



Language Policy

At Lakewood Catholic Academy, we understand the critical role that language plays in acquiring knowledge in all content areas, in communicating, in building relationships, and in breaking down barriers between people. We are committed to developing global citizens who are strong communicators.

In order to develop internationally minded citizens, who “will help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect” (*International Baccalaureate Mission Statement*), all LCA teachers must be language teachers. Furthermore, our classrooms are designed provide a rich language environment that will provide students with the opportunity to:

- Have frequent and consistent opportunities to listen, read, write, view, and present in all content areas. These skills will be developed both as independent and interdependent skills. Students in MYP Years 1, 2, and 3 will participate in language and literature classes every day throughout the school year.
- Learn and master content area vocabulary to ensure that students have the necessary tools to establish a solid foundation in every discipline and to effectively communicate their knowledge. Teachers will provide direct instruction of vocabulary and employ a variety of techniques and strategies that appeal to various learning modalities in order to ensure that all students have access to the content vocabulary. Unit plans will include content area vocabulary that will be used throughout the unit.
- Be exposed to a broad range of literature and literary genres that reflect a variety of cultures, perspectives, and historical periods. A minimum of one unit of world literature will be taught each year of the program.
- Develop literacy and critical literacy by focusing on the Approaches to Learning skills at increasing levels of complexity throughout the MYP years. Students will be called upon to analyze, organize, produce text, and use language appropriately in order to meet the objectives of the language and literature curriculum.

- Honor the mother tongue of non-native speakers and encourage non-native speakers to continue the study of their mother tongue.
- Be exposed to a second language throughout their years at Lakewood Catholic Academy. The focus of the language acquisitions will range from learning simple vocabulary, songs, and dances in the early years to a more formal study of the structure and grammar of a second language during the Middle Years Program.
- Have access to resources that are written in the languages that are taught in our language acquisition classes as well as resources that represent different cultures.

Language Acquisition

Language acquisition classes are offered beginning in preschool and continue through eighth grade. We believe that this early exposure to a second language furthers the International Baccalaureate's goals to:

- Promote international mindedness;
- Deepen a student's understanding of the structure of language and draw connections to their own language;
- Encourage students to explore different perspectives.

The frequency of language instruction at Lakewood Catholic Academy is as follows:

Age 3 to Grade 4: Spanish one class period per week

Grade 5: Spanish two class periods per week

Grade 6 (MYP Year 1): Students will experience a "language carousel" equivalent to more than 50 hours of instruction throughout Year 1. They will have Spanish class two periods per week for one semester and French class two periods per week for the following semester. At the conclusion of MYP Year 1, students will choose their language acquisition class for MYP Years 2 and 3.

Grades 7 and 8 (MYP Years 2 and 3): Students will study Spanish or French Four class periods per week throughout Years 2 and 3. The goal of these courses is for students to be able to "understand and use print-based and digital spoken, written and visual text." (*MYP Language Acquisition Guide, p. 8*)

Language acquisition classrooms in Years 1, 2, and 3 are conducted primarily in the language of instruction (Language B).

Support for Struggling Language Learners

Recognizing that a strong foundation in language is critical to all content areas, LCA provides a variety of assistance for students who struggle with language learning. These services range from informal tutoring sessions with a classroom teacher to intensive intervention services with education specialists. (*See LCA Special Needs Policy.*)

Support of English Language Learners

The LCA community is enriched by the presence of students who are non-native English speakers. Accommodations are made in the classroom to ensure a smooth transition to an English speaking environment as well as to meet with academic success.

Assessment

Teachers will use the Required Assessment Criteria in the Language and Literature Guide as well as Language Acquisition Guide in designing both formative and summative assessments. These assessments will vary throughout the school year and may take the form of projects, essays, written tests, performances, or other evidence of learning appropriate to the content.

Future Considerations

Currently, more than 97% of LCA's student population speaks fluent English. It is our hope that LCA will eventually attract students from other cultures because of the International Baccalaureate Program. When that occurs we understand that it will be necessary for us to further develop programs to support students whose native tongue is not English.

Although the vast majority of our students are fluent English speakers, more than 12% of our students also speak another language in their homes. We consider these students and their families a resource that can help advance our goal to educate internationally minded students who respect the traditions and values of other cultures. We will explore ways to further celebrate and share the cultural and linguistic traditions of our community.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, a team of teachers, administrators, and members of the community will review this policy yearly and make appropriate revisions.

Bibliography

Middle Years Program Language Acquisition Guide. Cardiff, Wales: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014. Print.

MYP: From Principles into Practice. Cardiff, Wales: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2014. Print.