



ESL Curriculum Policy

Traill International School

English as a Second Language (ESL) Curriculum Policy

Mission

The ESL programme at TIS strives to support ESL students until they are able to function independently, both academically and socially, in the mainstream classroom. To this end, a supportive environment is provided in both ESL and mainstream classes to encourage students to take risks in their language learning and increase their self-confidence. Language is taught and practised within natural contexts and meaningful situations, and the acquisition of language is stressed over simply "learning" language. We are committed to the support of parents in working with their children at home.

Aims

As the social and academic integration of the students into the mainstream classroom is the overall goal of the ESL programme, ESL students need to achieve a sufficient level of English to allow a full and successful transition into the TIS academic programme. In order to help the students achieve this level, we have goals in the following areas:

Content:

- reinforce and pre-teach the concepts from mainstream classroom subjects
- enable independent learning through the correct use of resources
- develop thinking skills and study strategies
 - develop an awareness of English language cultural norms

Skills: Listening, Reading, Speaking, Writing

Students should develop:

- the ability to understand ordinary spoken English statements, questions and instructions and to respond to significant variations in the spoken language.
- the ability to produce the sounds of English and achieve international intelligibility in the construction of well-formed statements, questions and instructions in conversation with others.
- the ability to comprehend written English, taking into account each student's reading level.
- the ability to construct well-formed sentences and coherent paragraphs in written English.

Attitude:

- encourage risk taking and view mistakes as a learning opportunity



ESL Curriculum Policy

- build self-confidence
- instil a positive attitude towards new language and culture
- value language as a means of understanding and communicating with the world around us
- instil patience with themselves and others in the language acquisition process
- encourage students to persevere

Teaching Objectives

- The teaching objectives for the ESL programme at Traill International School are based on the student's language proficiency in all four skill areas (reading, writing, speaking, listening). These objectives can be used as exit criteria for each level in the assessment of student language ability at their year level.
- It should be stressed that the language acquisition process is unique for each child and it is possible that some students may make more progress in some skill areas than others. Therefore, it is possible that a student may advance to the next level of proficiency based on their strengths in some skill areas, but still need practice in other skills at a lower level.

Beginner

By the end of this level, the student should be able to:

Reading - identify numbers, as well as the letters and sounds of the alphabet construct meaning from non-print features (illustrations, graphs, maps, tables, etc.), as well as from simple words and sentences; track text from top to bottom, left to right; use a picture dictionary to identify everyday objects.

Writing - generate numbers, the letters of the alphabet and simple texts which reflect knowledge of basic spelling, vocabulary and syntax and which may contain pictorial representations to convey meaning.

Speaking - ask basic questions and make statements, using non-verbal communication, single words or simple phrases, to express simple needs, feelings and desires, or to respond to stories, pictures, etc; begin to use English spontaneously.

Listening - understand and respond to basic request, questions and statements.

Intermediate:

By the end of this level, the student should be able to:



ESL Curriculum Policy

Reading- understand simplified and levelled texts (200-1700 words) for which they have background knowledge; use various reading strategies (prediction, context, pictures, etc.) to construct meaning from unfamiliar texts; use a simple dictionary or other reference source to identify unfamiliar words.

Writing- generate more complex texts, a wider variety of texts and more coherent texts than beginners: generate texts which reflect a growing command of English spelling, vocabulary and syntax conventions.

Speaking - use simple sentences to express thoughts which are comprehensible and appropriate; show increasing command of vocabulary and syntax; use English spontaneously.

Listening - understand stock vocabulary words and phrases covering many daily situations; begin to understand more complex sentence structures and academic language.

Advanced:

By the end of this level, the student should be able to.

Reading - read with fluency at year level; read independently with minimal comprehension problems; locate and identify specific facts within texts; begin to understand texts that are presented in a decontextualised manner or that contain complex sentence structure or abstract vocabulary.

Writing - produce texts independently for personal and academic purposes; produce texts in which the structures, vocabulary, and overall organisation approximate those of native speakers, with minimal errors.

Speaking- use more complex sentences for daily communication needs; use English spontaneously in new or unfamiliar settings.

Listening- understand most day-to-day conversations, academic language and many complex sentence structures; begin to understand idioms, figures of speech, words with multiple meanings and abstract academic concepts.

Instructional Approaches

The objectives of the ESL programme are achieved through a child-centred approach to language instruction, in which needs of the ESL student direct the effective teaching of the language objectives. With this in mind, the following instructional approaches are used in the teaching of ESL:

1) The language programme is a balanced one in which all four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are equally emphasised and integrated with one another (as opposed to taught in isolation).



ESL Curriculum Policy

2) Language teaching is linked to other areas of the curriculum through theme-based topics and/or content work from the mainstream classroom. Since the main goal of the ESL programme is the academic and social integration of the ESL student into mainstream classroom, it is important that the language objectives are taught through the content and attitude goals set forth in this document (i.e. mainstream topics, culture awareness and language learning strategies) so ESL students have the same background knowledge, skills, strategies and concepts as their peers in the mainstream classroom.

3) Each child is treated as an individual who progresses at his/her own pace and who has an individual learning style. A variety of methods and materials are used to meet different language learning styles of children, including visual learners, auditory learners and kinesthetic learners. These include, but are not limited to:

- Art projects (crafts, drawing, painting)
- Communicative activities (whole group and pair work, discussion, games)
- Drama and movement (role-plays, dialogues, skits, Total Physical Response, pantomime) Music (songs, instruments)
- Repetition, oral-aural drills, worksheets
- Literature (rhymes, stories, poems, reading aloud, questions, writing activities)
- Real life experiences (field trips, speakers, student-led interests and projects)
- Media (magazines, newspapers, audio and video cassettes, Internet websites, CD-ROMS, computer programs word processing, website building, etc.)
- Realia (board games, pictures, puppets, maps, sensory-related objects)

Assessment Methods:

Internal Assessment

Initial Assessment of skills (Reading, Writing / Spelling, Speaking and Listening) is given upon student's entry into ESL programme to help the ESL teacher place the student in the correct level of instruction and to apply a programme of study based on their individual needs. These assessments will vary according to grade level but may include a writing sample, initial spelling test, reading fluency and comprehension tests and / or observations about listening / speaking skills.

Formative Assessment is on-going throughout the school year. This type of assessment can be thought of as a 'check up' on how students are progressing. Results from this assessment will help ESL teachers to adjust their planning to better facilitate student learning. In addition, it provides feedback to students and parents about their progress. Assessment options are discussed below.

Final Assessment is given at the end of every term. It provides information about how much a student has retained over a period of time. ESL teachers will use the objectives set out in this document as assessment



ESL Curriculum Policy

criteria to determine the proficiency levels of beginning, intermediate and advanced level students. Assessment options are discussed below.

Assessment Tools

Because of the developmental and multi-faceted nature of language acquisition, it is necessary for ESL teachers to draw on a collection of different assessment tools used over the year to give an accurate description of student progress. Assessment options include:

- Portfolio reflections (a collection of work done over the term, chosen and reflected upon by the student)
- Paper and pencil quizzes and tests
- Teacher observation and anecdotal notes
- Rubrics (i.e. for written assignments)
- Checklist (i.e. for reading skills, grammar)