

DIPLOMA PROGRAMME (GRADES 11-12) LANGUAGE POLICY

Our Language Philosophy:

“No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world.” - Robin Williams

Language is fundamental to learning, thinking, and communicating and therefore permeates all instructional practices; all teachers are language teachers. We embrace that literacy skills are utilized all of the time and therefore should be thoughtfully and strategically embedded into all DP courses, projects, and extracurricular activities. Students need to be taught to be critical, creative, and independent thinkers. Comprehending, or meaning-making is essential for effective communication in any language. Strong language skills are essential to meeting the changing demands of college and career standards.

Although there are students in our population whose mother tongue may not be English, the Morris Jeff IB Diploma curriculum offers Language A: Language and Literature HL and SL in English. We offer Language Acquisition HL and SL in Spanish.

Our Approach to Studies in Language and Literature:

We believe language is a vehicle for thought, creativity, self-expression, and social interaction. Our literacy approach encourages our students to become action-oriented, lifelong learners. One's ability to communicate is paramount as students use critical, creative, and independent thinking skills to become agents of change for a more peaceful world.

We will do this by:

1. Embracing literacy instruction across all disciplines and committing to incorporating effective literacy instruction into daily practice. All aspects of literacy impact learning in all subject areas and are therefore essential.
 - DP units across all subjects have literacy embedded in lessons and instructional practice.
 - Literacy strategies are taught and employed across all subjects
 - IB and Louisiana academic standards are upheld
 - Developing skills -listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting- in a variety of contexts, in all subjects
2. Aligning literacy practices and procedures across all disciplines.
 - Extensive writing in all classes
 - Teaching vocabulary across the curriculum
 - Comprehension and close reading strategies are used in all subjects
 - Developing oral fluency through academic discussions, discourse, and presentations
3. Committing to having all students read authentic, interesting, and challenging texts with a focus on international-mindedness as well as socio-political consciousness.
 - Thoughtful and communal text selection that contributes to the development of “opinion-forming, decision making, and ethical-reasoning skills and further develops the attributes of an IB learner” (Language and Literature)

- Differentiated anchor texts and supplementary readings
 - Independent reading expectations based on interest, choice, and exposure
 - Engaging with texts from different historical periods and a variety of cultures
4. Honoring growth, effort, and self-awareness as well as sharing a sincere belief that every child can become independent readers, writers, and communicators.
 - Incorporating the growth mindset into our curriculum. This begins with innovation, commitment and a collective and relentless effort by all teachers across all subject areas
 - Inspire lifelong readers and learners by deliberately and collectively working to improve students' attitudes toward literacy
 5. Embracing differentiated instruction driven by our commitment to inclusion by being open-minded to personalized learning and utilizing all of the tools that technology offers to do this effectively, honoring individual needs.
 6. Embracing computer literacy is essential to our students becoming career and college ready. Using technology and digital media strategically will be supported and developed through a personalized learning focus
 - IB states, *"Students are encouraged to use applications such as databases, presentation, software, online games, podcasts, social media, simulations, spreadsheets and search engines. One of the aims of language and literature is 'to engage with a variety of media and information and communication technology in order to explore language (Language and literature pilot guide 2012)*

Our Approach to Language Acquisition:

An integral part of the DP students' academic experience is learning how to communicate in multiple modes and in more than one language. Spanish is the Language B taught at MJCS. Throughout their language learning experience, students learn skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Integrated into both the traditional and IB curricula at MJCS is instruction in the cultural diversity of the Spanish-speaking world. Many skills learned in the Language B classroom are transferable to other subject areas. IB seeks to create students who are balanced and follow a holistic plan of study. The mission statement of the MJCS Language Acquisition Department is as follows:

Our students will grow to be lifelong language learners with a curiosity for and knowledge about the Spanish-speaking world. Students will be equipped with a variety of linguistic skills and cultural knowledge to communicate effectively in Spanish in real-life situations.

We will do this by:

1. Offering different continuums of language learning to match the needs of our students. MJCS DP students have a wide range of prior language learning experiences and there are three different paths in language learning that our students can choose to follow:
 - Louisiana TOPS option: Per Louisiana high school graduation requirements, all students must study 2 years of the same foreign language. At MJCS, Spanish is the

Language B and students may begin studying Spanish 1 and 2 in the 9th grade.

- IB Standard or High Level: Students in grade 11, who are native Spanish speakers, have studied Spanish in the Morris Jeff MYP Programme, or have had other experiences with the Spanish language, may choose to pursue SL or HL Spanish studies.

2. Using curricula that will help prepare students for SL and HL IB exams.

- High School Spanish 1, 2, and 3 use the Hodder IB units as the base of their instruction. This curriculum is complemented with teacher-created materials, elements from the VHL Senderos curriculum, and other comprehensible input from online and other sources. These materials which are aligned with IB and the ACTFL national foreign language standards prepare students for the rigor of the IB DP Programme.
- DP students will study Language B Spanish, according to a plan of the study detailed in the Language B Course Outline. The Hodder Spanish B text will be used as the foundation of the DP Spanish along with supplemental materials from the VHL Senderos curriculum, literature, teacher materials, and other comprehensible input from the internet and other sources. The Hodder Spanish text is aligned with IB requirements and IB exams.
- We determine which DP Language Acquisition classes students will take, based upon their prior experience with the language and diagnostic assessments.

3. Differentiating instruction to match individual student needs, in language learning. This will be done with technology and personalized instruction.

4. Offering students real-life learning experiences. Students will be provided with opportunities to apply their language learning with real-life experiences in which they will interact with the Spanish-speaking community both locally and abroad. This can be done digitally through the use of technology, such as SKYPE, and with guest speakers and field trips

Our Approach to Support Students' Mother Tongue:

The IB program requires that schools provide students with opportunities to continue developing in their mother tongue.

We will do this by:

1. The library works to include materials that support the continued use of the mother tongues of our students
2. The literacy selections referenced in the Language and Literacy section of this document will include books related to the languages and / or cultures that represent the backgrounds of our student body, as well as other world languages and cultures

Our Approach to Support Special Needs in Languages A and B

Special needs students receive Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) that specify specific accommodations they should receive in their classes. Teachers of these students ensure that students receive these accommodations and aforementioned differentiation strategies to guarantee equity and access to the program.

Roles and Responsibilities

Head of School and Administration

1. Responsible for the professional development training of language teachers
2. Responsible for providing resources to teachers and students for language development
3. Communicate the values and expectations of IBO to teachers, parents, students and community stakeholders
4. Responsible for providing resources for library and media services
5. Attract and retain highly qualified and experienced language teachers to support the program
6. Ensure that the IB learner profile is firmly entrenched in the school culture
7. Encourage IB teacher articulation meetings to foster an interdisciplinary approach to learning

Heads of Language Departments

1. Oversee the implementation of the language program
2. Ensure that appropriate textbooks, resources are available
3. Ensure that parents are informed of their students' progress in language development

IB Diploma Coordinator

1. Informs all the staff of IB procedures and assessment practices
2. Ensures that appropriate textbooks, resources, and facilities are available
3. Organizes meetings for vertical and horizontal planning with language teachers

Our Language Policy was developed by a team of dedicated Morris Jeff administrators and teachers. This Policy will be reviewed/revised yearly by the DP administration team and teachers of Language A and B.

Citations for Documents Used to Create the Morris Jeff Community School Language Policy

1. International Baccalaureate Organization. Connecting IB to the Core. International Baccalaureate Organization (UK) Ltd Peterson House, Malthouse Avenue, Cardiff Gate, 2013
2. Guidelines for Developing a School Language Policy, 2008
3. Significant portions were taken from:
 - o Suncoast Community High School, Public Magnet High School, 2014
4. International Baccalaureate Organization. MYP: From Principles into Practice. Cardiff: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2008.
5. Middle Years Programme Language and literature pilot guide. Unpublished, June 2012.