

# The International School of Belgrade Language Policy and Practices

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### Glossary

ISB	International School of Belgrade
EAL	English as an Additional Language
IB	International Baccalaureate
PYP	Primary Years Programme
MYP	Middle Years Programme
DP	Diploma Programme

## ISB Philosophy

The International School of Belgrade (ISB) is committed to being a Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive school community and will actively seek to embody these values in all aspects of school life. ISB is committed to being proactive in promoting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within the language program.

### The role of language

At ISB, we believe that language is integral to exploring (promoting/pursuing/discovering) and sustaining our social and personal development, as well as our identity, and is the foundation for all learning. Language also plays a vital role in the construction of meaning. It empowers the learner and provides an intellectual framework to support conceptual development and critical thinking.

We endeavor to develop a lifelong passion for the learning of languages and a love of literature. As such, ISB values and promotes intercultural understanding, multilingualism, international mindedness and mother tongue development.

### Intercultural understanding

We nurture and celebrate the cultural and linguistic diversity in our community. All languages are celebrated in our community as we recognise the social importance, educational value and comfort of people speaking the language of their choice.

### Multilingualism

Multilingualism is viewed as “An individual store of languages at any level of proficiency including partial competence and incomplete fluency as well as metalinguistic awareness, learning strategies and opinions, preferences and passive or active knowledge of languages, language use and language learning” In IB programmes, multilingualism is viewed as a fact, a right and a resource. (Language and Learning in IB programmes 2014)

### International mindedness

Language provides a vehicle for learners to engage with the world, relate to, and accept, responsibility for the mission of the IB to “Help to create a better and more peaceful world.” This is expressed through the IB Learner Profile in being a caring, open-minded and principled communicator (Language and Learning in IB programmes 2014). Exposure to and experience with languages, with all their richness and diversity, creates an inquisitiveness about life and learning, and a confidence about creating new social interactions.

### Mother tongue development

Mother tongue development is significant for all learners. It is acknowledged that the development of a person’s mother tongue is crucial for cognitive development, and in maintaining cultural and linguistic identity. Success in mother tongue development is a strong predictor of long-term academic achievement, including the acquisition of other languages. In accordance with the IB philosophy, students who have a strong base in one language are better able to transfer skills and concepts, and learn another language. Having a strong foundation in their home language while studying in another enables students to reach academic success and enjoy a greater feeling of self-worth and cultural identity.

ISB also recognizes that in some cases students’ best academic language is English due to their schooling at international schools. ISB recognizes that each child’s linguistic and cultural ‘make-up’ is unique and must be respected and supported in every way.



## Language Policy – A Conceptual Framework of Language and Learning

Language learning in school is crucial for academic cognitive growth and the construction of knowledge. All students move along a continuum of language and learning and some of the complexity of the relationship between language and learning is expressed by Halliday (1985) “learning language, learning through language and learning about language,” where all three aspects operate at any one time.

### Learning Language

A child starts to communicate in the early stages of life and learns to use language in order to construct meaning and to interact. In addition to building up a resource for meaning, the child develops basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) – the dimension of language that will enable them to interact socially. Students who have communicative skills in a mother tongue may become functional in another language within two years.

### Learning through Language (CALP)

The development of academic language skills required for discourse in abstract and decontextualized settings in later schooling is referred to as CALP – cognitive academic language proficiency. To be successful in school, students must have an understanding and ability to use a variety of discourses and texts across the many subjects they study. All teachers are responsible for the development of their students’ CALP abilities in the discourses or discipline that they teach – it is in this sense that all teachers are language teachers.

### Learning about Language

Understanding the relationship of language and meaning and how language works in the construction of knowledge empowers the language user. Having critical language awareness will enable the student to make choices about language use according to his or her purpose and audience and also to gain insight into the language choices of others. Learners who are using a language other than their mother tongue might not always have this awareness and for this reason learning about language needs to be explicitly taught.

## Procedures and curriculum

All teachers are language teachers, who highlight the role of language across the domains as transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary within disciplines. Language acquisition is supported by a language rich environment which embraces the diversity of languages, cultures and perspectives in all learning spaces. In our public spaces there is an array of different languages in our group interactions. We are respectful about the way in which we use and interact with language. Teachers model language usage and attitudes to language and literature in all our learning spaces. The practice of translating information and communicating ideas and understandings in other languages is used in order to support our learners.

We believe that the following essential dimensions of good teaching practice can promote the full development of language learning for all members of our learning community regardless of language background: to **affirm** identity; to **activate** prior understanding and **build** background knowledge; to **scaffold** learning and to **extend** language and learning.

## Primary Years Programme (PYP) Courses

Language is the major connecting element across the curriculum. The focus is on how language is used across subject areas and throughout the transdisciplinary programme of inquiry. In an inquiry-based classroom, language instruction is integrated into all learning activities. Teachers strive to develop a caring language community in which all students feel accepted and confident in taking risks in their language learning. (Adapted from *Making the PYP Happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education p69*)

### Courses offered

#### Language A

- English
- Serbian Mother Tongue
- Other Mother Tongue Languages (After School Program)

#### Foreign Language

- EAL
- French
- Spanish

### English and EAL

#### Curriculum

ISB recognizes that developing basic interpersonal communication skills can take up to two years, while the more demanding cognitive academic language proficiency, the level of English language competence required to have adequate access in the mainstream curriculum, can take much longer to fully develop. For this reason, ISB considers EAL to be a long-term commitment.

#### Practices

- Students who are new to English will enter the EAL program and instruction will be focused on acquiring social language skills.
- Students who have had some exposure to English are observed by the EAL and homeroom teachers over a two-week period in order to assess their ability to study in English and determine their placement in the EAL program.



The process consists of an oral interview as well as reading and writing tasks, if appropriate, that are conducted informally. The EAL team may also use the WIDA Assessment to determine a student's language proficiency in all 4 domains- Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing.

- Gradually EAL Instruction moves from a focus on social to academic English and the skills needed to be successful in the content areas.
- Individualized and specialized instruction enables the full range of learners from non-English speaking backgrounds (from beginners to high intermediate) to receive English language instruction and support either in small groups or as individual instruction.
- Students attend EAL as their foreign language class. See below for information regarding Serbian Mother-tongue students who are new to the English language.
- In their homeroom classrooms, EAL students follow the same curriculum as their peers
- The EAL specialist teachers plan with the grade level teams and assist EAL students with mainstream content as well as general language acquisition.

### Students exit the program based on the following criteria:

- Mainstream classroom performance (including teacher evidence of student speaking, listening, reading and written performance)
- EAL assessment (including WIDA assessment where appropriate)
- EAL and Homeroom Teacher recommendations based on progress
- Social-cultural adjustment

EAL teachers, together with classroom teachers and the administration, determine when an EAL student is ready to start a foreign language.

## Serbian Mother Tongue

### Curriculum

The ISB Serbian Mother Tongue Program enables Serbian students to increase their fluency and to study Serbian literature and culture. In addition to developing language and literature concepts and skills, drawn from the Serbian National Curriculum, students are also provided with insights into the historical and cultural background of Serbia.

### Practices

- The PYP Serbian Mother Tongue Program is highly recommended for all students whose family/ mother tongue language is Serbian. New students with a strong foundation in Serbian mother tongue and little or no English may be pulled out of the Serbian Mother Tongue Program and placed in the EAL program for the duration of up to one school year. This is a joint decision made by the homeroom teacher, EAL teacher and Serbian teacher. In case of a disagreement the final decision will be made by the primary principal.
- Serbian mother tongue students attend Serbian language lessons instead of taking a foreign language.
- Push-in or pull-out support is provided to students in need of further English language development.
- Students who are not Serbian but have a strong foundation in Serbian language may be placed in Serbian Mother Tongue class upon the request of parents. Upon enrolment these students go through a two-week observation period by their Serbian language teacher to determine their proficiency in Serbian language.

## Other Mother Tongues

### Curriculum

The Mother Tongue Program is offered to families with children who do not speak English or Serbian as their mother



tongue. The curriculum is developed by the teacher according to the needs of the family. The purpose of the program is to help children maintain the languages spoken at home which are not offered within the school day.

## Practices

- Mother Tongue teachers can be ISB teachers or externally hired. The school provides organizational back-up, allocates classrooms, holds meetings and social get-togethers, and helps to manage situations that may arise.
- Information about the program is sent home to parents at the start of the school year, and groups are formed according to students' interest and teacher availability.
- Lessons are scheduled on Wednesdays during our Flex learning program (grades 3-5) or after school.

## Foreign Language Acquisition

### Curriculum

Foreign Language acquisition at ISB is designed for students who would like to enhance their understanding of a target culture and its people through language and, as such, aims to develop children's fundamental language skills and enable them to understand and communicate in the target language.

Instruction addresses the language learning outcomes of the Lower School Language B Scope and Sequence and framed around units in the Programme of Inquiry.

From grades 1 to 5, students proficient in English can choose one of the following foreign languages: French or Spanish. At the end of Kindergarten, a survey is sent home to choose the language for grade 1.

Serbian as a foreign language is offered on Monday after school.

## Practices

- Language teaching follows the pedagogy of the PYP in that learning engagements are inquiry based and student input is included in the development of both learning engagements and assessment tasks.
- The instruction occurs in the target language as much as possible, but students get help in English when necessary.
- Differing levels of acquisition in one group are commonplace, so teachers differentiate instruction to address the needs of individual students and allow construction of understanding at an appropriate pace.
- Students are provided with opportunities to practice and master the following language skills: speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and presenting. They are also given opportunities to explore language in the cultural context.
- Students are encouraged to continue learning their chosen language throughout their stay at ISB lower school.
- From 2021-22 school year, students in Kindergarten will receive an initiation of one trimester in Spanish, French and Serbian.

## Middle Year Programme (MYP) Courses

Learning to communicate in a variety of ways in more than one language is fundamental to the development of intercultural understanding in the IB. The MYP curriculum supports complex, rich, dynamic learning across a range of language domains.

### Courses offered

#### Language and Literature

- English
- Serbian

#### Language Acquisition

- EAL
- French
- Spanish

#### Flex Learning

Students who would like to further develop their Mother tongue can choose to participate in a language class organized during the flex learning period on Wednesdays.

## English Language and Literature

### Curriculum

The curriculum of English language and literature is designed to engage students in the study of many aspects of English language and literature. Students explore a collection of texts that span both place and time, written by authors from around the world, in both historical and modern contexts. They study various genres of literary and non-literary texts, including poetry, novels, plays, and documentaries, and develop their oral and written communication skills.

### Practices

- All MYP students are required to study English Language and Literature.
- MYP English language and literature course includes study of language and a range of literature.
- Students in phases 1 through 4 of English language acquisition are placed in an EAL course in addition to their English Language and Literature course.
- EAL students in phases 1 and 2 are assessed according to language acquisition criteria and receive a NG (no grade) in Language and Literature reports.
- EAL students in phases 3 and 4 are assessed according to the Language and Literature criteria and receive NG (no grade) in Language Acquisition criteria.

## Serbian Language and Literature

### Curriculum

The curriculum of the Serbian language and literature course is designed to engage students in the study of many aspects of Serbian language and world literature. This is done through the study of Serbian and world authors, with a specific insight into and focus on Serbian culture and history. Students study a wide range of literary and non-literary text types, writing styles and techniques, as well as learning grammar and punctuation rules. This approach allows students to comment on the significance of any possible contexts, audiences, purpose, and the use of linguistic and literary devices.



## Practices

- Students whose mother tongue is Serbian are strongly recommended to study Serbian language and literature.
- Students who are not yet sufficiently proficient in English take EAL instead of Serbian language and literature. Once they reach phase 5 in English, they will exit EAL and join the Serbian language and literature class.
- From 2021-22 school year, students in Serbian Language and literature in grade 6 will have the option to choose one language acquisition (French or Spanish) for one lesson per week.

## Language Acquisition

### Curriculum

ISB offers two foreign languages in the language acquisition program: French and Spanish. The curriculum of Language acquisition classes provides students with the opportunity to develop insights into the features, processes and craft of language and the concept of culture, and to realize that there are diverse ways of living, viewing and behaving in the world. The curriculum is designed to support the development of the students' academic communication in the language of their choice. This is done through various concept-based learning engagements that allow students to develop, practice, and apply strategies for reading, writing, listening and oral communication.

The IB continuum for MYP is as followed:

Start of MYP 1	MYP	
Schools may offer introductory MYP language acquisition courses (languages carousel courses) and consider the student's previous learning in the language during primary school education in order to determine placement. Refer to the written and taught curriculum requirements section in this guide.	<b>Emergent</b>	<b>Phase 1</b>
		<b>Phase 2</b>
	<b>Capable</b>	<b>Phase 3</b>
		<b>Phase 4</b>
	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Phase 5</b>
		<b>Phase 6</b>

### Practices:

- MYP students are enrolled in a language acquisition course once they reach phase 5 in English.
- Students are expected to study the same additional language in each year of the MYP, or achieve a satisfactory proficiency in phase 4 or receive approval from the Leader of Learning for World Languages in order to transfer to another language.
- Language teaching follows the pedagogy of the MYP in that learning engagements are inquiry based and student input is included in the development of both learning engagements and assessment tasks.
- The oral instruction occurs in the target language as much as possible, but students get help in English when necessary. The written instructions are in the target language only.
- Differing levels of acquisition in one group are commonplace, so teachers differentiate instruction to address the needs of individual students and allow construction of understanding at an appropriate pace.
- Students are provided with opportunities to practice and master the following language skills: speaking, listening,



reading, writing. They are also given opportunities to explore language in the cultural context.

## English as an Additional Language (EAL)

### Curriculum

The curriculum for EAL language acquisition classes provides students with the opportunity to develop insights into the features, processes and craft of language and the concept of culture, and to realize that there are diverse ways of living, viewing and behaving in the world. The curriculum is designed to support the development of the students' academic communication in English. This is done through various concept-based learning engagements that allow students to develop, practice, and apply strategies for reading, writing, listening and oral communication.

EAL follows the MYP aims and objectives and specific learning needs of the students in order to support the student's mainstream classes. The focus of the course is to develop and improve the students' English language skills to ensure the necessary academic language for success in the mainstream courses.

### Practices

- Students who have had some exposure to English are observed by the EAL and subject teachers in order to assess their ability to study in English and determine their placement in the EAL program. The process consists of using the WIDA Assessment to determine a student's language proficiency in all 4 domains-Speaking, Listening, Reading and writing.
- EAL language support takes place both as in-class support and as pull-out instruction (in the EAL classroom as needed).
- Students in phases 1 through 4 of English language acquisition are placed in an EAL course in addition to their English Language and Literature course.
- EAL students in phases 1 and 2 are assessed according to language acquisition criteria and receive a NG (no grade) in Language and Literature reports.
- EAL students in phases 3 and 4 are assessed according to the Language and Literature criteria and receive NG (no grade) in Language Acquisition criteria.
- The EAL specialist teachers work collaboratively with subject teachers and assist EAL students with mainstream content as well as general language acquisition.

### Students exit the program based on the following criteria:

- Feedback from subject teachers and quarterly reviews will determine when an EAL student is ready to follow another language and mainstream courses without EAL support.
- EAL and subject teacher recommendations based on progress
- The use of WIDA assessment is used to monitor progress.
- Social-cultural adjustment

## Diploma Programme (DP) Courses

### Curriculum

The curriculum framework for language courses is devised by the IB and follows its curriculum review cycle. Using the IB framework from the current IB guides, ISB teachers develop a detailed two-year program that will enable students to be successful in the course and its final IB exams.

### Practices

- Students choose their Diploma Group 1 and 2 languages, during the final MYP year (grade 10).
- All ISB students have to have English as either Group 1 or Group 2 language.
- Student's Group 1 language is either their Mother Tongue, or their best language.
- If students choose two languages from Group 1, they do not need to choose a Group 2 language (for ex. English Language and Literature and Serbian Literature, or Korean School Supported Self-Taught, Literature and English Language and Literature), they will then receive a bilingual Diploma.
- Language teachers use diagnostic tests developed by the school beside other assessment tools, to decide the best placement for the student in the Diploma program.
- English B is only offered at a Higher Level.
- Group 2 foreign language choice depends on the student's previous exposure.
- ISB also offers IB languages online.
- DP (Language acquisition) B level (Standard and Higher Level) - Students are eligible if they have previously studied the language for at least two consecutive years for the Standard Level course or reached a phase 3 level, and four or more years for the Higher Level course or reached a phase 4 level.
- DP languages *ab initio*. Students are eligible only if they have no or limited exposure to the language (up to one school year).

### Courses Offered

#### Group 1 - Language and Literature or Literature

- English A Language & Literature (SL/HL)
- Serbian A Literature (SL/HL)
- School Supported Self-paid Literature (SSST)

#### Group 2 - Language acquisition

- English (HL)
- French (SL/HL)
- German *ab initio* (SL)
- Spanish (SL/HL)
- Spanish *ab initio* – online (SL)
- Mandarin *ab initio* - online (SL)
- French *ab initio* - online (SL)

### Language and Literature or Literature

A student's Group 1 course will either be a Language and Literature or Literature course.

ISB practice in language courses aims to develop a student's powers of expression, encourage appreciation of the formal, stylistic and aesthetic qualities of texts, introduce students to a range of texts from different periods, styles and genres, encourage through the study of texts an appreciation of the different perspectives of people from other cultures, and promote in students an enjoyment of, and lifelong interest in, language and literature.



ISB offers English Language and Literature as English is the language of instruction in our school community. Serbian Literature is regularly offered for students whose mother tongue is Serbian. Students wishing to study their mother tongue are able to do that as a self taught course. Languages B not offered at the school are supported in taking a Self-paid course.

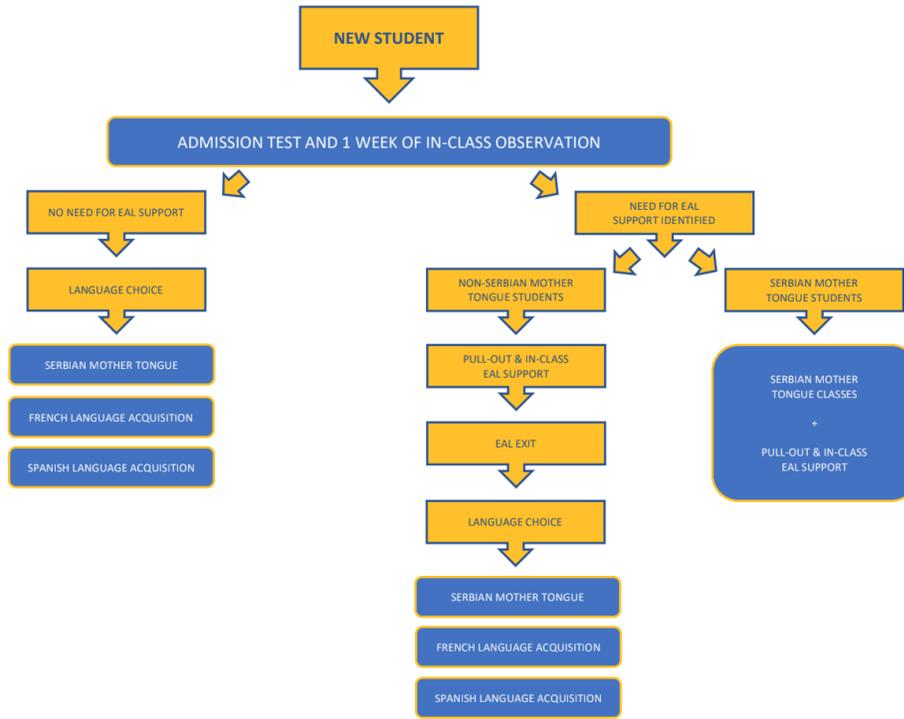
ISB encourages and provides all students with the opportunity to maintain and further develop their mother tongue in the DP programme. Some of the School Supported Self-paid languages studied in the DP have been Hebrew, Lithuanian, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Polish, Hindi, Norwegian, Italian, French, Turkish, Russian etc.

## Language B

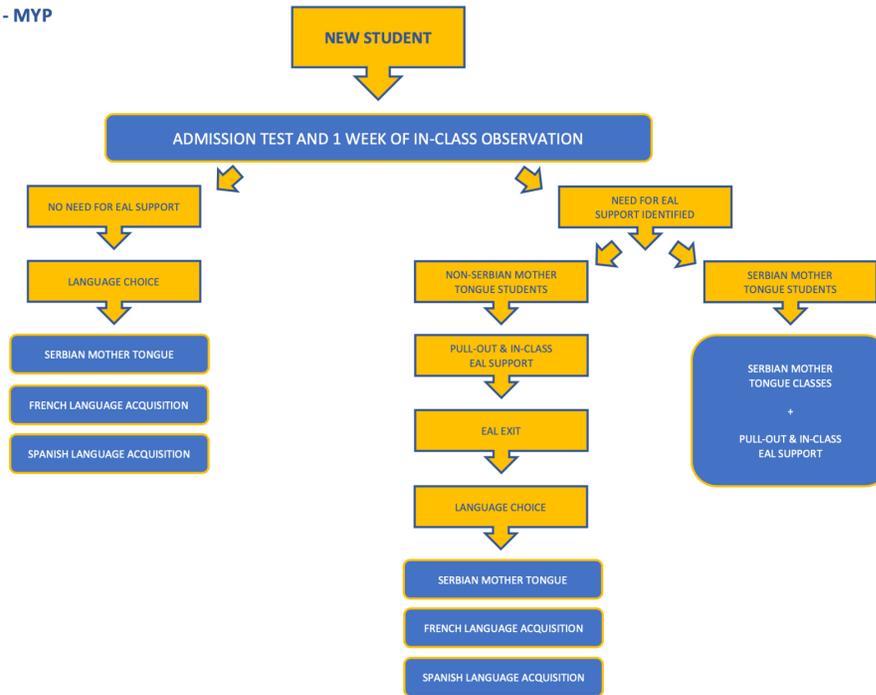
These language courses aim to accommodate different levels of linguistic proficiency that students may have at the start of the course. Overall, the aims of language acquisition are to develop students intercultural understanding, enable students to understand and use the language in a range of contexts and for a variety of purposes, develop students' awareness of the relationship between languages and cultures, and provide the opportunity for enjoyment, creativity and intellectual stimulation through knowledge of an additional language.

## Appendices

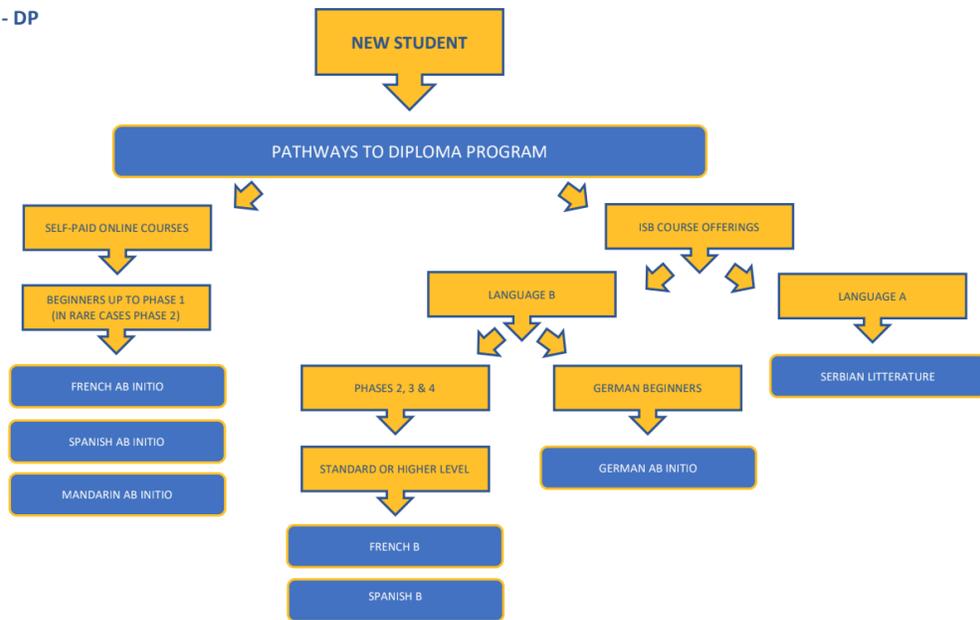
### ISB PLACEMENT PROCEDURES PRIMARY SCHOOL



## ISB PLACEMENT PROCEDURES SECONDARY SCHOOL - MYP



## ISB PLACEMENT PROCEDURES SECONDARY SCHOOL - DP



## References



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- Developing Academic Literacy in IB Programmes (August 2014 IBO)
- Diploma Language Guides (first examinations 2015 IBO)
- Guidelines for developing a school language policy (2008 IBO)
- Guidelines for school self-reflection on its language policy (2012 IBO)
- <http://www.linguistic-declaration.org/index-gb.htm>
- Jim Cummins Model (2007)
- Language and Learning in IB Programmes (August 2012 IBO)
- Learning in a language other than mother tongue in IB programmes (2007 IBO)
- Making the PYP happen: A curriculum framework for international primary education (December 2009 IBO)
- MYP Language guides (2014 IBO)
- PYP Language scope and sequence (February 2009 IBO)
- UNESCO Declaration of Linguistic Rights Article 3.1  
[ISB Teaching and learning guide](#)