



Language policy

List of abbreviations

PYP	Primary Years Programme
MYP	Middle Years Programme
DP	Diploma Programme
ELA	English Language Acquisition, general English support programme
ENLL	English Language and Literature- MYP & subject
ENLA	English Language Acquisition, MYP and DP subject
DULL	Dutch Language and Literature, MYP & DP
DULA	Dutch Language Acquisition- MYP and DP subject
DUAb	Dutch Ab Initio Dutch for beginners DP subject
SPLA	Spanish Language Acquisition, MYP (for DP this is Spanish B)
SPAb	Spanish Ab Initio, MYP & DP IB subject
SSST	School Supported Self-Taught DP subject
SAA	Service as Action, MYP curriculum component

This policy is intended to provide an overview of language learning at ISU. It is written in line with the principles and practices of the International Baccalaureate (IB). The policy outlines our school's linguistic and academic goals, and defines a language programme, which is designed to help our students attain these goals through authentic contexts in a culturally rich and diverse environment.

Language learning: a priority

The acquisition of more than one language and maintenance of the home languages enrich personal growth and help facilitate international mindedness and understanding.

In our school community, we aim to foster in students the ability to think and express themselves with precision, clarity, confidence and imagination in at least two languages. Since language is a powerful tool, we strive to challenge students linguistically, and encourage them to follow a language programme that will stretch their language skills, is appropriate to their background and suited to their future plans. Thus, Dutch classes are part of the curriculum as early as Kindergarten, since students should be able to interact with the Dutch environment around them as early as possible. In addition to this, all students, including those who are not yet proficient in English, are encouraged to take all subjects across all programmes. Finally, at Diploma Programme (DP) level, we encourage students to obtain a Bilingual Diploma whenever possible. Where appropriate, we support students taking a self-taught, school-supported Mother-Tongue Programme within the DP (SSST).

Learning languages provides the students with an opportunity to:

- expand their view of the world.
- develop in social contexts, liaising with others
- encourage critical reflection on the relation between language and culture, language and thought.
- expand opportunities for meaningful leisure activities (such as travel, film, other media)

- develop their intellect (encouraging good learning habits, memorization, combining course content and skills in a meaningful way).
- improve knowledge of the home language (through comparison and contrast with the language).
- help to build practical skills that may be used in other disciplines.
- foster their understanding of the interrelation between language and human nature.
- teach and encourage respect for other ethnic groups.
- increase their sense of self worth.

Language development: a shared responsibility

The language policy supports the shared responsibility of all community members, teachers, students and parents, for the language development of all students. This means that while students need to develop their English language skills, the maintenance of home languages is also fostered. To achieve this, all teachers and students are encouraged to become active language learners, and all teachers are language teachers within their subject.

Language profiles

Many students have a language other than English as their home language. The school has a diverse student and teaching body, representing over 40 different nationalities. The staff are multi-lingual and aim to celebrate home languages throughout the delivery of the curriculum. Once new students enrol at the school, as well as early on in the academic year, all students' language repertoires and all languages students are able to speak, write and read in are recorded.

English is the academic language of the school. To ensure all students can benefit from the programme, the school makes provision for students whose home language is not English.

Language programmes overview

Pedagogy

ISUtrecht provides a challenging, rigorous, and open intercultural learning environment that has language at its core.

Language learning at ISUtrecht follows a whole school language approach. Our language teaching:

- is integrated in all other areas of learning, and
- is achieved through authentic learning experiences, i.e. rooted in real-life contexts from kindergarten to DP.

Language is integrated into all areas of the curriculum and every teacher within the school is considered a language teacher.

The academic language at ISUtrecht is English, which is taught through a full immersion approach. This means that all our students are immersed in an English learning environment from the day they join us, including students who still are not proficient in English. Full immersion allows students to develop their language skills at a faster pace, while continuing to be challenged academically at an age- appropriate level.

To aid students in this transition, students complete the necessary English Language Acquisition programme (ELA). This programme provides additional instruction to address the particular academic challenges faced by those students who are learning in a language other than their home language. It is designed to be integrated in the conceptual learning that takes place throughout the curriculum, and endeavours to draw on students' own cultural and linguistic heritage.

Details of the language teaching pedagogy at PYP, MYP and DP levels are outlined in the table in Appendix A.

Assessment

While language acquisition follows distinct stages, students' rate of acquisition varies greatly from individual to individual. Therefore, language teachers assess all language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) regularly. Teachers differentiate through scaffolding or task extension as required. Formative and summative assessments in the classroom provide information on language growth, and are modified and differentiated as appropriate.

Students who are identified as requiring additional instruction in English to access the curriculum will be placed in the ELA programme. In the PYP students remain part of the ELA Programme until they are able to participate fully and independently in classroom learning. In the MYP students will follow English Language Acquisition (ENLA) as a dedicated and recognised IB subject. At DP level, due to the challenging nature of the course, students are expected to have the levels of English necessary to succeed (see Admission Policy)

English, Dutch and Home language programmes

All students are required to study a language and literature course. In the PYP this is English, and the curriculum is designed to develop literacy skills in this language to the appropriate levels. In the MYP ISUtrecht offers two language and literature courses: English Language and Literature (ENLL) and Dutch Language and Literature (DULL). These two choices are also offered at DP level, where there is also the opportunity of taking other home language studies as a self-taught, school supported literature course (SSST). ISUtrecht believes that developing a child's home language can accelerate the rate of English language acquisition, support achievement in all subject areas, develop confident, independent learners, and enhance intercultural understanding and international-mindedness.

English (ENLL)

In the PYP English literacy skills are taught following the practices outlined in Appendix A. When students begin the MYP or DP programmes, they may study English Language and Literature if their skills in all four language areas (reading, writing, listening and speaking) enable them to access this curriculum.

Dutch (DULL)

In the PYP students study Dutch as language acquisition from kindergarten. However, carefully planned differentiation within the lesson, and the use of a range of both teacher-directed and self-study materials, allow students with Dutch as their home language to be challenged to an age-appropriate level.

In the MYP and DP programmes, students with the appropriate proficiency in the language will continue to study Dutch following the language and literature course. Other students who have reached high language proficiency in Dutch may also study Dutch Language and Literature at MYP and DP levels. Students who are developing their Dutch language skills, but have not yet achieved the necessary level to join the language and literature course will join the Dutch Language Acquisition course (DULA) in view of potentially transitioning to DULL during the course of the programme. Students who complete the Dutch Language and Literature courses at MYP and DP level will have the necessary skills to access Dutch universities.

Home language

The development of the students' home language is the best medium for acquiring knowledge; it is a key factor in fostering balanced, self-confident multilingual students. It helps makes learners make a cognitive link between what they learn in English and their home language. Therefore, home language development opportunities are offered to students from kindergarten to Grade 12, both during and out of lesson time. Home language programmes at ISUtrecht are outlined in Appendix B

ELA instruction: in class, parallel teaching, pull-out, support & ENLA

In accordance with our whole language approach, English language learners who do not yet have the levels of English required to follow the curriculum are placed in the age-appropriate, mainstream classroom with the other students. In this way, they are encouraged to work with their peers and participate in learning activities. They take part in the ELA programme and receive extra support from qualified staff on a regular basis. ISUtrecht accepts that there is a transition period of up to 1 year and that in this time the student is given the time and space to transition mentally, emotionally and linguistically to the new

environment – the actual time for this transition will vary from case to case, as well as the time needed to develop social and academic language. At the end of that transition period, if a student is still struggling significantly, then the class teacher and ELA support staff will discuss the necessity and/or provision of further support. Both in the PYP and MYP, English language support is kept dynamic in structure so it can adapt to the changes in the student body as a whole and to individual students' needs.

The sole exception to this pattern is kindergarten, where children develop age- appropriate literacy skills in English by being fully immersed in a play-based, experientially rich learning environment, in addition to two separate ELA lessons per class per week.

Primary Years Programme

From grade one to grade five, each class is allotted a specific number of ELA support periods in which ELA staff will support the learning of the students. These sessions preferably take place during language and literacy periods. It includes a mixture of focus sessions for absolute beginners, in-class instruction and parallel teaching; the class teacher and ELA teacher liaise continuously to adapt and modify the support as the students' language develops over the course of the year.

Middle Years Programme

Students are placed in either the ENLA or the ENLL class. When assigned to the ENLA class, it is the intention that students reach the end of phase 4 and then join the ENLL course. (see MYP ENLA criteria for details on phases). Students who need additional ELA support and come to the school's language hub, where a designated space, staff and curriculum has been developed to support the students' access to the curriculum.

Diploma Programme

In the DP students unable to access the English Language and Literature programme can be offered the English language acquisition programme. This means that the student would choose either Dutch or another language and literature subject.

Language acquisition programme: Dutch and other languages

As mentioned in section I above, in the PYP all students will learn Dutch as an additional language from kindergarten to grade 5. Most students in the MYP will take at least 2 additional languages up to grade 10 level in addition to English:

- students with Dutch as a home language will take Dutch Language and Literature (DULL, see section IV above) and Spanish language acquisition (SPLA)
- students who do not have Dutch as a home language and follow ENLL will take Language Acquisition Dutch (DULA) and Spanish (SPLA).

In the MYP, Language Acquisition courses are taught in six phases and students are assessed according to the Language Acquisition Assessment Criteria for MYP Years 1–5.

Dutch Language Acquisition (DULA)

Dutch language acquisition starts at kindergarten level. In the PYP all students receive Dutch as an additional language from the age of 4 years old. These lessons include language and culture of the Netherlands.

In the MYP, all students receive Dutch, either as language acquisition or language and literature. The DULA programme is designed to develop the different communicative competences (reading, viewing-listening, speaking, writing and critical literacy). Students acquire knowledge and language skills in different contexts (personal, public, educational and occupational). Both subjects include language and culture of the Netherlands.

At DP level, the school offers Dutch Language Acquisition (DULA) as well as the Dutch Language and Literature course (DULL). In the DP students may also study Dutch at beginner level by following the Dutch Ab Initio course (DUAb), which requires no previous exposure to the language.

English Language Acquisition (English B)

For some students in Diploma Programme, English B is a good option, when there is an alternative group 1 language. The English language acquisition (ENLA) programme is designed to develop the different communicative competences (reading, viewing-listening, speaking, writing and critical literacy). Students acquire knowledge and language skills in different contexts (personal, public, educational and occupational).

Spanish Language Acquisition (SPLA) and SPAb

ISUtrecht offers Spanish from grade 6 to grade 12. The Spanish Language Acquisition SPLA programme is designed to develop the different communicative competences (reading, viewing-listening, speaking, writing and critical literacy). Students acquire knowledge and language skills in different contexts (personal, public, educational and occupational). During the course, students become aware of the diversity of Spanish speaking countries and their linguistic and cultural heritages, while reflecting on their own home language and cultural heritage. Students who join the school in the higher grades with no Spanish join a Spanish Ab-initio course (SPAb), in order to study the language at beginner level.

At DP level, the school offers Spanish Language Acquisition (Spanish B). Spanish is also offered at beginner level Spanish Ab Initio course (SPLAb), which requires no previous exposure to the language.

Student and parent community involvement

ISUtrecht believes that the language development of all students should be a shared responsibility of all community members, teachers, students and parents.

Parental involvement

Parents are an integral part of our community of learners and can provide necessary support for language learning. At the moment, parents volunteer in the classroom, support extra curricular activities, and run home language development clubs. They are particularly essential in supporting home language development, not only through extracurricular activities, but especially at home. Since parents are our very own home language experts at home, they can provide help and we rely on their support to ensure that their children continue to develop their home language skills to the age appropriate levels. In view of this, we encourage parents to focus on home language development at home, and avoid privileging English language development over their home language. We ask parents to use their home language consistently at home, providing as many home language experiences as possible for their child. Teachers can provide parents with the current topic of study, learner outcomes and unit vocabulary, so parents can discuss these outcomes in the home language at home.

Student involvement

Students are also actively involved in helping the language development of our community. As part of their Service as Action and CAS, MYP students are encouraged to use their language skills to support their peers or younger students, either with the development of English or their shared home language. Many work as English language or home language buddies with PYP students, and organise home language clubs or language lessons.

Appendix A

Language Learning: Whole language approach

Whole language is when language is taught through authentic learning experiences, with a focus on building meaning and teaching the processes of communication. Language aspects (such as phonics, spelling, grammar and punctuation) are not taught in isolation but through the reading and writing. At ISUtrecht, we follow this approach to teach language to all students, whether new to English or not.

Whole language is:

- integrating literacy into other areas of the curriculum, especially math, science, and social studies, and the arts;
- focusing on creating meaning in reading and expressing meaning in writing;
- emphasising students' interpretations of text and free expression of ideas in writing as the most effective way for students to build knowledge.
- incorporating the writing process, which focuses on individual students' language development. The writing process requires students to plan, draft, revise/edit and re-draft.
- reading and writing for real purposes; emphasis on high-quality and culturally-diverse literature;
- frequent reading: with students in small guided reading groups; to students with read-a-louds; by students independently;
- emphasising how phonics, grammar, spelling, punctuation and sentences structures are essential in building meaning. This is done by exploring and creating texts (fiction and non-fiction, for different purposes and in different registers).

Pedagogical principles in the programme		
PYP	MYP	DP
Promotes inquiry based authentic language learning	Includes Language and Literature (LL) courses next to Language Acquisition (LA) courses	Considers prior knowledge Develops language in context in each content area
Integrates the teaching and learning of language into the programme of inquiry	Considers prior knowledge	Promotes collaborative learning
Develops the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and media literacy	Develops language in context in each content area and in interdisciplinary units	Accommodates diverse learning styles
Provides for the teaching of additional languages	Promotes purposeful, disciplined and integrative understanding of the topics.	Values and respects students' ideas and home languages
Provides appropriate feedback to support learning	Promotes collaborative learning	Embraces a multitude of perspectives
	Accommodates diverse learning styles	Makes expectations explicit; provides appropriate feedback to support learning
	Values and respects students' ideas and home languages	Enables students to understand how judgments about learning are made, and how to provide evidence of their learning
	Provides targeted assessment that integrates MYP objectives and criteria	Develops meta-cognition, structured inquiry and critical thinking
	Makes expectations explicit; provides appropriate feedback to support learning	Promotes engaging, challenging, and relevant learning

Appendix B

Home language programme

In school

Use of home language in the classroom is valued and encouraged at all grades.

Both lesson tasks and homework tasks involving home language are wherever possible integrated into unit work.

There are buddy groups throughout the school, also between primary and secondary secondary students provide home language support to maintain reading and writing skills

In some cases buddies use their home language to help peers in the English language development. The school supports parent volunteers in organising home language classes during the school day, eg. Dutch, Hindi, Mandarin

Focus of these classes is the maintenance and development of oral, aural and reading language skills. If home language teachers are able to come to the school, ISUtrecht provides classroom space and teaching facilities as necessary, eg. after school home language Dutch club.

Parents work in cooperation with the school to find a home language teacher for the self taught language A class. Students have time during the school day to work on projects and/or receive instruction in their home language.

Appendix C

IB continuum pathways for language acquisition

Please note: this is an indication only – it is up to schools to decide the minimum requirements for progressions from MYP to DP language acquisition courses

Start of MYP 1	MYP		DP
<p>Schools may offer introductory MYP language acquisition courses (languages carousel courses) and consider the student's previous learning in the language during primary school education in order to determine placement.</p> <p>Refer to the written and taught curriculum requirements section in this guide.</p>	Emergent	Phase 1	Ab initio
		Phase 2	Ab initio (in rare cases) Language B SL
	Capable	Phase 3	Language B SL
		Phase 4	Language B SL/HL
	Proficient	Phase 5	Language B SL /HL Language A: literature SL Language A: language and literature SL Literature and performance SL
		Phase 6	Language A: literature SL/HL Language A: language and literature SL/HL