

Deerwood Academy Elementary School
Primary Years Programme
Language Policy

Purpose:

Language instruction empowers our scholars to become life-long learners who are global thinkers and communicators. Our Language Instruction provides:

1. French Instruction as an additional language
2. Mother –Tongue language support
3. Instruction of English through the Units of Inquiry

Statement of Belief:

At Deerwood Academy, we believe that language is vital to constructing meaning and is the vehicle that allows scholars to think critically and develop conceptual understandings. All scholars flourish from learning various languages. The exploration of multiple languages encourage scholars to embrace different cultures, form new perspectives, and foster an appreciation for the diverse world. Scholars who pass through our doorway are language learners and our teachers are effective teachers of language. We believe that scholars learn language best through meaningful listening, speaking, viewing, presenting, reading, and writing opportunities within the Units of Inquiry. Our inclusive classrooms support mother-tongue development that preserves each scholar's uniqueness and cultural identity. At Deerwood Academy, we have made a commitment to our stakeholders to provide a learning community that promotes and supports a strong foundation in language and language diversity. Language Instruction at Deerwood Academy provides our scholars with the knowledge and skills to become global communicators who are able to compete in a diverse world.

Practices:

Identification of Language Needs:

Deerwood Academy is a public school and we accept all children therefore English is not a requirement. Scholars who are not from English speaking homes are given the ACCESS, an assessment to determine English language proficiency. This information determines whether or not the student is classified as a student for which English is the second language, and informs the school of the primary language. Informing our teachers about the different language populations early in the school year allows them to infuse those cultures into the curriculum and provides an authentic appreciation for their culture. For English Learners, additional services are provided by our English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Department of Atlanta Public Schools (APS). The ESOL program is a federal mandated instructional program for students in grades K-12. It is standards based and emphasizes academic and social language development based upon the WIDA Consortium English Language Development Standards. The ESOL Department provides access to resources and facilitates communication between the English learner parents and school which allows the parents to take an active role in their scholar's education.

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The ESOL Program Goals:

The English to Speakers of Other Languages Program of Atlanta Public Schools fosters inclusive schools and classrooms that are responsive to the linguistic and cultural needs of English Learners and their families. The APS ESOL Program provides English Learners with support and instruction in the English language, American culture, and academic and cognitive areas in order to ensure success in the mainstream classroom, school, and the community. The goals of the program are as follows:

1. To develop competency in English in all four domains of language: listening, speaking, reading and writing;
2. To integrate language, cognitive and academic instruction that enables students to develop English language proficiency and content area knowledge;
3. To support the curriculum based on the Georgia Standards of Excellence while emphasizing social and academic language proficiency;
4. To orient students and parents to the American culture and enable them to participate successfully in school and community life;
5. To ensure grade-level appropriate content for all ELs regardless of English proficiency
6. To ensure that all staff in the district assume responsibility for the acculturation and instruction of ELs.

Scope and Sequence:

The IBO's Language Scope and Sequence is our framework for language instruction. The Language Scope and Sequence provides developmental continuums which guides our teachers as they provide language learning opportunities for our scholars. We also utilized the developmental progressions (Reading, Writing, Language, Speaking, and Listening) of Georgia Standards of Excellence for English Language Arts into our instructional framework.

Language in the Classroom:

Classroom Instruction:

All instruction at Deerwood Academy is conducted in English. Language is the foundation of our transdisciplinary program and is woven into physical education, visual arts, and fine arts classes. In the inquiry based classroom, scholars are reading, writing, speaking, and listening through the context of the Units of Inquiry. Teachers provide differentiated activities through a balanced literacy approach. Language is supported through reading, writing workshops, word study, and phonics opportunities that allow scholars to use language during presentations, collaboration, reflections, and researching. Culturally responsive literature is chosen to expose students to diverse cultures and languages. Flexible grouping is utilized to temporary group scholars based on learning styles and learning outcomes. Students not only learn from their teacher, but also from their peers and experiences with language. Oral language (receptive and expressive), visual language, and written language are taught consistently and embedded in the Programme of Inquiry. Language is also supported by our

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Media Center. We have a full time media specialist that assists students with a plethora of digital tools and media. There are open times for students to check out books and conduct research. The media specialist works with the teacher to provide learning opportunities and resources that support each unit of inquiry.

ESOL Instruction:

It is the goal of all teachers at Deerwood Academy to support our English Learners by providing a caring environment where all scholars can thrive. Scholars that qualify for ESOL classes are serviced during the school day by a certified ESOL teacher. These times may be modified throughout the school year to meet the students' language needs. English Learners are encouraged to use the language of their culture and bring their language experiences to share with their peers. This practice supports international mindedness and cultural awareness amongst all students. All teachers provide support to the English Learners in a variety of ways. For example, teachers:

1. Provide extra support with the Unit of Inquiry
2. Provide nonlinguistic representation of words
3. Use sentence frames to give practice with language
4. Scaffold Learning with Native Language
5. Expose scholars to rich language input through shared reading

French Instruction:

French is the additional world language offered at Deerwood Academy. French Instruction is a part of the World Language Program which purpose is to move our scholars towards second language proficiency and biliteracy through engaging instruction with inspiring teachers. The two models of programing is Exposure and Proficiency. The Exposure model focuses on an introduction to culture and language and is taught primarily in English and the Proficiency model is oral and written proficiency; thus, the course is taught primarily in the target language. To help facilitate international open-mindedness and increase personal development, our scholars, 5 to 6 years, receive the exposure model with French instruction twice a week for 45 minutes. Scholars 7 to 11 years, receive the proficiency model with French instruction three times per week for 45 minutes. All teachers provide French instruction to support oral and written language.

The goals of the World Language program are:

- to equip students with the skills that will enable them to function in a language other than their own;
- to develop communication skills that allow students to compete effectively in the global community;
- to develop listening, speaking, reading, writing and cultural competence skills in the target and native languages;
- to use technology and other non-print sources to absorb information; and
- to increase awareness of students' own culture and appreciate the culture(s) of others.

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Assessment:

In foreign language (French), the students are assessed on oral communication, reading, writing and listening comprehension as well as projects. Assessment of language in the classrooms is in the forms of listening, speaking and written (both reading and writing). Work samples, anecdotal notes, written tests, and checklists are various ways to assess language skills and knowledge.

Professional Development:

The faculty and staff at Deerwood Academy need additional training and guidance on utilization of the IBO Language Scope and Sequence. Professional Learning sessions should focus on understanding and implementing the IBO Language Scope and Sequence.

Communicating the Policy

The Language Policy is regularly communicated to all staff members through collaborative dialog during professional learning. The Language Policy is shared with parents and community stakeholders during Parent Academy breakout sessions. Teachers are responsible to communicate this policy to students and parents. At the beginning of each new school year the policy will be shared with faculty during professional learning days and utilized as a working document.

Reviewing the Policy

The school reviewed the Language Policy during the self-study process. The policy will formally be reviewed every four years with all stakeholders.

Resources

At Deerwood we have a Reading Room that provides additional support to language instruction. The reading room houses around 10,000 books. This room has various collections of books such as leveled books based on guided reading levels, chapter books, comprehension sets, lexile sets, and texts sets. Teachers use these books to support language instruction in the classroom.

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References

Assessment Policy of Deerwood Academy 2013

Language Scope and Sequence. IBO, 2009

World Language Program of Atlanta Public Schools.
<http://www.atlanta.k12.ga.us/Page/1027>

English to Speakers of Other Languages Department of Atlanta Public Schools.
<http://www.atlanta.k12.ga.us/Page/880>