



LANGUAGE POLICY

Philosophy

Language is a vital tool that empowers us to acquire knowledge, communicate in many fashions for many purposes, and to different audiences in our global society. It promotes international understanding, cultural identity, and personal growth. Language learning is essential in all areas of the curriculum; it provides for the construction of meaning and creative expression. We believe in the importance of using every learning experience as a vehicle to teach language and see all teachers as language teachers. We aim to nurture an appreciation of the richness and diversity of other languages by fostering the acquisition of more than one language.

Elementary School Language Profile

Language	Percentage of Students
English	14%
Spanish	79%
Portuguese	1%
Japanese	1%
Mandarin	2%
French	2%
German	1%

Although Spanish is the mother tongue for a high percentage of our student population, parents seek to educate their children in an English speaking school. They recognize English as the language of international communication that facilitates multicultural exchange in an increasing international world.

Language of Instruction English

All students at Robinson School receive an enriched language instruction in which English is the primary language. Students are taught usage of English through classroom instruction in all components of language. The components are interrelated, and mastery of each leads to the development of others. Incorporating the components of language into all disciplines is imperative to the success of the students' language development. The mastery of the essential language skills- reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing is a vital part of students overall language development and is present in the teaching of all subjects.



Spanish

In addition to English, Spanish instruction is offered for a 40 minute period each day. It is taught from pre-pre Kinder to sixth grade. Spanish instruction aims at helping students maintain fluency in their mother tongue, support development of literary skills and celebrate their Spanish culture. From a social perspective, our students are at ease in engaging in both languages. These languages are interrelated and support and extend the IB units of inquiry. “Children who come to school with a solid foundation in their mother tongue develop stronger literacy abilities in the school language”. Cummins (2001)

Mother Tongue Support

We currently serve students whose mother tongue is Portuguese, French, Japanese, Mandarin, and German. The school provides two support programs on a daily basis to gain proficiency in English and Spanish. Students are given a language proficiency test to create an educational plan that provides support to ELL and SSL students to meet language standards as well as content standards. The duration of the educational plan is determined by the students’ language needs and abilities and are adjusted throughout the school year accordingly.

We are in the midst of developing additional support for students whose mother tongue is one other than English and/or Spanish by:

- Celebrating their heritage through school activities: International Language Day celebrations, reading circles in mother tongue languages, and connecting our inquiry units to their cultures for a more enriching experience.
- Expanding our library collection to include books and other resources in their mother tongue.
- Inviting parents and family members as guest speakers to share with students their culture, language and traditions.
- Offer more opportunities for language classes in our After School Program “Beyond the Bell”.
- Provide professional development for teachers to create a multiliteracy community.

Other Language Needs

Not all students are proficient language learners. For this reason, Robinson offers a well designed network of services to ensure the well-being and academic growth of all students. The services include: Reading Specialist, Speech and Language Therapy, Orton Gillingham reading Instruction and special education.

Reading Specialist - works as a pull-out specialist to reinforce phonemic awareness, fluency and reading comprehension.



Speech and language therapy- is provided by a certified professional to students that present a developmental delay in speech and language.

Orton Gillingham- teachers work with students after school providing them multisensory reading instruction.

Special Education- Recognizing the importance of language in all learning experiences, the school offers special education services (English and Spanish) to students with a Language Based Learning Disability. These students need to be serviced within a more systematic and skill based educational program due to a specific learning disability that requires specialized teaching. By offering a skill based instruction within the school's curriculum, the program aims to develop strong reading and writing skills in students with a language based disability, teach compensatory strategies and give each student an awareness of his/her particular learning style so as to be able to advocate for themselves beyond their Robinson School years. In response to the complexity of this neurological disorder, students are given the opportunity of a diverse range of pathways to help them be successful through the curriculum, opening opportunities for mainstreaming into the regular classroom while respecting that inclusion will always be contingent to the unique learning challenges of each individual (for more information see Special Needs Policy).

Resources:

Guidelines for developing a school language policy, IBO

Making the PYP Happen, A curriculum framework for international education

Language Scope and Sequence, IBO

J. Cummins (2001) Bilingual Children's Mother tongue: Why is it important for education?