

Language & Literacy Policy

2024 - 2025



مدارس دبي
DUBAI SCHOOLS
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Dubai Schools Language & Literacy Policy

Purpose, Vision & Mission Purpose

This policy will outline how Dubai Schools intend to support students' language acquisition skills, to support them to make accelerated progress through successfully accessing the totality of the curriculum.

This policy is in place due to the context of the schools' group. All Dubai Schools are based in the UAE, where almost all students are Bilingual and Multilingual learners, with Arabic being the first language. The primary language of instruction in Dubai Schools is English, therefore it is necessary for all students to develop English proficiency in both academic and conversational language to support academic achievement.

This policy aligns with our Taaleem Values in that we aim to provide a learning environment for all which is nurturing, inclusive, respectful, and communicative.

Vision

- All stakeholders in Dubai Schools will experience a language-rich, communication focused learning environment.
- All areas of the school site are aligned in their goal to support language acquisition, seen through consistent resources, approaches and expectations, including the effective application of translanguageing strategies.
- Teachers ensure that core literacy skills are taught across all areas of the curriculum.
- All staff and students in Dubai Schools take pride in their identity as Bilingual and Multilingual Learners/Teachers.



Mission

- There will be a shared responsibility across all staff and stakeholders in the language development of students in both academic and conversational settings.
- A shared understanding between all stakeholders places a high level of importance on language acquisition and the impact on learning outcomes.
- Teaching and learning address the competencies and areas of development to ensure progress across the four domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
- All assessment processes and documentation are aligned with the complexities linked to language learners, which all staff have a solid understanding of how to utilize effectively in the planning process.

Language Goals

Across all stakeholders, there are several shared goals we would aim to achieve within language, as outlined below:

Students

- Will be able to access all elements of the curriculum through high quality provision.
- Can articulate their language level and next steps in learning.

Teaching Staff

- Act as role models within the school, able to support students with all aspects of language acquisition and application to literacy skills.
- Teaching staff understand the meaning of BICS and CALPS, including how these impact learning and strategies to support.



Parents

- Can access all communication from school and respond in a meaningful way.
- Understand ways in which to support language acquisition in both Arabic and English.

Leaders

- Language skills are further developed through an oracy curriculum which is developed to further support all stakeholders understanding in the explicit teaching of language skills.
- Staffing structures allow for effective provision to support language development.
- All leaders understand the levels of language need within the staff and student body and have actionable measures in place.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of Leaders (Senior Leaders and ELL leaders)

- To embed assessment and identification processes linked to language acquisition, including at the point of enrolment.
- To ensure there is clarity among all staff (including specialist teachers, support staff and admin) regarding students' language skills.
- To effectively implement the ELL policy.
- To ensure all staff receive professional learning through the Centre for Educators of BMLs.
- To plan in-school professional development time dedicated to the development of language acquisition, including time for reflection, and sharing of best practice.



- To work alongside the Taaleem Teaching School in continuously sharing high-quality and effective professional learning, linked to showcasing BML strategies.
- To monitor the impact of internal and external Professional Development on the quality of teaching and associated student outcomes.
- To monitor the quality of learning environment and ensure they are language rich, in both English and Arabic.
- Further develop the expectations around an oracy curriculum, linked to the Language standards within NYSCS ELA.
- To periodically review the staffing structure ensuring suitably qualified and experienced staff are in place to further support the development of life skills with a focus on career readiness, in partnership with the development of language acquisition.
- To develop opportunities for parents, carers, and guardians to receive training linked to supporting native language development, which will, in turn, enhance English proficiency within the educational environment.
- Strategies being used in class to support the development of skills in language acquisition and literacy skills are to be shared with parents to ensure they understand the why and how of teaching approaches in place.

Role of Teachers

- To ensure a secure understanding of students' needs regarding language proficiency in both English and native languages and sharing accessibility to this across all appropriate teaching or support staff.
- To collaboratively plan within teams to create and share translanguaging resources to support units.
- To develop high quality learning environments that are language rich, in both English and Arabic, including:



- A classroom environment which is conducive to good literacy practice. ○ Displays of reading material relevant to the topic or national curriculum subject; each classroom promotes subject-specific vocabulary which pupils are encouraged to use regularly.
- High quality reading material, which is up-to -date, relevant and balanced in its presentation of ethnicity, culture and gender.
- Access for pupils to the school library; access for pupils to a good quality range of texts during lessons; Dictionaries, glossaries and lists of appropriate subject vocabulary that are available during lessons, and which pupils are encouraged to use.
- Access to appropriate audio and visual equipment / ICT.
- To ensure all lessons provide students with varied, but balanced, opportunities to develop listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills.
- To ensure the teaching of oracy, within the NYCSC ELA Language standards, is of a high priority within curriculum planning across all phases.
- To effectively deliver language acquisition interventions that explicitly introduce new vocabulary to students.
- To ensure that appropriate assessment methodology is implemented to monitor progress in listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills.
- To collaborate with Inclusion Leaders and ELL Leaders to implement and monitor action plans for supporting identified students.
- To utilize the support of resources and expertise provided by the Taaleem Teaching School.

Role of Support Staff, including admin where appropriate

- To effectively deliver language acquisition interventions that explicitly introduce new vocabulary to students.



- To have a secure understanding of students' language skills/needs, including where to access this information.
- To regularly review resources in the space they are working, e.g. classroom/reception desk, to ensure they align with school expectations to support language development, in both English and Arabic.
- To develop their own use of English in speaking, reading, and writing where necessary.
- To engage effectively with students through purposeful and planned questioning and discussions.
- To aim high-quality questioning towards students to address understanding and identify areas for development within academic language proficiency.

Role of Students

- To understand their own strengths and areas for development linked to use of English and Arabic.
- To develop a range of strategies and resources they can access to further support language acquisition.
- To work collaboratively with Teaching, Support Staff and peers, and take responsibility for their progress.

Role of Parents

- To ensure transparency with the school in relation to language/s spoken in the home, including proficiency levels and frequency.
- To continue with the development of students' home language outside of school.
- To engage proactively with the school to remove barriers to language learning.

Vocabulary Instruction

Vocabulary instruction is not just the domain of the English teacher; words matter in every subject across the curriculum. A strong understanding of both Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary and context-specific definitions, helps



students to construct better responses to questions and essays, better understand newly taught content, and communicate like experts in any given discipline.

To ensure that every student in the classroom has the vocabulary knowledge they need to thrive, both when learning new content and when tackling challenging questions, subject-specific vocabulary must be explicitly taught in every discipline. Only when subject-specific vocabulary instruction unlocks a students' ability to approach a discipline like an 'expert' (e.g. approach science like a Scientist), do they feel they have the potential to succeed and are barriers removed.

Tier 1	Basic, Familiar words that are commonly used by most students in everyday conversations.
Tier 2	Robust, high-frequency words that students encounter across the content areas and topics. Tier 2 words often have multiple meanings and are referred to as academic vocabulary words
Tier 3	Low-frequency words that are content specific.

Monitoring of students' language proficiency Assessment of Literacy Skills

There are a range of different ways in which students are assessed within Literacy, inclusive of, but not limited to:

- MAP (Fall, Winter & Spring)
- NGRT Assessments (3x per academic year)
- Regular phonic assessments through RWI tracker
- HMH Formative Assessments
- Reading Running Records



Students are expected to work in line with curriculum expectations, however individual student goals are mapped using MAP, CAT and internal data, informing expected and aspirational RIT growth targets.

Schools are expected to implement an effective system for identifying students' levels of English proficiency, specifically in relation to BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency). This system should be accessible to all staff and regularly reviewed throughout the academic year to ensure students' language development is effectively monitored consistent with curriculum standards. Any form of language assessment at the school aligns with curriculum resources requirements whilst informing planning, teaching and learning of language or highlighting the needs for language acquisition intervention.

As a group of schools, the use of WIDA as an assessment tool supports in the identification process, alongside allocation of planned intervention. WIDA assessments will be initially conducted after careful analysis of student CAT results, including at the point of enrolment, where appropriate.

The WIDA proficiency levels are outlined below:

WIDA and Proficiency Levels

Proficiency levels describe a student's ability to use (speak and write) and process (read and listen) social and academic English in terms of the six WIDA English language proficiency levels (1-Entering, 2-Emerging, 3-Developing, 4-Expanding, 5-Bridging, and 6-Reaching). These levels represent the stages of English language development. For instance, a student who is new to the English language (or a beginner) may have scores in Level 1 or Level 2, whereas a student with more proficiency in English may have scores ranging from Level 4 to Level 6. To establish a common understanding of proficiency levels, the following WIDA English language proficiency levels and descriptions will be used for students on the ELL register for Dubai Schools.



Description of Proficiency Level	
Level 1 Entering	Knows and uses minimal social language and minimal academic language with visual and graphic support
Level 2 Emerging	Knows and uses some social English and general academic language with visual and graphic support
Level 3 Developing	Knows and uses social English and some specific academic language with visual and graphic support
Level 4 Expanding	Knows and uses social English and some technical academic language
Level 5 Bridging	Knows and uses social English and academic language working with grade-level material
Level 6 Reaching	Knows and uses social and academic language at the highest level measured by this test

Monitoring of staff language proficiency

To effectively support student outcomes, specifically within language acquisition, it is vital staff who are teaching students are able to act as effective role models in use of language. In order to ensure this, language proficiency must be considered as part of the recruitment process. Dubai Schools leaders will include effective language usage as part of their ongoing monitoring documentation, ensuring action is taken to upskill any staff who have an identified area for development within language usage.



Appendix A High Impact Strategies for Teachers

- Ensuring you have a clear understanding of any ELL students in class and their proficiency level.
- Reviewing and expanding vocabulary banks provided through curriculum resources, where appropriate.
- Implementing academic skills vocabulary to curriculum resource linked units where appropriate.
- Presenting, discussing, and translating key vocabulary at the beginning of each lesson.
- Revising key vocabulary across units of work.
- Relating learning to familiar culture, setting or famous figures to bridge the gap of subject knowledge or relevance where appropriate.
- Providing explicit instruction in academic English.
- Integrating the use of physical experiences, multimedia, and digital learning tools to introduce new vocabulary and consolidate meaning and context for students.
- Offering, when students are writing, a 'thinking space', where students can write ideas/notes in their home language if this is easier for them than English.
- Promoting translanguaging practices (students communicate between their native language and English) within lessons.
- Structuring effective use of bilingual partnerships for collaborative learning.
- Referring to the language standards within the NYSCS to further promote the teaching of oracy, include explicit links within lessons.



High Impact Strategies for Support Staff

- Ensuring you have a clear understanding of any ELL students in class and their proficiency level.
- Giving students an appropriate amount of time to respond to a question or statement (minimum of 5 seconds) before re-phrasing or asking again.
- Referring to the below table which outlines key questions to ask students:

5 Ques'ons you should be asking students	
What do you think?	This ques)on interrupts us from telling too much. There is a place for direct instruc)on where we give students informa)on, yet we need to always strive to balance this with plenty of opportuni)es for students to make sense of and apply that new informa)on using their schemata and understanding.
Why do you think that?	A>er students share what they think, this follow-up ques)on pushes them to provide reasoning for their thinking.
How do you know this?	When this ques)on is asked, students can make connec)ons to their ideas and thoughts with things they have experienced, read, and have seen.
Can you tell me more?	This ques)on can inspire students to extend their thinking and share further evidence for their ideas.
What ques'ons do you s'll have?	This allows students to offer up ques)ons they have about the informa)on, ideas or the evidence.
<p>Top 'ps</p> <p>Make asking ques)ons part of your rou)ne.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide)me for students to think. Time will depend on age, depth of material, comfort level, etc. • Vary your tone so it genuinely sounds like a ques)on and not a statement. • If students are not comfortable, ask a ques)on, pause, invite students to "turn and talk" first before sharing with the whole group. • Avoid closed ques)ons, those that only have a yes or no answer. 	



High Impact Strategies for Parents

- Ensuring to utilize home languages as much as possible whilst at home, even when students respond in English.
- Providing a print-rich environment as much as possible for students at home, including texts, books, newspapers, labels, signage in your home language and/or English. Providing variety and linking to their interests and passions is helpful to support engagement.
- Reading aloud with students regularly to support language development.
- Modelling good reading habits and engaging in discussion about the books being read at home.
- Engaging in meaningful conversations and allowing them to express their feelings, thoughts and ideas.
- Asking open ended questions that require more than a 'yes' or 'no' answer.
- Encouraging students to re-tell stories in their own words.
- Playing word games and rhyming activities.
- Providing translations for key vocabulary when students are completing their home learning

