



LANGUAGE POLICY

2023 -2024

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UCSI International School Springhill

Philosophy of language teaching and learning

Language wraps itself around, in, through and between everything that we teachers and learners do in the classroom.

(Ritchhart 2002)

Language stands as the centre of many independent cognitive, affective, and social factors that shape learning.

David Corson (1999, p 88)

A continuum of learning language, learning through language and learning about language (Halliday 1980) is woven through the three IB programmes. Learning is more than one language is considered essential to international education and for enriching intercultural understanding. Consequently, there are language requirements, as well as language learning opportunities, built into all three programmes (see the IB document Programme standards and practices).

The IB learner profile describes a communicator as someone who understands and expresses ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. In the PYP an additional language is introduced to students by the age of 7; MYP students must register in two languages for the MYP certificate; in the DP students must study two languages—a “best” language and a second language—to achieve a full diploma.

Language, however, is not separated from overall learning. As the main tool for building our knowledge of the universe and ourselves, language is crucial for success across the whole curriculum in each of the IB programmes. Language is integral to exploring and sustaining personal growth and cultural identity; it is closely linked to the development of healthy self-esteem and emotional well-being, both of which are necessary for successful learning to take place. Maintaining and developing the mother tongue of all learners is especially important in this respect.

As well as being the major medium of social communication, language is tightly linked to cognitive growth; it is fundamental to the processes by which meaning and knowledge are negotiated and constructed. The language of academic discourses, along with the concepts and bodies of knowledge of any discipline are closely interwoven. The features of different discourses have been identified and are described in linguistic genre theory. A linguistic genre is a particular text type created by a specific communicative situation.

As learners build understanding through transdisciplinary enquiry in the PYP, and through interdisciplinary and disciplinary learning in the MYP and DP, they move along a continuum of increasing ability to use and understand the range of academic linguistic genres in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

UCSI International School Springhill is an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School. At UCSI Springhill we create a challenging and motivating multilingual environment where the

language of instruction is English. We view language as a tool for making meaning in the world. We believe that every student has an individual and a cultural set of experiences, skills and interests, which must be considered in the teaching and learning process. For UCSI Springhill, multilingualism and the development of critical literacy are considered important factors in fostering international-mindedness through the promotion of cultural identity, intercultural awareness and global citizenship.

At UCSI Springhill, all teachers are language teachers as language transcends curriculum areas. Through the IB language programmes, we aim to develop confident, curious, highly proficient and enthusiastic readers, writers, viewers, presenters, speakers and listeners. Language is always taught meaningfully and in context. These contexts vary but often involve the use of real-life scenarios, native speakers, the local area and a wide variety of text types. We advocate the learning of language through inquiry, allowing students to make connections with context, to explore and investigate. The learning of any language is developmental by nature, building constructively on what each individual student knows to help move them forward.

As an international school situated in Malaysia, we are strongly committed to providing students with access to Malay and Mandarin language learning and utilising the host country and community for language and cultural experiences throughout the curriculum. Equally important to the school is the belief that each student should have the opportunity to maintain and develop their mother tongue(s). The acquisition of additional languages allows students to further reflect upon and explore different cultural perspectives.

At UCSI Springhill we are committed to providing an inclusive and equitable learning environment. We aim to ensure access to the three IB programmes offered by the school for all students

As an IB World School, we are committed to the following IB Practices (IB Standards and Practices reference):

The school describes in its language policy the way that the school recognizes multilingualism as a fact, a right and a resource for learning. (0301-04-0200)

The school identifies in its language policy a variety of physical and virtual resources used to facilitate language development. (0301-04-0300)

The school clearly describes in its language policy the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community and what constitutes good practice within the school context. (0301-04-0400)

The school provides opportunities for students to explore and develop their personal and cultural identities. (0402-07-0100)

The school community affirms individual student identity through learning and teaching. (0402-07-0200)

Students take opportunities to develop their language profiles. (0402-07-0300)

Teachers support language development with consideration for the language profiles of students. (0403-05-0400)

As language forms the basis for all learning, this policy is critical for helping the school to the school to achieve its mission. The language policy validates the equal status of all languages. The language policy supports the shared responsibility of all teachers, students and parents for all students' language development. All teachers and students are encouraged to assume the responsibility to be language learners.

This language policy promotes life-long learning. Developing language learning skills gives students the capacity to solve problems, think critically and creatively. Language empowers students to understand, interpret and respond to ideas, attitudes and feelings.

The language policy is a working document developed by staff and administration from each school programme (PYP, MYP, DP). The policy is consistent with the stipulated principles, standards and practices of the IB. This policy is intended to provide an overview and guiding principles for language learning at UCSI which permits the entire school community through authentic contexts in a culturally rich and diverse environment.

Community Language

Throughout UCSI International School Springhill English is the community Language of Instruction. It is the common language in which all communication and access to the curriculum occurs. As such, the support and development of English within the school is paramount. English language learning is not something that happens at a set time with a set teacher, instead it happens across the disciplines and every teacher is required to model the use of language, emphasizing clear and concise communication.

All assessment with the exception of additional Language A and B courses is conducted in English as outlined in the UCSI International School Springhill Assessment Policy. Reporting on Assessments is also undertaken in English, with the exception of Malay and Chinese.

All Teachers are Language Teachers

Language is central to learning. UCSI International School Springhill believes that all teachers are, in practice, language teachers who are responsible for developing literacy and facilitating communication. Through language development and the IB Approaches to Learning, students are given the tools they need to interpret the world around them. Language is also a major component in encouraging understanding and tolerance of other culture groups and perspectives.

Language Pathways: Practices at UCSI Springhill

These pathways collectively give an overview of the practices at UCSI Springhill that are in place and being implemented to bring our philosophy statement to life and exemplify how the School brings about excellence in language learning.

The school places importance on language learning, including mother tongue, host country language and other languages.

At UCSI Springhill, language is taught holistically. Each programme has specific learning outcomes for the strands of speaking and listening, reading and writing, and viewing and presenting appropriately to the students' level. We promote inquiry-based authentic learning through an investigative approach to different genres.

The School invests in qualified, professional language teachers for the language of instruction, host language and other languages.

Students are allowed and encouraged to use their mother tongue to access the curriculum. For instance, they are encouraged to share their learning and progress with their parents and other members of the community using their mother tongue.

In the Primary Years Programme (PYP), the language of instruction (English) is integrated into the units of inquiry or organised into stand-alone language sessions.

In the Middle Years Programme (MYP), Bahasa Malaysia and Chinese are mandatory for all the MYP 1-5 students irrespective of their nationality.

UCSI Springhill is an English-medium boarding school, but our students speak many different languages. Obviously, it is not possible to offer classes in all these languages. However, because educational research makes clear that those students who maintain their mother tongue will have better access to learning when working in a second or third language, it is important that we provide the opportunity for students to access their first languages.

At UCSI Springhill, we greatly value children continuing to learn in their mother tongue. We prioritize those children who are new to learning English. We encourage parents to talk, read and write with their children in their mother tongue as well as in English.

Furthermore, while English is the medium of instruction in all classes aside from other language classes (Mandarin, Malay) students are welcome to speak in their native languages in the hallways, in the cafeteria, and in the dorms.

In the Middle Years Programme (MYP) and the Diploma Programme (DP), language is divided into studies in language and literature (Language A) and Language acquisition courses (Language B). A student is required to take at least two languages. In order to obtain an IB Diploma Programme, one of these has to be a language and literature course. UCSI Springhill students have the opportunity to study up to three languages. These courses are offered according to the student's level in the language of instruction, English, and the host country language, Malay. Language acquisition courses are also offered in Chinese Mandarin; in special circumstances, students may have the option of following a different language acquisition course in the Diploma Programme. If the MYP and DP do not provide the student's mother tongue or strongest language (Language A) in its regular programme, then the School strongly recommends that parents opt to have this language be taught as an IB MYP or DP course through external, private tuition with the assistance of the MYP and DP Coordinators.

Immersive English Language Program.

As an inclusive IB Continuum School, UCSI International School Springhill, provides an Immersive English Language Program (IELP) for students who may have very limited English when entering the school. Due to staffing limitations of being a small school the IELP is run alongside the PYP and MYP Curriculum in Grades 5, 6 and 9. Students who are within the Grade 4 and 5 age band follow the program alongside the regular Grade 5 schedule, Students of Grade 6, 7 and 8 age follow alongside the regular Grade 6 schedule and Students of Grade 9 and 10 age follow alongside the regular schedule of Grade 9.

The aim of the IELP is to prepare students to be successful on full entry to the main PYP and MYP programmes, rather than to create perfectly fluent English speakers.

Students in IELP take on average around 12 dedicated periods of IELP a week, with the remainder of their schedule within subjects that require less demands on English ability: PHE, Arts and Mathematics. All IELP students also take an Additional Language and where possible the working Language A.

Students are moved from IELP when their English language ability is within the bounds of Language Acquisition Phase 2.

Teaching and learning address the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning a language other than their mother tongue.

Differentiation in language lessons is based on best practice according to the standards and practices of the IB. All teachers respond to students' needs and may, therefore, provide individualised instruction guided in some cases by specific learning goals and Individual Learning Plans (ILPs). Teaching strategies may include working in small groups, using different resources with different levels of language complexity, as well as changing the level of questioning and tasks for individual students. Students may also have choices so they can follow their own interests or use a preferred learning style. The School also follows the IB recommendations on student placement.

The language policy recognises the transfer of cognitive skills from the mother tongue to English and vice versa and acquisition of additional languages. This process encourages the acquisition of higher-order thinking skills and the development of multiple perspectives. The policy also recognises the importance of all teachers differentiated instruction for students at different levels of language acquisition.

All students' language needs are determined through initial and ongoing assessments throughout the year. Teachers differentiate for the range of students' needs in different ways. In the PYP, students might, for example, be placed in flexible ability groups. In homerooms, students may be grouped by ability for reading groups, but work in mixed ability groups for other tasks.

In MYP and DP, students are placed in classes according to the IB's continuum of language learning phases. Standardised academic language placement tests are given to newly enrolled students to determine which phase they are assigned. The School has a flexible placement policy that allows student movement throughout the school year in relation to students' progression along this continuum. Moreover, if students would like to request their language acquisition be reassessed, they can request reconsideration.

Teaching and learning demonstrate that all teachers are responsible for the language development of students.

UCSI Springhill focuses on the transdisciplinary nature of language learning by recognising and modelling the role of language in each subject as well as in the language of instruction, host country language and in other languages, and by developing an understanding of the IB objectives and pedagogical language of the programmes.

The basic skills for all types of communication - oral, written and visual - are explicitly planned for using our scope and sequence. When students are acquiring a language, our teaching is informed by incorporating four concepts: context, culture, reflection and fluency. Students are encouraged to think for themselves, recognize patterns, develop theories and construct meaning as they investigate language. As students progress, teachers enable them to see language as a means of self-expression, exploration of self and others, as context-driven, having multiple meanings and involving at all levels of discourse a personal stance, from simple communication to the core of the academic language.

Throughout the school, there is an expectation that in order to foster an enjoyment and love of reading, students will be encouraged to read at home – from packaging and emails to quality literature – and will read a wide range of genres in school to understand their features. In the PYP, students are expected to be read to, or read, every day at home. This may be done in a student's mother tongue. A variety of reading strategies will be introduced to support students in the mechanics of reading and comprehending the meaning of what they read. These include phonemic awareness, recognising patterns in text, decoding, making inferences, recognising a bank of sight words and etymological understanding. Teachers also make use of guided reading and literature circles to develop students' reading skills.

The writing process of drafting, revising and finalising will be modelled and explored in all languages. The use of literature, games, role-play and multimedia will support students' understanding of different genres as well as developing their vocabulary, sentence construction, use of tense and punctuation. Using the text as a model, students and teachers can begin to analyse the features of different genres before jointly and individually constructing written or presented pieces. During the revision process, students will be encouraged to develop their knowledge of grammatical and spelling conventions by self-correcting. Finalising writing may involve students sharing writing with others, keeping it for themselves or publishing it for a chosen audience.

In order to enable students to develop accurate language use and self-correct errors, they will be introduced to different strategies to investigate words and groups of words. These include spelling strategies such as syllabification, saying the word as it looks and mnemonics, to a deeper understanding of language in context, such as collocation. Teachers encourage students to make connections between words in different languages.

The IELP Specialists and the languages teamwork with the other MYP and DP departments and with the School librarian to:

- collaborate on vocabulary and concepts across the curriculum,
- spread use of a common language about language
- teach the conventions of referencing, citing and the principles of academic honesty

UCSI Springhill is committed to promoting the idea that all teachers are teachers of language through professional development opportunities. This includes outside speakers, in-school advanced skills workshops and training workshops.

Assessment at the school aligns with the requirements of the programmes.

Assessment is integral to teaching and learning at UCSI Springhill. Using a range of tools and strategies, teachers are able to determine students' knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes towards language.

At the School, teachers use pre-assessment to determine what students already know, can do and understand. Formative assessment is used to check-in and to give constructive feedback or praise on learning. Summative assessments are used to gather evidence about student's learning at the end of a unit. Various forms of both formative and summative assessment may be used. Along with teacher assessment, students are often asked to peer or self-assess as well.

Also important to UCSI Springhill in terms of the language skills of students in their preparation for higher learning. As such, language teachers are committed to enhancing academic practical skills of MYP and DP students such as timed reading comprehension, summarising texts, and varying types of writing tasks.

Assessments are reported to parents in different ways. Students receive written report cards about their language learning. Parents are also invited to attend parent-teacher, three-way and student-led conferences.

At the PYP, students are regularly assessed using the expectations from the School's language Scope and Sequence. Achievement of different learning outcomes will be recorded and passed on throughout their schooling at UCSI Springhill to facilitate each student's learning. At the beginning of tasks, criteria are shared or created by the students so that learning goals are clear.

In the MYP, units are designed with a significant concept, a global context and a unit question in mind. Assessment tasks are linked to these big ideas and allow students to show a developing understanding of the global context; summative assessment is an opportunity for students to discuss the unit question using what they have learned.

Assessments in the MYP and DP are in line with the requirements of the IB programmes.

Languages in PYP

UCSI International School Springhill recognizes that in a transdisciplinary programme, language is essential to inquiry-based learning and the construction of knowledge. Relevant, authentic and meaningful contexts, social interaction, and connection to prior knowledge are all essential components to effective language learning in the PYP; therefore, students who are non-native speakers of English, and who have been identified as being in need of additional English language support, are immersed in regular classroom activities for the maximum amount of time possible. In some cases, students in PYP 5 join the IELP for additional English language support as an alternative to learning an additional language.

Languages offered at PYP

Home and Working Language	Language Acquisition
English	English
Bhasa Malay	Bhasa Malay
Chinese	Chinese

Studies in Language and Literature and Language Acquisition in MYP

In the MYP Language Acquisition, level-specific criteria are used based on each phase outlined by the IB from students newly acquiring a language to those at working language level. In addition, UCSI Springhill uses age-appropriate modified criteria using the interim objectives set out by the IB for MYP 1-3 and using the end of program objectives for MYP 4-5. Task-specific rubrics are also created for each assessment and are shared with the students. In the DP, criteria are also level specific and based on the course chosen and the level at which the course is taken.

For the MYP Language & Literature course, students need to be proficient enough to be in phase 5 in a language. If they are at Phase 1 – 4, then a language acquisition course is appropriate for them. Malay + High is phase 5 & 6 and it aims at preparing the students for the Language & Literature. Malay+ Low is phase 1-4 to prepare the students for Language Acquisition.

MYP Languages Offered at UCSI International School Springhill

Studies in Language & Literature	Language Acquisition
English	English (phase 3-6)
Bahasa Melayu	Bahasa Melayu (phase 3-6)
Chinese	Chinese (phase 3-6)
	French (1-3)

MYP Core and Language Learning:

MYP Personal Project can be done in Mandarin, keeping in mind the needs of the student and the availability of the staff in the school who can assess and moderate the project in the concerned Language.

Studies in Language and Literature and Language Acquisition in DP

Diploma Program (DP) – Grades 11-12

Studies in Language and Literature (Language A)

UCSI International School Springhill offers students in the Diploma Programme access to English Language and Literature and Chinese Language and Literature at both SL and HL.

All students in grades 11-12 are expected to complete second language (Language B or a second Language A) study. UCSI International School Springhill offers IB DP Languages B in English, Chinese and Bahasa Malay. Students in grades 11-12 taking the full Diploma Programme, must continue the study of a second language in one of the following ways:

A second language A from above (or a School Supported Self Taught Language A – see below)

DP Language B higher level or standard level (for language learners who have had three or more years of experience with the language): Students learn to communicate effectively in a number of situations, from everyday exchanges to literary texts. In this way they develop mastery of language skills.

DP Language ab initio standard level (for a beginner who has little or no experience of the language): Students gain a basic level of communication based on everyday exchanges and prescribed situations.

UCSI International School Springhill offers French ab initio. Classes will be reviewed yearly dependent upon need.

Additional Home and Working Language Access

Externally taught Home and Working Language courses in the MYP and School Supported Self-taught courses in the DP follow the above guidelines. Students may be referred for further assessment within the School to enable teachers to gain as much information as possible about a student's strengths, interests and areas in need of developing and to monitor their progress. In some circumstances, Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are developed for individual students depending on their individual learning needs. In the MYP and DP, this may include modified assessment criteria for the student. Any such cases will be discussed with the student, parents, respective IB program coordinator and relevant faculty members. However UCSI International School Springhill recognizes that access to Additional Home and Working Language Support is dependent on availability of external tutors to support students who wish to pursue Additional Home and Working Languages

Collaborative planning and reflection recognize that all teachers are responsible for the language development of students

Since students learn about language and through language, we understand that all teachers are responsible for the language development of students in the School. As a result, collaborative planning and reflection are built into the regular schedule of staff as well as it being the focus of staff meetings throughout the year. In this way, we are able to develop links between different subject areas and departments across the School.

At the PYP, all teachers review the language scope and sequence to ensure that it is as relevant and comprehensive as possible. Teachers then plan collaboratively, during

grade-level meetings, grade meetings, meetings with the PYP coordinator and with EAL and learning support staff.

In the MYP, timetabled curriculum planning time (CPT) allow teachers to meet together as a teaching faculty. This may be done as whole staff meetings or divided into smaller meetings where teachers meet in department groups, language groups or interdisciplinary groups. During these meetings, teachers plan what will be taught, reflect on best practice and consider the needs of individual students. They also discuss articulation, transitions and progression between all three IB programmes and ensure that delivery of the programmes is consistent and current with developments in the IB. External mother tongue tutors are encouraged to collaborate with their students' subject teachers in order to develop strategies to help students to better access the curriculum.

The school utilizes the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programmes.

All language teachers are responsible for sourcing and purchasing a range of quality texts so that students can explore different genres such as recounts, stories, explanations or persuasive writing in different languages and at different levels. Students also have access to a variety of dictionaries to assist them including picture dictionaries and mother tongue dictionaries. In all formal IB assessments in MYP and DP, all non-native English-speaking students have the right to request a paper translation dictionary.

Students have access to other resources such as newspapers and magazines –that they can also subscribe to- in a variety of languages, which help them to be aware of current affairs, to foster an interest in reading, and to develop confidence, fluency and comprehension. The use of technology is an integral language learning tool. Students are encouraged to use electronic devices to access programs or tools to support their language learning such as Google Translate or voice-activated applications. The School also subscribes to various age-appropriate online platforms, and all students have free access to this program to facilitate language learning. Lastly, games, art, music, maps and artefacts are used to help students make connections in their language learning.

The community is considered a valuable resource to aid language learning. Students go on numerous field trips, such as museums, libraries, theatres and cinemas where they have an opportunity to use the host country language in context and gain an insight into the host country's culture. Throughout the year, students are exposed to numerous celebrations linked to the diverse cultures within our community to promote international mindedness and an appreciation of the host country's culture.

In addition, languages represented by the school, notably Mandarin and Malay, are celebrated through wall posters and decorations, the annual recognition of cultural events, and cultural presentations and performances at assemblies.

Library Resources and Support

The UCSI SH library boasts thousands of texts in English, but also sections of texts in a variety of other languages, notably Mandarin and Malay. Students are also welcome to contribute all languages to the literature of the library, and to the school community in general. In order to provide an additional support for different mother tongue's groups, the school Library is equipped with additional reading (printed) and e-resources . Library periods are incorporated in the timetable and school break time periods. There are many cultural

events planned and reflected in the school calendar to promote and celebrate a multilingual environment and cultural diversity .

Communication of Language Policy to the School Community

The language policy is introduced and discussed with the UCSI International School Springhill community through four main routes: Staff meetings and parent coffee mornings for direct engagement with the policy. Via the school website and through access via Toddle.

The feedback is collected annually via a survey. This feedback feeds into updates to this policy is to be uploaded on the school website.

Also, in the first month or two of each academic year, new staff should be introduced through an activity that involves a participative discussion about the policy, with emphasis on all teachers being language teachers, along with learning and teaching strategies for working with our unique profile of learners.

Policy review process:

The initial version was developed in 2014 and submitted for Authorisation visits in 2014-2015.

The process of revision was arranged based on the Self-study finding and survey results following the 5 year review in 2019. This survey was designed specifically for the Language Policy revision and conducted in June 2019:

- Are you aware of the School Language Profile system?
- Please, list the languages offered by the school and what grade levels.
- Which practices are in place to support mother tongue?
- What would your suggestions to provide the learners with more effective mother tongue support?
- Please put your comments and suggestions about the strategies to support those students who are not proficient in the language of instruction.
- Please make your suggestions on the ways and strategies for learning about the host country (Malaysia) language and culture.

Based on survey and self-study findings the whole staff group worked collaboratively to make all updates and changes via Google docs platform. The final version was accomplished and proofread by the leadership group (3 programme coordinators and principal). The **Language Profile** data was also revised and updated based on new academic year enrollment data.

Following COVID an updated review was conducted in 2022, by a designated faculty group and their suggestions resulted in the current updated version.

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