool for thinking, inquiring and learning.
- Encouraged to maintain and value their mother tongue and to value that of other students.
- Provided the opportunity to become proficient in more than one language.
- Exposed to a broad range of literature reflecting a variety of cultures and perspectives.
- Encouraged to develop an appreciation for language and literature.
- Provided constructive and specific feedback from teachers and peers.
- Exposed to modelling of rich language experiences and given time to reflect on their learning and to apply techniques appropriately.

In order that all students are provided equitable access to the curriculum, the school will ensure that the objectives of the English Language Arts program is supported through interventions, differentiation, and common assessments carried out by the classroom teacher and/or grade level team.

The classroom teacher will:

- (a) Reinforce basic skills through the use of Common Core learning progressions for effective listening, speaking, reading and writing in English
- (b) Provide necessary accommodations, particularly in terms of differentiated assessment, to allow an EAL student to succeed at his/her level
- (c) Provide necessary modifications of the skills, content and/or assessment of coursework to make them more accessible to EAL students
- (d) Assist students to become socially integrated through collaborative and inquiry-based tasks.

In order to be successful language learners, our EAL students are encouraged to take responsibility for developing strategies that will extend their language learning. Reading extensively outside the classroom and developing a richer vocabulary in English is strongly encouraged. As students progress into higher grade levels this becomes even more important as they will be expected to read a range of increasingly sophisticated texts in different content areas.

Approaches to the teaching of reading

In the Kindergarten (KG) school, the integrated approach to literacy is being used. Considering KG students come to school with no knowledge of English language, the

introduction to phonics is often times based on structured inquiry. As children become familiarized with phonics, more activities based on guided or open-inquiry are planned and offered to them. This shows direct transition from “Learning Language” to “Learning about Language” and later “Learning through Language”. KG teachers use a variety of strategies and resources during this time, including: interactive white boards, Pearson Reading Street, Promethean Planet and hands on manipulatives. As soon as the majority of students can read the first set of sounds independently, the teacher begins to introduce blending using the letters taught. These new words are grouped into two categories: those that can be phonetically blended and those that cannot.

After this time, students are asked to choose a station that they would like to work at. At times the teacher may encourage certain students to choose specific stations. Classrooms are organized with four stations that contain differentiated ‘hands-on’ literacy activities’. Students have around 10 minutes at a station before the teacher calls for the class to rotate; this allows each student to have worked on two different literacy tasks. The teacher and teaching assistant work with different groups to provide support, while the other groups work independently. During this time, teachers also assess students’ understanding of what has been taught and/or the task that the students are completing.

At the end of both rotations students are asked to reflect on their learning. This is a chance for them to reflect on what they have learned either individually or as a group. This is also a chance for the teacher to: assess students’ understanding; assess for grouping and regrouping; and also assess against the 5 essential elements.

In the Primary School grades, students are taught reading in three basic ways:

Guided reading

All students are assessed using the Oxford Reading Tree assessment tool, and are then split into 2-4 groups based on ability and needs. The groupings are flexible and as students make progress there are opportunities for them to move between the groups. For guided reading sessions, groups use leveled readers (primarily Oxford Reading Tree and Pearson Reading Street) that are developmentally appropriate, aligned with needs identified during formal and informal assessments, and are unit related when possible. During these sessions, the teacher encourages the students to think about grammar, vocabulary, and phonics while modeling appropriate reading strategies. Comprehension questions are usually open ended and students are encouraged to ask questions about the story and make connections to their own experience to help deepen their understanding. When the teacher is meeting with one group, the other groups are working on independent writing, spelling, reading or grammar tasks. In cases where students have extremely lower abilities, they are (where possible) paired with teaching assistants and have more one on one contact to learn basic reading skills.

Read aloud

Daily read aloud sessions are conducted to further develop student's comprehension, vocabulary, and develop unit-related conceptual understanding. Stories can also be chosen to reinforce understanding of the learner profile attributes or to allow students to explore areas that they have expressed an interest in. This is also a time when teachers are able to focus on and nurture an appreciation of literature.

Independent Reading

Students are frequently given time to read independently in class, self-selecting their books from a pre-arranged leveled book box or class library. This student guided time encourages students to read topics and genres of personal interest to them, helping to develop a love of reading for both pleasure and information. Teachers are most often roaming the classroom during this time and discussing books with students, or listening to specific students read aloud. Classes regularly visit the school library where students are able to select books to take back to class or home for independent reading; often during this library time students are able to have independent reading time.

Teachers also send home leveled readers which are at each child's independent reading level. It is a requirement that parents supply some form of written response to prove they have read the story, and provide feedback as to the level of comprehension. These books are sourced from either the school libraries, or libraries within the classroom.

Approaches to the teaching of writing

Across all grade levels classroom environments are rich with displays that model and reinforce written and grammatical structures that are developmentally appropriate to the students. These can be in the form of: word walls, grammatical conventions posters, and student-generated work samples that are built upon throughout the year.

In the early primary years students begin with 'structured organizers' that begin with some blank spaces to fill in and 'sentence finishers' that are open ended so the student is provided with opportunities to expand. As students progress throughout the grades, writing activities become less structured and more opportunities are afforded for students to develop their writing through open-ended tasks. While writing activities are generally unit-related, there is an emphasis on skill development, and therefore stand-alone lessons focused on specific writing skills are evident.

In the middle to upper grades, the written genres and conventions focused on at each grade level are informed by the Common Core English Language Arts Standards. At the beginning of the year, grade level teams review the content that is to be taught and embed

them (as much as possible) within their Units of Inquiry, thus providing for a trans-disciplinary approach to the teaching of writing.

At all levels, teachers encourage creative, independent writing in students, ensuring that they are given time to write on topics and genres of their choice on a frequent basis. Unstructured, student guided writing time such as this aims to develop and instill in students an enthusiasm and interest for all forms of literacy.

Students are regularly assessed against the schools Common Core English Language Arts Standards, which may focus on any or all of the standards such as writing, grammar, vocabulary and language. Teachers aim for consistency in grading and leveling student writing samples, often sharing exemplars of student work with grade teams to check understanding about students' current writing levels. Teachers also aim to display exemplars of writing in their classrooms that help students' knowledge and understanding of successful writing, within different genres. Students are constantly encouraged to reflect on and critique their own writing in order to improve specific skills and ideas when they are writing.

Learning in a Language other than the Mother Tongue

At Abu Dhabi City Campus it is recognised that the large majority of students are engaged in learning in an instructional language other than their mother tongue. To accommodate challenges that this situation might present, teachers are encouraged to:

- Allow students to explore topics in their preferred language to activate prior knowledge and better grasp concepts
- Use visual materials and actions, alongside oral instruction to deepen understanding
- Reinforce oral instructions with written instructions
- Emphasize academic vocabulary specific to the subject
- Actively use visible thinking strategies
- Teach writing conventions within context
- Provide student-centred activities which allow students to explore ideas and concepts through dialogue
- Structure tasks and scaffold lessons and assignments so as to maximize every student's opportunity for success
- Allow students to give an oral response at times rather than a written; how far this can be allowed depends on the subject specific marking criteria
- Use language for reflection, either by journaling or in direct email contact with the teacher
- Identify students in need of EAL support and make the appropriate modifications to classroom materials and instruction in order to meet those needs

Host Country Language: Modern Classic Arabic

ENS Abu Dhabi City Campus is committed to enabling students to achieve proficiency in Modern Classic Arabic. This is facilitated through regular classes dedicated to language

learning and language rich activities. All students in the Primary Years Programme are enrolled in either Arabic or Arabic as an Additional Language (AAL). Throughout their schooling, students receive a high quality Arabic instruction program that aims to prepare all students for fluency in their mother-tongue. Additional coursework in Islamic Studies and UAE Studies are also delivered through Arabic language. A small percentage (3-5%) of the students enrolled at ENS Abu Dhabi City Campus are from non-Arabic speaking backgrounds and require small group, AAL support.

Mother Tongue Beliefs and Practices

As a school we encourage access to different cultures, perspectives and languages through the exploration of Units of Inquiry that are relevant, significant and engaging. In that, we believe that competence and confidence in the mother tongue are crucial for academic success, for the maintenance of cultural identity and for emotional stability. The school actively helps and supports any parent who is seeking mother tongue instruction for their child. The school also seeks to ensure that the Library resources represent the languages and cultures of the whole school community. We are committed to supporting families as far as possible in developing and maintaining the mother tongue of students throughout the school.

We believe that Mother Tongue Support:

- Helps achieve bi-literacy
- Facilitates the learning of the LOI and additional languages
- Helps increase intercultural awareness and understanding, for both the student and his/her peers
- Enables students to remain in touch with their culture
- Makes it possible for students to re-adjust to their home community and/or education system, should they return

The Role of the IB Coordinator

The school's IB Coordinator is responsible for:

- Maintaining a list of students that speak languages other than English and Arabic
- Collecting and collating information on the mother tongue schools and classes which are available in the community
- Bringing together individuals wishing to study a particular language to form a language study group
- Working with the Librarian to improve resources in the languages of the school community
- Working with the Director of Curriculum and Instruction to secure web-based learning programmes for students whose language is not taught through the school's subject areas.