



Morikami Park Elementary School Language Policy



Language Philosophy

At Morikami Park Elementary School all teachers are language teachers. All students are language learners, regardless of what language they speak. Each student has his or her own background and their unique contributions, which is crucial for defining their cognitive development and in maintaining their cultural identity. Language is fundamental to learning and permeates all subject areas. Language is best taught in a language-rich environment through a variety of modalities including listening, viewing, speaking, reading, writing and presenting. Through the exploration of transdisciplinary units of inquiry, students are encouraged to construct language meaning and make connections across content disciplines. At Morikami Park we provide a learning community that promotes and supports language development in an environment that fosters confident, creative and responsible learners through inquiry based instruction.

Practices that Reflect Our Beliefs

- Staff provides a school environment that is print rich and encourages language development. Students have access to a variety of texts (both narrative and informational) and classrooms have labels/signs/anchor charts that are referred to.
- Language learning activities that include listening, viewing, speaking, reading, writing, and presenting are purposefully planned and embedded into daily instruction.
- Students are provided numerous opportunities to use language for a variety of authentic purposes.
- Staff and students use language as a vehicle for engaging in inquiry-based learning.
- Students are given choices in how they want to communicate their learning and express themselves (oral, written, etc.)
- Student writing and teacher writing are displayed. Students have the opportunity to publish their work.
- Reading at home is promoted using reading logs and other systems.
- Students are encouraged to inquire about other languages.

- The development of students' mother tongue is encouraged both in school and at home through parental involvement.
- Explicit language instruction occurs during language arts, in reading and writing instruction, as well as across all disciplines.
- Teachers use a variety of texts (both print and digital) in their teaching.
- There is direct instruction of language. All staff model and teach appropriate use of language (ex. Writing, reading strategies, listening skills, appropriate speech).
- Students are frequently engaged in collaborative conversations that deepen their learning
- Students use language as a means to reflect upon their learning and self.
- Staff has high expectations for each student's language learning and use.
- Students fully engage in learning a second language.
- Technology is used regularly to enrich language development.

World Language Instruction

Students at Morikami Park receive instruction in Spanish for 30 minutes three times a rotation of 8 days (A day to H day) in grades kindergarten through fifth grade. Students also receive instruction in Mandarin for 30 minutes once in the rotation. World Language teachers are itinerate to the classroom. All teachers are supportive of the World Language program and are encouraged to incorporate Spanish and/or Mandarin in their instruction. The school's morning announcements include some reporting in Spanish and Mandarin. Signs and labels throughout the school can be found in the additional languages. World Language teachers work to infuse the additional languages throughout the school day in an effort to increase proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing Spanish and Mandarin, and to stimulate an interest in international cultures.

All units of inquiry are supported by the World Language teachers. Classroom teachers are informed, during the planning of their unit, how the World Language teachers will be contributing to the unit. In this way, the additional language teachers are incorporating authentic language learning into the program, and offering a global view to the unit where possible.

Native Spanish speakers are placed in an appropriate level library books. Books in the additional language are brought into the classroom and book reports are encouraged. Reports are assigned on special topics for Native speakers. Enrichment worksheets enhance students' vocabulary and comprehension of their native language. During writing exercises, Native speakers are encouraged to expand their level of writing. Native speakers are encouraged to help in modeling pronunciation and reading. Students are also encouraged to contribute to any class study by sharing their cultural traditions and knowledge of their or their parents' country of origin.

Parents have contributed to cultural bins which may include books and artifacts from their country of origin. Classroom teachers also encourage students to bring in books written in their Native language. The school's Media Specialist orders books in various languages, which are also displayed for students' viewing. These books may be checked out by all students. Computer programs in Spanish and Mandarin are also used in the classrooms.

Parents are informed regularly on the unit of study, as well as any special activity or project in the additional languages through the grade level page on school website. Parents are encouraged to reinforce their child's learning with the use of the language outside of the classroom through vocabulary practice, singing songs together, and encouraging their child to talk about their lesson.

World Language teachers have been trained in the PYP. Some of the teachers have had additional IB training outside of Florida (Hilton Head). They also receive professional development training in the beginning of every school year, as well as other workshops available through the school district. World Language teachers attend the Florida Foreign Language Conference as well as other conferences (American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages-ACTFL) in order to acquire ideas and materials to enhance their teaching of the additional languages. Through the Florida Foreign Language Conference supplemental materials and realia are purchased. Publishing companies send annual catalogs that are reviewed in order to stay up-to-date on the latest materials available.

The students will, upon completion of their world language instruction at Morikami Park Elementary have acquired a proficiency of core vocabulary and language skills necessary for simple every day communications in Spanish. In Mandarin, the introductory nature of the course will permit students to become acquainted with Mandarin greetings and vocabulary as well as cultural aspects of China.

Assessment is integral and crucial to the curriculum and is used to guide instruction and to plan effectively for the development of the language and culture in harmony with the PYP philosophy. A variety of tools and strategies are used to continuously monitor student progress including a Linguafolio, where students monitor and reflect on their foreign language progress. Report card inserts informing parents of the curriculum covered are sent home on a trimester basis. Feedback from parents is encouraged by providing a section for comments on the bottom of the progress report. Also, work samples are sent home and placed in the portfolio.

Assessment

Teachers regularly use diagnostic, formative and summative assessments to assist in the teaching and learning of languages. Assessment takes place in accordance with the Morikami Park Assessment Policy, which is aligned with state standards as well as PYP guidelines/standards. Student work is assessed using various assessment tools, including observation, teacher feedback, checklists, and rubrics provided by the county or developed by teachers. Students and parents are kept informed of student progress through informal parent-teacher meetings, scheduled parent-teacher consultations, interim progress reports, and student-led conferences.

Language Learning Connections to the IB Learner Profile

Through the acquisition and study of language, Morikami students develop the qualities and skills of internationally minded, effective learners represented in the IB Learner Profile.

Our students are:

Inquirers: They inquire into language in a variety of forms and contexts. They use language to conduct research, to ask questions about their world, and to participate in the exchange of ideas.

Thinkers: They develop both literal and abstract thought through language. They connect, create, and organize ideas effectively and confidently.

Communicators: They communicate clearly in both written and oral language. They embrace opportunities to express themselves through language.

Risk-takers: They are willing to participate by reading, writing, performing or speaking both in school and in the world at large.

Knowledgeable: They have strong understanding of language use and language structure. They are knowledgeable about texts and literary genres.

Principled: They understand that language is powerful, that it can have a profound effect, and that it must therefore be used responsibly.

Caring: They demonstrate care in their use of language and are aware of how language can affect others.

Open minded: They respect differences and recognize similarities between languages, dialects and personal communication styles. They understand that language can express bias.

Balanced: They express themselves orally as well as in writing, and they find a balance between listening and speaking when communicating with others. They read a variety of written material and can write for different purposes and audiences.

Reflective: They reflect on their language development and consciously work at improving their language proficiency. They reflect both orally and in writing about their work across the curriculum.

Mother Tongue Support

As research and best practice shows, we encourage that our parents and students continue to speak in their mother tongue at home. This strengthens the child's language skills but also instills a sense of confidence and importance about their culture. This way the student is free to be proud of their culture and their abilities. As a school environment it allows us to celebrate our differences. Currently we have the ability to send home in newsletters, assessments, and other correspondence in Spanish, Creole, and Portuguese. To support our diverse population both our classrooms and our Media Center offer bilingual books.

English Language Learner (ELL) Services

We currently do not have a teacher who instructs ELL, but students receive support in the classroom since all teachers are ESOL endorsed. This support is provided through differentiation. The amount and intensity of services are determined by student needs and may take the form of small group instruction, in-class support, teacher collaboration, and/or monitoring of academic progress.

Professional Development

Classroom teachers and specialists will collaborate and share best practices that pertain to language acquisition and development. Language specialists such as Speech and Language Pathologist, ELL teacher, and World Language teachers play a particularly important role in reinforcing, supporting, and enriching student learning in the classroom. Professional development will be provided as necessary.

Communicating the Policy

The Language Policy is regularly communicated to all staff, families, and stakeholders. Teachers are responsible to communicate this policy to students and parents. The Language Policy will be posted on the Morikami Park Elementary School website and newsletters/brochures. Families are encouraged to be involved in the school community whenever possible. All staff will be able to access the Language Policy on a file sharing network (SharePoint) and hard copies.

Reviewing the Policy

The PYP coordinator will ensure that the language policy is reviewed and revised every two years to reflect the current needs of the school population. All staff at Morikami Park are involved in the development and will agree on the language policy. All staff is responsible to ensure that the language policy is a working document, which is referred to and reflected upon.

