

Hammond Eastside Magnet School Lower Primary Years Programme Language Philosophy and Agreements

The purpose of this document is to clarify teachers' understanding of the language development process within our school setting. It is a constantly evolving document that reflects our school's unique language needs. Our language philosophy applies to the whole school and is to be communicated to and understood by all continuing and new teachers, students, parents, and administrators.

PHILOSOPHY (Why?)

Language permeates the world in which we live. The development of language is fundamental to the need to communicate. Language is the major connecting element across curricula and provides a vehicle for inquiry. Learners listen, talk, read, and write their way to negotiating new meanings and understanding new concepts.

In order to enable our students to be internationally minded and prepared for the twenty-first century world, we believe that children should be literate by third grade. In addition, every child benefits from having access to different cultures, perspectives, and languages. Acquisition of more than one language enriches personal growth and helps facilitate international mindedness. We believe it is critical to cognitive development to encourage and support a student's mother tongue as well.

ACTIONS (What?)

At HEM, we are making a VOW to teach language using a systematic, research-based method exploring both modes (receptive and expressive) in the primary areas of linguistics – Visual / Oral / Written. Students will use all three areas and both modes to express the ways they understand the world in which they live.

VISUAL LANGUAGE-Viewing and presenting

Visual language provides an outlet for viewing (receptive) and presenting (expressive), which includes interpreting or constructing visuals and multimedia in a variety of situations and for a range of purposes and audiences. We give our students agency to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through visual interpretations. Such interpretations include illustrations, 3-D models, exhibits, graphic organizers, and reenactments. Digital natives thirst to create content not just be consumers of knowledge; moreover, they naturally share knowledge through collaboration using technology.

ORAL LANGUAGE- Listening and speaking

Speaking (expressive) and listening (receptive) through purposeful talk enables learners to articulate thoughts as they construct and reconstruct meaning through collaboration, discussions, and presentations. As active participants of conversations, students are required to compare, contrast, analyze, and synthesize a multitude of ideas. Oral language is the vehicle that exposes the thinking of the learner during inquiry, action, and reflection.

WRITTEN LANGUAGE- Reading and writing

As learners engage with interesting, authentic, and rigorous text, they acquire the skills, strategies, and conceptual understanding to become college- and career- ready, independent readers (receptive). Writing (expressive) is primarily concerned with communicating meaning and intention. When this is done in an authentic setting, writing becomes a genuine expression of the individual. As students share their ideas in written form, their skills are developed, applied, and refined to produce effective written communication.

EXAMPLES (How?)

Students are provided with opportunities to:

- Reflect on learning and self through student portfolios
- Close reading of a variety of meaningful and rigorous text
- Authentic writing across the curriculum
- Increase acquisition and usage of academic vocabulary
- Utilize technology through presentations, Google Slides, Google Classrooms, OnCourse, and Interactive Notebooks
- Write in response to a variety of text
- Cite evidence and explain claims to justify/persuade audiences to their Point Of View
- Apply thinking and problem-solving strategies in real world situations
- Publish their writing in a variety of ways
- Read independently and use their agency to choose materials from school and classroom libraries
- Read and comprehend class materials that are on and above grade-level
- Receive reading interventions based on reading diagnostic screeners

Language instruction will be facilitated in the following ways:

- Implementation of Units of Inquiry
- Model and support reflective language through think-aloud strategies
- Reflecting on each unit

- Socratic discussions
- Class gallery walks
- Students will generate questions and explore these questions
- Model effective use of oral and written language across the curriculum
- Integrate academic and domain specific vocabulary
- Modeling by teachers and giving students opportunities to practice the expression of thoughts and feelings through all modes of communication within Morning Meetings and restorative circles
- Actively supporting literacy in mother tongue by providing written materials and opportunities to express themselves using their native language
- Actively supporting acquisition of second language through formal Spanish instruction with certified personnel
- Publishing student work in a variety of means
- Model reflective process (using visual and oral language) to prepare students for student-led conferences
- Opportunities for student-driven inquiry using the full inquiry cycle
- Text-dependent questioning (explicit and implicit)
- Allow student questions to drive instruction by strategically organizing anticipatory artifacts and learning activities (front-loading) to represent all subject areas to begin Units of Inquiry
- Teach thinking and problem-solving strategies through modeling the process and providing opportunities for practice
- Analyze reading and math assessments (MClass, iReady, District Checkpoints, ongoing teacher observations and class assessments) to properly drive differentiated instructional practices and to set individualized reading and math goals

Mother-Tongue Support

All students who identify a language other than English spoken at home (using the Home Language Survey during registration) are tested for English proficiency using the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA). Tangipahoa Parish School District has resource personnel that provide our teachers with the accommodations that students should have, as well as resources such as dictionaries, translators, laptops, *Rosetta Stone*, and other study aides that the teachers can share with their students. Also the district resource teacher provides translation services for the Spanish speaking parents and students. When a student's mother tongue is something other than Spanish, our district personnel assists the school by finding a person in the community who would help with translation issues. (Foreign Language Department at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond)

When district personnel are not available, the school has two teachers that are fluent in Spanish and English. These teachers develop a close relationship with the families of our students whose mother tongue is Spanish and frequently help with translations for parents, students, and teachers.

Not only does the school provide translation services, it has numerous titles written in different languages available in the library. One of the many initiatives of the school is to continue to build a culturally-diverse library because we understand the importance for our students to feel supported and respected in the use of their mother tongue.

Spanish Instruction

It is increasingly evident in today's world that being conversant in more than one language has definite advantages. The world, so to speak, is getting smaller as immigration, communication, and travel draw people of differing cultures and languages closer together. HEM provides instruction in Spanish in grades Pre-Kindergarten through fifth grade. Students, under the guidance of a Spanish specialist, participate in learning the Spanish language by active participation in a program that echoes the manner in which they learned their primary language - English. Spanish instructors have written their own scope and sequence that connect to the grade levels' unit of inquiry. They teach this scope and sequence through a wide variety of best practices and learning engagements. The goal of this program is for our students to expose students to the Spanish language as well as the Spanish culture. Cultural awareness and understanding are integral to instructional practices. The acquisition of a second language follows a continuum. Spanish instruction will follow HEM's Spanish Scope and Sequence, which are based on *National Foreign Language Standards*.

Language in the Learner Profile

Keeping with the Learner Profile and the PYP, HEM utilizes a language-specific Learner Profile as it pertains to the students and faculty.

Inquirer – Satisfy curiosity using language to gain new information or knowledge to make sense of the world independently

Thinker – Able to express thoughts and ideas clearly, succinctly, and creatively

Communicator – Competent users of oral and written language in a variety of situations; listen attentively to details; speak confidently; read and write with fluency and comprehend what is conveyed

Risk Taker – Showing commitment to reading, writing, and speaking in all situations

Knowledgeable -- Have acquired vocabulary and understanding to discuss literary genres and styles

Caring – Show appreciation, tolerance, respect, and empathy in their use of language

Principled – An awareness that language is powerful and must be used with integrity

Balanced – Express themselves visually, orally, and in written form and give equal attention to listening and speaking when communicating with others (cooperation)

Reflective – Reflect on their language usage and development and enthusiastically work towards fluency

Open-Minded – Appreciate the differences and similarities in languages, dialects, and personal communication skills