

Alturas International Academy

IB Language Policy

Language is the foundation of all learning and the basis for all inquiry and transdisciplinary across the curriculum. Language learning involves the elements of learning language, learning about language and learning through language. All students are language learners and our teaching philosophy of small group instruction gives our students opportunities to explore language analytically and critically. Our program supports students bringing their own unique contribution to language learning. Teachers facilitate learning experiences that enable learners to develop language within meaningful and engaging contexts. Students are able to make connections, apply their learning, and transfer their conceptual understanding to new ideas. This progressive conceptual development, together with high engagement, and a love for learning provides the foundation for lifelong learning. In our program students are given the tools to be part of a community of active learners who aspire to be internationally minded and responsible global citizens.

Alturas International Academy has a balanced language curriculum which includes; oral, visual and written language. Through active participation in a small group instruction students are involved in a diverse range of learning experience. Students perceive themselves as readers, writers, listeners, speakers and analytical and critical thinkers.

Alturas International Academy Mission Statement

Alturas International Academy promotes academic distinction, while empowering student to be principled and intellectual leaders as they explore, create, investigate, and analyze in a safe, engaged, collaborative environment that inspires them to make a genuine difference in their local and global community.

Practices and Implementation

The mother tongue for instruction at Alturas International Academy is English. Students whose mother tongue is different from English are encouraged to continue to develop their mother tongue and culture in addition to the English

language program. As a school we will enlist the collective skills and knowledge of all students, parents, and community members (both ELLs and English speaking) to promote language development in English as well as other mother tongues. As a globally minded school we will enlist other language speakers to talk about the culture and mother tongue. The Alturas school library has books available in Spanish and in time will add books in other languages. Knowledge about culture and language will be integrated across the curriculum. Language diversity is embraced at Alturas and bilingualism is encouraged and accepted. Students are given the opportunity to speak, share and value learner diversity in a safe environment. By working in small groups students are encouraged to be open minded and purposeful communicators. Each student is different and each student will have different needs to be met. Students that are not proficient are taught by inclusion in the classroom setting by small group instruction at their instructional level and have the support of the special education department, classroom teacher, classmates in a collaborative community. A plan is made and for those needing additional support or just more time to process, resources and help are available from the SPED teacher and other support staff.

A balanced and scaffolded language program is implemented at Alturas through the Core Knowledge and Unit of Inquiry curriculum. Each Unit of Inquiry is tailored to include an explicit focus on students being internationally minded. Our curriculum provides students with authentic purposes and audiences for their work, in which they discover, construct or use knowledge. Teachers plan and facilitate activities that integrate the different language modes; speaking, listening, viewing, reading and writing. Language learning follows the Inquiry cycle and is transdisciplinary in that it is used in all areas of the curriculum. We use a balance of oral, written, reading and visual language.

Inquiry in the PYP incorporates exploring, wondering and questioning

- experimenting and exploring with possibilities
- making connections between previous learning and current learning
- making predictions
- collecting data and reporting findings
- clarifying existing ideas and reflecting on perceptions of events

- deepening understanding through the application of a concept
- making and testing theories
- researching and seeking information
- taking and defending a position
- solving problems in a variety of ways

The Language of Instruction is made up of the following areas.

1. *Oral language—listening and speaking*
2. *Visual language—viewing and presenting*
3. *Written language—reading and writing*
4. *Learning a foreign language-Spanish*

Oral Language

Oral language encompasses all aspects of listening and speaking. Opportunities for learning about and learning through oral language occur in all areas of the curriculum. Students are provided with authentic opportunities to develop their skills. These include assemblies, Units of Inquiry presentations, The Exhibition, collaboration in small group instruction, and performances. Assessment of speaking and listening is completed in small group settings as well as partnership mentoring. Students learn best when learning is focused on progression of understanding through collaboration, and students make deep conceptual connections, across the curriculum, that enhance their sense of purpose and meaning, and enable them to use critical and analytical thinking.

Visual Language

Alturas incorporates using and constructing visuals and multimedia in a variety of situations and for a range of purposes and audiences. They allow students to understand the ways in which images and language interact to convey ideas,

values and beliefs. Visual learning allows students to look at problem differently, increases memory of important information, builds understanding of the overviews and summaries, inspire students to think in more creative, open-minded ways and create ideas of their own, help organizational skills, and students can process and retain information faster and with more readability. Students are provided with learning experiences to develop their ability to understand how images and languages interact to convey ideas, values and beliefs by incorporating into their projects websites, videos, graphs, maps, diagrams and charts. Learning to interpret, understand and use different media are incorporated into our program.

Written Language

Through language experience, modelled reading, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading sessions, learners are engaged in excellent literature. Students learn best when they are encouraged to inquire, reflect, question and challenge themselves for increased understanding through collaboration and mentoring. Our Units of Inquiry give students the opportunity to communicate their questions, intuitions, conjectures, reasons, explanations, justifications and ideas in a variety of forms with the written language as a foundation.

Writing is primarily concerned with communicating meaning and intention to an audience. Students have three Units of Inquiry Nights to share their projects with the community. Writing is thematically woven into the program. Children learn to write by writing. The students are engaged in writing and researching throughout the school day. Students learn the mechanics of writing including: spelling, grammar, text structures and features, the writing process and developing voice thus integrating language throughout the curriculum.

Spanish

Alturas International Academy students are taught Spanish for 2 hours a week in grades K-5. This enables students to gain an understanding of culture through language. Students will develop skills in Spanish by using the inquiry approach to learning. The Spanish program will allow for the development of the language and skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing and viewing. Foreign Language study creates more positive attitudes and less prejudice toward people who are different. Analytical skills improve when students study a foreign language.

Learning about another culture enables people to gain a more profound understanding of their own culture. Creativity is increased with the study of foreign language. Skills like problem solving, dealing with abstract concepts /are increased when you study a foreign language. Studying Spanish enhances listening skills and memory. Students will participate more effectively and responsibly in a multi-cultural world. Most importantly, the study of Spanish leads to an appreciation of cultural diversity.

Plan for Implementation

The language policy will be implemented through a collaborative team effort. This collaborative team will involve teachers, students, parents, staff and administrators, working in partnership, to promote and pursue student language learning needs. This language policy includes support for mother tongues as well as support for students who are not proficient in the language of instruction. The goal at Alturas is to take into account all students' language learning needs.