



Amity International School Amsterdam

Language Policy 2020-2021 (Senior School)

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1. School Guiding Statements

OUR MISSION

It is our mission to provide an engaging and challenging learning environment where students are empowered to succeed academically, socially and emotionally.

Our students learn within a real-world, inquiry-based curriculum which fosters their individuality, creativity and unique interests. We encourage our students to be innovative and reflective thinkers who demonstrate resilience and determination. We promote ethical, responsible action for positive change and provide opportunities for teamwork and leadership. We nourish the development of open-minded, caring individuals who are active and respectful members of the global and local community.

OUR VISION

Empowering each individual to thrive and make a positive difference.

2. Language Philosophy

At Amity International School Amsterdam (Amity Amsterdam), we believe that: "language is central to learning," (International Baccalaureate Organization, MYP: From principles into practices). This view is the foundation of our language philosophy, and that it is the responsibility of all teachers, support staff and parents to support students' language development, to enable them to access their academic and core curricula.

We believe language plays a fundamental role in adolescent development and providing students with the tools to understand their own identities and establish relationships with others; it provides students with communication skills necessary to access age-appropriate experiences, both social and academic. Language is the bridge to our sense of belonging; it informs our opportunities and ability to develop strong communities, within and outside the school, (International Baccalaureate Organization, MYP: From Principles into Practices).

Amity Amsterdam utilizes English as the primary language of instruction, and all students for whom English is an additional language (EAL) are provided with support as per their needs. This includes differentiation in the classroom, EAL classes and one-to-one support if needed. We ensure that all students develop from their existing levels of language proficiency upon entry into the school and are supported and monitored to ensure an appropriate level of growth. Individual students' language needs are met through differentiated teaching and learning tasks, that enables all students to access the curriculum, with an appropriate level of rigour and challenge.

Amity Amsterdam distinguishes between the development of the mother tongue, language acquisition and literacy. We are committed to supporting students and encourage the values of language diversity, intercultural understanding, and international-mindedness., and promote a positive self-image of individual cultural identity We recognise, celebrate, and encourage solidarity between the various cultures of our multilingual and international community. We are committed to the development of Dutch language learning, for both native speakers as well as those studying language acquisition. We celebrate Dutch culture, through annual events, as well as providing opportunities to engage with our local community.

Our teachers and support staff understand that they are language teachers, and are committed to supporting students with their language development to enable them to develop their literacy skills, their mother tongue and acquisition languages at an appropriate level, allowing them to access a range of opportunities within and outside of school.

2.1. Language learning connections to the IB Learner Profile

Inquirers	Knowledgeable
<p>At Amity Amsterdam, we want to nurture our students' curiosity, providing opportunities for them to develop skills for inquiry and research. Students must know how to learn independently and with others, and to learn with enthusiasm to sustain their love of learning throughout life.</p>	<p>We want Amity Amsterdam's students to develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. Students will engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.</p>
Thinkers	Communicators
<p>We want Amity Amsterdam students to use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. Students exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.</p>	<p>We want Amity Amsterdam's students to express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. Students learn to collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.</p>
Open-minded	Risk Takers
<p>We expect all students at Amity Amsterdam to critically appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. Students will seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience</p>	<p>We want Amity Amsterdam's students to approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; to work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. Students are expected to become resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.</p>

3. School Language Profile

Amity International School Amsterdam is a diverse community, with students of many different nationalities. Many of the students are multilingual, speaking a variety of languages at home and school. Therefore, we aim to create an environment which values and celebrates different cultural identities and languages.

Currently the majority of the school population are fluent in English, therefore, most documentation is provided in English. However, over twenty different languages are spoken, and we continue to monitor the need for publications in other languages. Members of the community who do not speak English are welcome to request help with understanding these documents.

4. MYP Language Pathways

In MYP, the following language courses are presently on offer:

- Language and Literature: English, French and Dutch.
- Language Acquisition: English, French and Dutch.

In keeping with the requirements of the IB all MYP students study at least two languages of which one is Language and Literature and the other is Language Acquisition.

In the Diploma and Career-related programmes, we expect to offer the following:

- Language and Literature: English HL/SL, French HL/SL and Dutch
- Language Acquisition: English HL/SL, French B HL/SL/, Dutch Ab Initio

All AISA students will study at least 1 Language & Literature course and 1 Language Acquisition Course. Depending upon their skills level and proficiency, students will usually study one Language and Literature course and one or two Language Acquisition courses (Dutch and/or French). If students are already proficient in English, Dutch and/or French they may study two Language and Literature courses.

The choice of courses at AISA reflects the needs of the student community and is to be regularly reviewed. Given budgeting and staffing resources, we shall adjust the languages offered to ensure that students have choice and opportunity to try out, develop, maintain a range of language options.

To ensure a smooth transition from Primary to Secondary, teachers liaise to discuss the level and type of support the students have had in Primary, the progress they have made and the areas in which they require support. The role of the PY5 teacher, the SEN and EAL Coordinators, the House Advisors and the Learning Support Assistants is integral to supporting vertical integration between the sections and supporting the next phase in the students' learning journeys.

Students who are joining from other schools will take a CAT4 standardised assessment test upon admission that provides valuable information on his/her level of English language development. A student with a

reasonable level of French or Dutch will complete some communication exercises with these subject teachers in order to determine the most appropriate course.

In addition to CAT4 tests upon admission, all students (from August 2021) will sit MAP Growth standardised assessment tests during the school year to determine their level of knowledge and developed ability in reading and language usage (as well as mathematics and science for MY4-5 students). Test data provides valuable information to guide instruction that is differentiated for individual students' needs and benchmarks the growth of each student over successive grade levels. Teachers will draw upon the data to modify the level of rigour for each student and to account for gaps in students' existing knowledge, thus supporting a personalized approach to learning. All teachers, regardless of subject specialism, will draw upon the data and instructional guidance to support students with their language proficiency.

4.1. Support for development of mother tongue language

AISA encourages students whose first language is not Dutch, English or French to attend our after-school Mother Tongue Maintenance (MTM) program which is run by parent volunteers and local tutors. We encourage parents who wish to begin an extra-curriculum language class to contact the school, where we will make facilities available.

Students are able to make use of our increasing collection of fiction and non-fiction books in our library, and we encourage families to develop their own collection of book and DVD resources at home, or make donations to the school's library. Co-curricular mother-tongue activities are facilitated by one of our language teachers, with a particular thematic focus for each class, with an opportunity for students to share their learning towards the end of the class, thus promoting intercultural understanding and international mindedness.

4.2. English as an Additional Language

Students whose home language is not English may require additional support. Our EAL team identifies the level of support required, based on the student's language profile and previous educational experience.

Two different levels of EAL lessons are provided. EAL support is in place of either French or Dutch language lessons and consists of 3 one-hour lessons a week. We also provide an EAL intensive programme for students with beginner level English. Additionally, these students may also attend EAL lessons in place of Science, I&S and English Language and Literature classes. The support students receive is tailored to their individual needs, and is designed to enable them to access the full mainstream curriculum as soon as possible.

The House system with its Vertical Tutoring groups also provides an opportunity for younger and/or weaker language students to receive help and mentoring from the more able or senior students. This may be provided with the support of a reading or phonics programme and contributes to students' service contributions.

4.3. Dutch and French Language Acquisition

Integration into the local community and host country is an important element of inter-cultural understanding. At Amity Amsterdam, Dutch classes are part of the curriculum from the Early Years, from when students begin to interact with the Dutch environment around them.

In MYP, non-Dutch students take regular Dutch language acquisition lessons during which they will also learn about Dutch history, typical Dutch expressions, and make comparisons with their own languages and cultures. Body language is also integrated, along with drama, music, and other areas of the wider curriculum, into the language classroom.

Students may also follow a French language acquisition course in which they study French in a fun, interactive and engaging way, including through the use of online resources such as Linguascope and Quizlet. Students are encouraged and prepared for sitting the DELF French language exams.

Language acquisition follows distinct phases and teachers assess all language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) on a regular basis. Formative assessments allow students to work collaboratively or individually and take part in concrete projects and real-life situations. Students also enhance their communicative skills and improve their confidence when communicating in the target language. In addition, students develop strategies such as recognizing keywords, analysing the origin of words, and comparing vocabulary and structures with other languages in order to improve their comprehension skills and effectiveness when completing an assessment.

In MYP, students are assessed according to the MYP language acquisition criteria depending on the phase they belong to (phase 1 to 4). Assessments are always composed of authentic and diverse material including reference to different regions, traditions and accents. Each of the following criteria are assessed twice a year: Criterion A: Listening; Criterion B: Reading; Criterion C: Speaking; Criterion D: Writing

4.4. Dutch and French Language and Literature

Many of our students are French or Dutch native speakers or have a strong level of proficiency in these languages. Rather than following the Language Acquisition pathway, then, these students will study French/Dutch Language and Literature, usually alongside English Language and Literature, and will continue to develop key skills involved in listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting in a variety of contexts. The Language and Literature programmes enable students to use language to critically engage with a range of literary and non-literary texts, from both contemporary and historical contexts, using a range of linguistic and literary concepts. Students are also encouraged to develop their creative and expressive skills in the production of their own literary and non-fiction texts, and to develop a passion for lifelong reading.

In the MYP, language and literature assessments are closely aligned with the curriculum. Assessment for language and literature in all years of the programme is criterion-related, based on four equally weighted assessment criteria: Criterion A: Analysing; Criterion B: Organizing; Criterion C: Producing; Criterion D: Using language

4.5. Literacy Skills

At Amity Amsterdam we believe that language is a processing tool which aids cognitive development, communication and learning (Language and learning in IB Programmes). Literacy forms part of the Approaches to Learning Skills and developing students' literacy is key to supporting them in accessing the curriculum in all subject areas. Therefore, reading comprehension is a skill which we focus across the school. Reading of academic and non-academic literature is incorporated in lesson activities and students are encouraged to read around subjects. Increasingly, students are supported to develop their critical thinking skills for literary and textual analysis.

It is important that students develop traditional as well as media and computer literacy skills. Teachers aim to provide students opportunities to writing by hand in every lesson. This could be through the process of articulating statements of conceptual understanding and reflecting on their learning in their Student Handbook, or writing in process journals.

Each week students have two dedicated periods in the library, with the librarian, working on various skills to develop information literacy, inquiry skills and digital citizenship. Developing these fundamental skills empowers students to take control

of their own learning and help to connect their existing knowledge to new understandings.

The focus on Information literacy enables students to: access and evaluate information efficiently and effectively to inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge; to use information accurately, creatively, and ethically to share knowledge and to participate collaboratively and productively as a member of a democratic society; to appreciate literature and other creative expressions of thoughts and ideas and pursue knowledge related to personal interests and aesthetic growth. Digital Citizenship enables students to understand and practice Internet safety and wellbeing when using electronic media for educational, social, or recreational purposes; and to examine rights and responsibilities, privacy and security and consumer awareness.

5. Language and assessment

Languages are assessed according to the MYP language criteria. Each criterion has eight possible achievement levels (1–8), divided into four bands. Each band has its own descriptor allowing teachers to make “best-fit” judgments about students’ progress.

As detailed in the Amity Amsterdam Assessment Policy, teachers use a range of formative and summative assessments in order to provide information on students’ language growth. Formative assessment is an on-going process to monitor student knowledge, understanding and skills and permeates daily interactions. It is the teacher’s responsibility to collect and organise data on the student’s learning in order to inform future planning and adjust instruction in response to individual student needs. Formative assessments may be a tool for making judgements about a learner’s language proficiency in order to provide timely feedback, and to promote agency in learning so that students understand where they are in relation to assessment criteria and the required next steps in their learning journey. Summative assessment provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate mastery of their language learning.

Given the diversity of language proficiency within the school, assessments will be differentiated according to individual student needs. This may include adjusting the rigour of the task or the time given in which to complete it. Where possible, and within reason, students should be given the opportunity to re-sit an assessment once they have reached the appropriate level of mastery.

Students with special educational needs may require additional support with languages. Where appropriate specific language learning requirements will be included in the students’ Individual Education Plan (IEP). Students with particular language difficulties may have access to Individual assessment arrangements. (See SEN policy working document)

6. Language Learning through the Senior School Library

Amity International School Amsterdam has excellent library facilities, with approximately 5 000 subject specific and extra-curricular items for loan. The library aims to support students' academic literacy, as well as encouraging students to develop their language skills by engaging in wider reading. The library is available for students 8am – 4pm Monday – Thursday and 8am – 12:30pm on Fridays.

Our Library's Mission is to support the school community by: stimulating a lifelong love of reading and learning and enhancing the delivery of the IB curricula; working collaboratively with teachers to create authentic learning; create an intellectually and culturally open environment where students, teachers and parents can access, understand, construct and exchange a rich diversity of information; and to curate activities that promote curiosity, multiliteracies and international mindedness.

All students are encouraged to make use of the library during lessons, to access academic materials and develop skills of independent inquiry. The school librarian and classroom teachers support students in finding relevant academic research material, to enhance their knowledge and extend analysis. Students are also encouraged to access the library for extra-curricular purposes. All MYP students receive sessions from the school librarian about the benefits of reading regularly. All students are encouraged to have checked out at least one library book, in order to encourage them to read for pleasure. Events such as the *kinderboekenweek* provide distinct opportunities for students to stop and prioritize the pleasure of reading for its own sake.

It is our belief that regular reading will boost students' literacy, enhancing their academic proficiency in languages and academic success. We also believe that developing students' literacy skills allows them to access more opportunities and has a positive effect on their overall well-being. The Amity Amsterdam library plays a vital role in this, as well as other dimensions of their learning, such as academic integrity, and actively seeks to support students' language development.

7. Differentiated Language Learning

'Differentiation is about giving students exactly what they need at that moment in the learning journey based on evidence collected from formative assessments' (Stern, 2018). With regard to supporting the language development of a diverse range of learners, it is vital that every subject teacher considers him/herself a language teacher, and deploys strategies to support language learning. Such strategies might include an explicit focus on vocabulary within units, or on genre and purpose when writing (for example, science lab reports), or developing spoken language skills for performance, as well as supporting students to develop their listening skills, and providing explicit feedback on students' assessed written ability.

Teachers should ensure that suitable published texts are provided to support students' levels. Furthermore, students are scaffolded to replicate model texts and reproduce language on an appropriate continuum from everyday, informal and novel language use, to increasingly technical, abstract, formal and expert-like language use.

Activities such as the Dictogloss dictation serve to support all students in their listening, speaking, writing and reading skills, and can be used across the mainstream curriculum. A range of classroom routines such as 'Think, Talk, Open Exchange', or Elbow Exchange, or 'See, Think and Wonder' can be deployed to support differentiated access to learning tasks to support both language learning and thinking skills. Group learning tasks, with students of diverse ranges of reading levels collaborating together, can allow for all students to participate and engage, while increasing teacher thinking time. For further information on useful classroom strategies, the Faculty refers to *Differentiated Instruction Made Practical* (2018) by Rhonda Bondie and Akane Zusho and *Making Thinking Visible* (2011) by Ritchhart et al.

8. Integrating the learning of languages within the subject groups

Language and Literature

At Amity Amsterdam, the Language and Literature courses are designed to both challenge students rigorously, at each progressive level in the program, as well as encourage their love and appreciation for literature and writing. We believe the truth depth of knowledge and understanding stems from an appreciation and respect for the craft. Using stories, poetry, and literary works spanning the globe, both old and new, we set them in or against the modern backdrop in order to challenge students to find what necessary connections exist there that would allow them to help construct a better world for the coming generations. We believe that literacy and a love of reading is at the heart of this process.

Visual Arts

literacy is embedded throughout all stages of MYP Visual Arts to ensure that students develop skills which will allow them to analyse their own work and that of other artists. At the beginning of each unit students will have access to subject specific words to help them with their comprehension and written work. Each project will ask students to engage with another artist's work in some way. These tasks involve both reading information and written analysis. As students progress through the school and their knowledge builds, the analysis task increases in depth to help students develop a deeper understanding. Throughout projects, students are constantly writing in their process journals, which allows them to reflect on their own learning. Once the practical work is complete, literacy is once again used to enable students to evaluate the success of the work they created in relation to the statement of inquiry.

Design

Digital Design provides learners with new and varied options for language learning through interactive opportunities for engagement, collaboration, concept development, and authentic work. While exploring the concept of language, students develop an awareness and understanding of how, why and when we need to ensure that clear messages are given and received throughout the design process. It ensures that ideas can be communicated clearly, and each person involved in the development of an idea from conception to use has a common and consistent understanding of the technical language used to drive invention to be innovative.

Individuals and Societies

Students develop language learning through engagement with a wide range of texts such as historical sources, news reports and visual data such as graphs and diagrams. Students will study the significance of local language themselves, for example, in relation to globalization and cultural identity. Students develop their written and spoken language skills through a range of assessments, such as source and textual analysis, presentations, and the drafting and writing of essays and statements of understandings.

Mathematics

Although considered by many a 'universal language', Amity students are still encouraged to develop the learning of language in their maths lessons. We do this by memorizing key mathematical vocabulary, exploring problems in a range of contexts, and drawing comparisons between the structure of mathematical expressions and the structure of expressions in English. An example of the latter would be how a double negative impacts the meaning of an expression in English, much in the same way subtracting a negative number is the same as adding a positive number of the same size.

Music

In Music students develop their writing, reading and verbal language skills in a number of different ways. Research projects and presentations require students to identify and select relevant information from text and put it into their own words while writing in a coherent and structured manner. Singing in particular helps students retain words and expressions much more effectively while rhythm and the repetitive patterns within a song help them to memorise new words. They also learn specific musical terms and use them in a meaningful way by applying them to their reflections and descriptions of music which helps support language acquisition.

Science

Within the science discipline, students develop their language competencies through designing investigations, communicating observations, making models, organising, collecting and presenting data, and subsequently analysing and explaining their findings. Students are, therefore, taught how to write texts such as Lab Reports using appropriate technical vocabulary and genre conventions. Exams and tests often demand specific application and understanding of scientific terminology. Inquiry-based learning supports investigations into a wide range of real-world phenomena and issues, and to evaluate information from different sources to make judgements.

9. Language development through concept-based learning

A concept-based approach to teaching and learning further supports the learning of language through making explicit the definition and significance of key and related concepts. Students develop a firm attainment of concept meaning, and then come to organise their thinking in context, supported by factual evidence. The subsequent transfer of conceptual relationships across contexts serves to deepen conceptual understandings, and helps students organise and make sense of their world. The articulation of big understandings, or generalisations, also allows students to develop and refine their literacy skills. The adoption of concepts across disciplines additionally presents opportunities for fostering interdisciplinary learning, and exploring new vocabulary and understandings through a synthesis of disciplinary approaches.

10. The Language Policy Committee

This Language Policy has been developed with the collaboration of language acquisition, language and literature, EAL, and other subject and support teachers, as well as the contributions of students and parents as part of a working group to review earlier drafts.