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LANGUAGE POLICY

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Introduction

This policy outlines the philosophy and aims of language teaching and learning across DP courses and requirements. It defines provisions for language teaching based on the school profile and in accordance with the IB principles.

Philosophy and Aims

The attributes of the IB learner profile and others like them that help students become lifelong learners and responsible citizens of both local and global communities are at the core of our value system and we see the role of language in achieving these aims as crucial.

Language is the primary means of communication, a social phenomenon and the foundation for all learning. In order for students to become successful learners and lifelong learners they must become language proficient; in other words, be able to use language, spoken and written, accurately, confidently and creatively in a variety of social contexts and for a variety of academic, social and personal purposes. Language enables us to collaborate effectively and listen carefully to the perspectives of others, and it is inextricably linked to our capacities for critical and creative thinking as well as to our aptitude to formulate and express ideas and feelings. As such, language is instrumental in developing awareness and understanding of the self and the world, with particular attention given to fostering cultural and intercultural understanding. Consequently, all teachers are encouraged to see themselves and be seen as language teachers.

This policy additionally aims to establish and promote the pivotal role language skills play within the three elements of the core - Theory of knowledge (TOK), Creativity, activity, service (CAS) and the Extended Essay - and Approaches to teaching and learning (ATL).

School language profile

The language of instruction in the school's DP is English except for Group 1 languages where there is a visible dominance of Croatian as students' best language. This accounts for the fact that the majority of students are not native speakers of English. There is always a fair number of international students who come from non-Croatian speaking backgrounds.

The school places high value on providing instruction for all Group 1 languages. Teachers of Croatian A, English A, French A, German A, Italian A are part of the permanent school staff, and teachers of other A languages are outsourced when necessary and if possible. The self-taught option is considered only if all other options are rendered infeasible. This reflects the school's high appreciation of and permanent dedication to provide instruction and **support in mother tongue** for all DP students.

All students come to DP with at least some to even very significant experience of second-language learning. Group 2 courses provided are: English B, German B, and French B. All students are encouraged to pursue the study of languages during the process of choosing their DP subjects. All IB students have the opportunity to pursue a non-IB course in Latin.

Language A and Language B are compulsory for all DP students. All languages A and B can be taken at HL and SL. Exceptions to students' free choice of levels may be non-eligibility conditions imposed by specific national and/ or university-related requirements.

Croatian language policy

All Croatian students and citizens have to take Croatian A Language and Literature course as it is stipulated by the national educational regulations on mother language policy, a requirement of the Croatian Ministry of Education. If students decide to study in Croatia, it is a requirement of all universities and colleges in Croatia for students to have a validation from, or an equivalent to, the Croatian final 'graduation' exam at either high or standard level. The Croatian Ministry of Education fully acknowledges the validity of IB DP Croatian A Literature exam on both HL and SL as equivalent to the Croatian final 'graduation' exam.

Based on the above mentioned Ministry of Education requirements, English as a language B is mandatory in the Diploma Programme for Croatian students. In this case, French B or German B can be taken as extracurricular subjects.

The school offers the following options:

Language A: literature (HL/SL)

A course in literature in which students adopt a variety of approaches to textual criticism, explore the nature of literature, the aesthetic function of literary language and textuality, and the relationship between literature and the world. It is designed for students whose linguistic skills are already strong and are expected to be consolidated further through developing students' proficiency, fluency and linguistic range, and by acquiring the critical discourse appropriate to textual analysis. It is required that a number of texts is read in translation, thus following the principle of international-mindedness as well as fostering respect for cultural diversity and multiple perspectives.

Language B (HL/SL)

A language acquisition course designed to provide students with the necessary skills and intercultural understanding to communicate successfully in an environment where the language is spoken. In language B course, students with some previous experience of the target language further develop their ability to communicate in the target language through the study of language, themes and texts, and develop their linguistic abilities through the development of receptive, productive and interactive skills. In doing so, they also develop conceptual understanding of how language works, as appropriate to the level of the course, and learn to foster respect for cultural diversity.

Croatian C

A school-complimentary, non-IB course, taken by international students with no prior experience of Croatian, or very limited previous exposure to it. The course aims to develop receptive, productive and interactive skills as well as intercultural understanding. It enables students to communicate more successfully in the environment where the language is spoken. It promotes the ability to cope with the demands of day-to-day transactional and social contacts. **The course aims to promote learning of the host country language and culture.**

Students are encouraged to continue acquiring the second language started in previous education to enable them meet the requirements for DP Language B of minimum of 3 years of studying.

English and Croatian		
MYP		DP
Croatian A	→	Croatian A SL/HL
English A Language and Literature (grade 6 or 7 only for English A)	→	English A Literature SL/HL, or English B HL
English B: Phase 6 (grade 6 or 7 only for English A)	→	English B HL, or English A Literature SL/HL
English B: Phase 4 and 5	→	English B SL/HL
French and German		
MYP		DP
Language B : Phase 1 and 2 (French or German)	→	Language B SL (French or German)
Language B: Phases 3 to 6	→	Language B SL/HL (French or German)

Furthermore, the school offers additional optional French and German courses covering different levels of language acquisition (beginners, intermediate and advanced learners). These courses are open for all students of the school, regardless of the programme they attend, whether national or IB.

Within this scheme there are also specially tailored courses for students who wish to take the German language certificate (Deutsches Sprachdiplom-DSD) at level I and II, and the French Language Certificate (Diplôme Approfondi de Langue Française- DELF).

Depending on the number of interested students, Latin is also offered as an optional subject and is taught in Croatian two periods a week. It follows the curriculum similar to the one taught in Croatian schools since the students who want to continue their university education in the field of medicine, pharmacy or law are required certain knowledge of Latin.

Positioning of language within the enrolment procedure for MYP to DP transfer candidates

School enrolment procedure for IBDP Year 1 includes a comprehensive English entrance exam (written and oral) as a basis for placing students into adequate English group. Students who scored 50 – 80% may be placed in English B group while those who scored 80 – 100% may be placed in English A Literature group, if their choice of subjects requires so.

The placements tests will be conducted for French B and German B in IBDP Year 1 to identify the appropriate level (SL or HL).

Support for students who are not proficient in the language of instruction

Most of the students come to DP with at least some experience in the language of instruction, English, and 2nd language as well (German and French). Students who are not proficient in the language of instruction are rare due to the fact the enrolment in the DP is subjected to the English language Entrance Exam. Should such case occur, it is approached individually in form of meetings with the student, parents, language teacher and the DP coordinator when a specific strategy is agreed on how to encourage and improve a student's proficiency in the language of instruction. In the past when the school deemed it necessary an ESL course was organized for students with lower level of English. Should there be such a need in the future, the school has resources to organize an additional ESL course.

Strategies to support all teachers in their contribution to the language development of students

Language is embedded in the concepts, contexts and big ideas across all subject areas. Further, in many cases, key terms and concepts transfer easily from one subject to another. However, there are instances when the same word in one subject may mean something completely different in another.

Helping students recognize these key terms and concepts, understand when they do and do not directly transfer, and how to use them to communicate is what makes every teacher a language teacher. The idea that every teacher teaches language doesn't mean that every teacher needs to be a language expert, but rather, that they are experts of the language of their subject areas.

Correct language use and communication in subject areas don't develop overnight. Teachers need to lay the groundwork by first identifying the language of the subject they are teaching. Then, they can start building a foundation for the students to acquire the subject language, transfer the language to other subjects, and use language accurately to communicate their understanding.

This process doesn't require expertise in language learning, but it does signify why every teacher is a language teacher. Teachers of all subject groups who use English as language of instruction are responsible for introducing, developing and reinforcing specific, subject related register (<https://www.whitbyschool.org/passionforlearning/why-every-teacher-is-a-language-teacher>).

Status of IB language courses according to the language frameworks

The following table is informative of levels of achievement at the end of the IB DP language courses in comparison to the following commonly used frameworks of reference for languages*:

IB International Baccalaureate	CEFR Common European Framework of reference	ACTFL American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages	University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations
Language A HL	C2 Mastery	Distinguished	Certificate of proficiency in English (CPE)
Language A SL	C1 Effective Operational Mastery	Superior	Certificate in Advanced English (CAE)
Language B HL (English B HL with grade 6 or 7)	B2 Vantage (C1 Effective Operational Mastery)	Advanced	First Certificate in English (FCE)
Language B SL	B1 Threshold	Intermediate	Preliminary English Test (PET)

*taken from: Zurich International School