

The PYP and bilingual education

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Primary Years Programme

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International Baccalaureate Organization (UK) Ltd
Peterson House, Malthouse Avenue, Cardiff Gate
Cardiff, Wales CF23 8GL
United Kingdom
Website: ibo.org

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IB mission statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.



IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

INQUIRERS

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

KNOWLEDGEABLE

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

THINKERS

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

COMMUNICATORS

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

PRINCIPLED

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

OPEN-MINDED

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

CARING

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

RISK-TAKERS

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

BALANCED

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

REFLECTIVE

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

Setting the scene

As an increasing number of schools consider developing bilingual provision, clear guidance is necessary to structure conversations, decisions and implementation. This teacher support material (TSM) is designed to provide a step-by-step process for schools that are interested in exploring the potential of a bilingual programme. Alongside the documents to develop understanding of bilingual models are three school stories. These illustrate different models using the Primary Years Programme (PYP) to meet the needs of different populations. They are meant to support reflective discussions of school context and potential models.

Learning goal	To understand bilingual education models within the PYP and decision-making processes for developing a bilingual programme
Learn about	Language

Background of bilingual education

Bilingual education is becoming increasingly common in schools around the world. There are many reasons why a school may choose to develop a bilingual programme, and it is important to be sure that it is done with clear understandings of both best practice in bilingual education and reflection on the school context. While immersion-style English-medium instruction has prevailed in international education, the growing body of research on the role of the first language in learning has become an important counterpoint to this trend. Schools engage in bilingual education for a variety of reasons, but it must always remain clear that a new school language must never replace the first language of a student. For this reason, there is no “one size fits all” for bilingual education, and each school should investigate their context before deciding on an appropriate bilingual model. The goal of these support materials is to give schools theoretical information about bilingual education as well as practical tools to help decide if bilingual education is appropriate for their school, and to establish what model would work best in their context.

Approaches to bilingualism in education

Broadly speaking, there are two approaches that we refer to in bilingual education. The first is **additive**; contexts in which the students’ first language is valued and expected to continue to develop alongside the addition of a new language through schooling. The second is **subtractive**; contexts in which the students’ first language is either not considered at all or is considered only for its usefulness in acquiring the second language. Schools with an additive approach expect students to add a new language; schools with a subtractive approach replace the students’ own language with the school language (inadvertently or consciously). It goes without saying that all IB World Schools should approach language in education from an additive perspective and develop programmes to support this goal.

The role of the first language in education

The first important point to recognize is that the basis of a child’s cognitive and linguistic development is their first language (**L1**)—the language a baby first engages with through their parents/carers. No matter the goals of the parents or the aspirations of the school, there is a duty of care to safeguard that language and ensure its continued development (Chalmers 2019). For schools that have high levels of linguistic diversity, this means that a bilingual programme cannot easily be based on the L1 and English (or other school language). If these schools want to consider developing a bilingual programme, they need to

carefully consider the tensions surrounding growth of the L1 and the addition of potentially two new languages through education.

Schools that are linguistically homogeneous (local students) have a strong basis to develop an L1/L2 bilingual programme, rather than an **L2**-only (second language) programme. While full immersion may seem preferable, particularly to parents, research strongly supports bilingual models over full immersion in terms of ultimate proficiency in L1, L2 and academic achievement.

Figure 1

There is a duty to safeguard a child's first language



Bilingual programmes

What we know about bilingual programmes

- In additive contexts, bilingual education produces equal or better results in terms of language acquisition and academic achievement compared to monolingual approaches.
This is an important consideration for IB World Schools with local student populations.
- Language-learner students (learning the school language) benefit the most from additive approaches.
This is the case because of the continued support for their own language.
- There is little consistent research on how different allocations of time/language affect bilingual development.
How time is divided is less important than other factors, such as student population.
- Earlier is not always better. Students in **late immersion** programmes quickly catch up with students who started at the beginning of primary school (Mehisto and Genesee 2015).
Full immersion from a very young age isn't necessary, or even always beneficial, depending on the language profile of a child.
- It takes 1–2 years to develop basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) in full-time immersion in a new language at school, and 3–9 years to develop cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins 2008). If students are learning **two** new languages, these time frames are obviously longer.
Schools need to be sure that they can provide proper support for learning both languages—keeping up with content, and maintenance of the first language for these students.
- Not all bilingual programmes are a good fit for every student—the same programme can be additive for one student and subtractive for another.
This is to be considered carefully in bilingual programmes where some students are learning both of the languages, which places them at a significant disadvantage in terms of language and content learning. For these students, continued development in their L1 is critical to success in developing second/additional languages, alongside appropriate support for both languages being learned.
- Bilingual education involves learning, teaching and assessing through two languages of instruction.
Schools need to consider how they will track language and content across two languages in ways that acknowledge the students as **language learners** and not native speakers of both languages (that is, not benchmarking against monolingual native-speaker tests).

Given these considerations, schools need to do a close investigation of their own context, potential models and factors that will influence success with their unique student population before developing a bilingual programme. These support materials are designed to provide support for schools considering a bilingual programme, or for schools that already have a bilingual programme that needs reviewing.

Bilingual programme models

Bilingual programme	Description of goals
Transitional Subtractive approach	To move students towards the majority language and, consequently, away from their own language. Generally, the L1 is used as a tool to develop the L2 but is of lower status and not attended to enough for full academic proficiency to be the goal. Transitional programmes can be

Bilingual programme	Description of goals
	early (1–2 years of primary), middle (3–4 years) or late (end of primary), but the L1 is discontinued in school after the transition point.
Maintenance Subtractive approach	To develop the school (majority) language to full academic proficiency without entirely phasing out the L1. L1 speakers are treated as language learners and the weight of teaching and assessment is in the L2 as soon as feasible.
Prestige/immersion Additive approach	To add a second, usually high status, language to the repertoire of majority language speakers through education. Prestige programmes tend to balance the languages equally, while immersion programmes tend to concentrate high percentages in the lower years, with literacy being taught initially in the L2. Both prestige and immersion programmes are often selective, taking only students who are academically strong.
Developmental Additive approach	To fully develop the first language of the students while also adding the second language as a full academic language. These programmes tend to have higher percentages of the L1 in the early years, and literacy is first in the L1, but both languages are expected to develop to full academic proficiency. In the IB, these programmes would lead naturally to a bilingual diploma.
Two-way developmental Additive approach	Programmes in which (ideally) equal numbers of L1 and L2 speakers are educated in a bilingual programme together. In this way, both sets of students are learners of each other's language, and the two languages are equally valued. In the IB, these programmes would lead naturally to a bilingual diploma.
Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and CLIL-type Additive approach	Programmes in which some subjects are taught in the L2, but not all. The amount varies according to the model used. The goal of these programmes is to introduce the L2 as an academic language, but the chosen model (see the "PYP bilingual models" section) will determine, in part, the level of success. In European contexts, these programmes usually teach mathematics or sciences in English while using the national language for other subjects, but there is variation across contexts.

Figure 2

Learning and teaching through two languages of instruction



PYP bilingual models

The PYP framework offers a variety of possibilities for bilingual programmes. The table below describes some potential programme models, as well as the benefits and challenges they offer. It is important to remember that each programme will interact with the school context, and thus no one programme is the right fit for every school. Characteristics of these programmes can also be combined to create a bespoke programme that fits the needs of your school.

Description of bilingual programme models	Benefits	Challenges
Majority/minority language		
Students choose a “majority” language, which is the language of academic instruction. The minority language is taught as a language, as well as being used in complementary subjects. The minority language may take a greater role after the majority language has Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Best for: Schools where many students will be learning both languages.	Allows students who are learners of both languages to develop CALP in one first, with the second language present in lower-stakes areas. Allows schools to plan for academic development of more than one language in an ethical manner, without overloading students. Ensures that teachers have full oversight of a learner’s progress in the main content areas.	Requires either common agreement on majority/minority language, or two teaching streams. Does not develop academic proficiency in both languages simultaneously. (This is good for the students but can be challenging for parents to accept.) This model works on developing strong skills in one language first, alongside conversational skills in the second school language.
Day on/day off (50/50)		
Language of instruction changes every other day, generally (but not necessarily) between two teachers. Best for: Schools with students who already speak one of the two languages, and in which teachers have ample co-planning time.	Distribution of language across the curriculum is equal. Teachers co-plan for content goals and assessment across languages.	Requires teachers to communicate every day about progress. Can make learning challenging for students because of frequent shifts in language. Requires all specialist subject teachers to move between languages to maintain balance across the curriculum.
Unit-based model		
Language of instruction switches with each unit of inquiry, allowing for 50/50 over a year. Best for: Schools where co-planning time is limited, or where one language is seen as lower status (less likely to be used voluntarily by the students).	Planning is straightforward when working with two teachers. Students have the opportunity to develop each language across a whole unit, deepening understanding of language development.	All curricular areas outside of the unit of inquiry must be planned for in a similar way in order to ensure a balance of languages. Careful alternation of the unit of inquiry is needed across years in order to ensure a balance of transdisciplinary language.
Half-year model		
Full immersion in each language for half of the academic year. Best for: Schools where both languages have a high status and in which support for language	One teacher is responsible for academic content and assessment.	Maintenance of the non-teaching language must be planned for in the “off” half-year. Careful alternation of the unit of inquiry is needed across years to

Description of bilingual programme models	Benefits	Challenges
development outside the school is possible (in the community).	Ensures equal teaching and learning in both languages each year. Lowers the planning load to a reasonable level.	ensure a balance of languages across transdisciplinary learning (that is, students are exposed to subject-specific language within both languages by alternating the units within the programme of inquiry (POI)).
Developmental transitional model		
Teaching is initially weighted to one language and shifts gradually to the other. Typical models are 90/10 or 80/20 moving towards 50/50. Best for: Schools in which the majority of students come from the same language background and are acquiring a new language (often English).	Allows for the continued development of the home language (L1) while the second language (L2) is being developed. Has been shown by research to be a very successful model for both languages and academic content. Allows for students to develop literacy in their own language first.	Can be challenging for parents if they want English language learning from the start. Requires teachers who speak the local language and have experience with the PYP.
Two-way immersion		
Classes are composed of (ideally) equal numbers of speakers of each of the two languages. Best for: Schools that want to balance between the needs of local students learning English (or other school language) and international students learning the local/host-country language.	Students learn from each other, putting all students in the learner and teacher roles. Results favour academic fluency in both languages owing to the nature of the programme and student profiles. Allows host-country/international students to learn together successfully. Supports additive bilingualism in minority/majority contexts.	Not always easy to find students from both language groups—this is especially the case when one of the two languages is of higher language status than the other. One language is often viewed in the community as being less desirable/lower status. This can influence the results of the programme for developing this language to full academic proficiency.
Translanguaging model		
Classes have different compositions of language learners, and language use is flexible for teaching and learning. It may be one bilingual teacher, or one teacher for each language, but the teaching is shared across languages in a flexible and dynamic way. Best for: Schools with a very clear understanding of bilingual development and the willingness to implement a flexible model that requires attention to detail to ensure success. Students would	A dynamic language model that responds to how multilingual learners use their languages and allows language to be seen as a resource for learning. Breaks down the “two solitudes” of bilingual/immersion education.	Tracking the amount of teaching and learning in each language is challenging. Students (and teachers) may have a tendency to resort to the stronger language for “difficult” content, which could have a negative effect on the development of the other language. Can be challenging to explain to parents.

Description of bilingual programme models	Benefits	Challenges
ideally be proficient in one of the two languages.		

Figure 3

Each programme interacts with the school context.



Questions

First impressions

- Would your school be a natural fit for a bilingual programme? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- If your school already has a bilingual programme, which model does it use and how was it developed?

Deepening your understanding

Using the bilingual programme toolkit, outline the context of your school in terms of potential for an additive bilingual programme.

If your school has a bilingual programme, use the bilingual programme toolkit to review and reflect on your programme with your team.

Figure 4

The right model means discussions with the whole learning community



Bilingual programme toolkit

Choosing a framework/developing a programme

Designing, implementing and delivering a bilingual education programme is a complex and profoundly important task. The wide variety of factors that go into making operational decisions on an individual school level can lead schools to adopt a “ready-made” model and programme. However, it is clear from research that the success of any programme depends on how it responds to the needs of the students and how it interacts with the local language ecology (Spiro, J and Crisfield, E, 2018). A good starting point is to choose a model focus (for example, transitional, maintenance), followed by a full survey of the situational, operational and outcome factors using the following critical questions to guide thinking and discussions within the learning community.

- Who is being served with the programme?
- What would we like the programme to help them achieve?
- What are the factors within/outside our control that will promote success?
- What are the factors within/outside our control that may interfere or hinder?

The answers to these first questions will help guide the macro- and micro-decisions that need to be considered in order to develop a cohesive, responsive bilingual programme.

Part I: Local language landscape (for schools with high numbers of local students)

1. Briefly describe the historical context of languages in the learning community.
2. What are the major and minor languages spoken in the area?
3. Describe the local hierarchy between the most-spoken languages in terms of status in relation to each other and to other national languages.
4. What languages are commonly used in schooling in the region?
5. Are there any other characteristics of the local cultural or linguistic landscape that may be relevant to the development and/or implementation of a bilingual programme?

Part II: Contextual characteristics

Nature of students

1. **Numbers:** What is the primary enrollment expected to be? What will the class size be at primary?
2. **Stability:** Is the student body stable, or will there be a significant number of students entering/exiting the programme at interim points?
3. **Socio-economic status:** In terms of socio-economic status, describe the situation of the students in primary and secondary, and their related language background(s).
4. **Home language background:** Describe the language background of the students most likely to be enrolled in the school. Give an overview of all home languages likely to be spoken, as well as an estimate of how many students will speak one/both of the school languages prior to enrollment.
5. **Future schooling:** Will the bilingual PYP feed into a bilingual Middle Years Programme (MYP)/Diploma Programme (DP)?
6. **Bilingual programme:** Reflect on the parent profiles of the school and how their aspirations for their children will impact the implementation and success of a bilingual programme. What role does/would the bilingual programme play in parents' decision to send their child to the school?
7. **Future schooling for graduates:** Describe the likely post-secondary trajectories for graduates in terms of where they are likely to seek further education, and the language priorities related to this.

Background of teachers and teaching assistants

1. **Ethnolinguistic profiles:** Describe where the teachers and teaching assistants are likely to be recruited from, and what their ethnic/linguistic background will be. Reflect on the similarities or differences between student and teacher backgrounds that may be influential in the school.
2. **Degree of bilingualism:** Will the teachers and teaching assistants speak both official languages of the school? Describe the likely staff language situation, including access to the two school languages, and the home language(s) of the students (if different from the two school languages).
3. **Training:** What is the general training background of the teaching staff and teaching assistants? Include what their initial teacher-training background is, as well as what current staff have had for professional development (PD) during their time at the school.
4. **Experience in bilingual programmes:** Describe any experience of, or expertise in, bilingual education or programmes. What was the school programme, and what was the role of the specified teacher in the programme.

Resources

1. **Resources:** What is the availability of teaching resources in the two languages in terms of the curriculum: literacy, maths, programme of inquiry, and so on. What is the quality of these resources?
2. **Teacher support for resourcing:** What resources are available to allow for in-house development of resources in the two languages, or adaptation of pre-existing resources?
3. **Multimedia resources:** What is the local availability of digital and multimedia resources, and what is the availability and reliability of the internet for learning and teaching in both languages?
4. **Additional language support resources:** Are resources available for teaching both languages as additional languages, rather than as instructional languages? If yes, are these resources sufficient or in need of adaptation?
5. **Home languages:** Will the home language(s) of the students, if different from the two school languages, be given support? If yes, in what ways? If not, why not?
6. **Professional development:** What PD opportunities will the school engage in to ensure that all stakeholders are supported in understanding and delivering the new programme?

Part III: Outcomes

1. What are the desired outcomes for the bilingual programme for each of the two languages, and why?
2. Do the stated outcomes meet the linguistic and cultural needs of the students, both in their current educational situation and also for their future possibilities?
3. How will the school support the language and academic needs of students who do not fit easily within the bilingual programme?

Once this data has been collected, the results can be examined in the context of the section “Bilingual programmes” to determine which model might form the best basis for the school to develop as a bilingual model.

School profiles

Aga Khan Academy Mombasa

In brief: Kenya; private continuum IB World School; local population; mainly English-speaking; bilingual junior school using English and Kiswahili.

The Aga Khan Academy Mombasa (AKAM) is one of a network of schools that share a common mission and vision of connecting the local and the global through education. Part of this mandate is that a national language is used in parity with English in delivering the curriculum so that students stay connected to their roots. At the AKAM, the junior school is bilingual, with Kiswahili and English as languages of instruction. The student body is local (in the junior school), and some of the students join as Kiswahili speakers and some as speakers of other languages, but mainly they are English-dominant. The programme therefore needs to help build proficiency in Kiswahili, which is a lower-status language than English, despite being a co-national and official language of Kenya.

About the bilingual PYP

The Aga Khan Academies are all IB World Schools. Their choice to take on the IB was affected by many factors, but in terms of the mission and vision, it allows the academies to tailor the curriculum to the local context, and link to the Aga Khan Academy Strands (ethics, pluralism, culture, economics of development, and governance and civil society). In this way, the framework offered by the PYP enables the academy to design learning that is focused both locally and globally, which is unique.

The programme structure in the junior schools is composed of two parts. In years 1–3, the programme is delivered through a bilingual programme of inquiry (POI) on a 50/50 model, which is day on/day off. Two teachers share the teaching of each class: one in Kiswahili and one in English. Until recently, the two languages were also delivered in separate classrooms but, as of two years ago, the classrooms are now shared between the two teachers and two languages. The teachers feel that this model benefits students in both practical and affective ways. Firstly, the students stay in the same classroom, which is easier from a time and management perspective. Secondly, the classroom representation of the two languages has led to a more holistic approach to the bilingual programme. Outside the POI, additional literacy and mathematics are taught through both languages, and although specialist subjects (music, art, PE) have leaned towards English, there is a concerted effort underway to shift to a bilingual approach in these as well.

In years 4–5 of the bilingual programme, the POI is delivered using a **translanguaging pedagogy**. The main class teacher and the “translanguaging” teacher share responsibility for planning, teaching and assessment. They work together in a dynamic way to provide opportunities for the students to inquire in both languages, and bridge from one to the other in terms of learning and outcomes. This model has been in place for three years, and they are continuing to refine the approach. One of the challenges of a translanguaging approach is to ensure balance in the amount of each language that the students are using in the learning engagements. There is a tendency (by teachers and by students) to default to English for certain types of content, and for writing and assessment. The academy team are developing an approach that promotes balance in the planning phase, as well as in assessment. In the translanguaging classes, they are also trialling ways to track the amount of input and output happening in each language in order to ensure that the programme remains a balanced bilingual programme despite the dynamic nature of language in the classrooms.

Successes and challenges

The main strength of delivering a bilingual model through the PYP is that the school-centred nature of curriculum development allows the school to tailor the programme to the learning and language goals of

the academy. This flexibility is key to success when one of the languages is difficult to access or to resource for education. In the case of Kiswahili, very little teaching is done through the language in the state sector, and that is relegated to the early years of schooling. Delivering a traditional curriculum model bilingually would not be possible because resources are not available for subject teaching. This is also one of the main challenges; finding appropriate resources to support the transdisciplinary POI is challenging, especially for the more science-based units. Teachers have to prepare a lot of the Kiswahili resources, and in the upper years there is a gap between how much input can be presented in English and in Kiswahili. The academy works hard to overcome this, to model that both languages are useful and valuable for learning, but it is an ongoing concern. A second challenge in the year 1–3 model is the time commitment for co-planning the units of inquiry. The day on/day off model requires the two teachers to touch base at the end of each day to discuss progress and make adjustments for the next day.

Community

Do parents choose the school for the bilingual programme, for the PYP or for other reasons?

How does the bilingual programme serve the needs of the local community?

The use of Kiswahili in education by a prestigious school is an important step in affirming the right of local languages to be present in education. The academy engages in a variety of outreach activities in the Kenyan education sector to provide support for local schools in terms of curriculum and pedagogy, and links this to their mission and vision of making connections between the local and the global. By putting Kiswahili in parity alongside English in their highly regarded IB programmes, they are setting a clear agenda for the inclusion of local expertise and knowledge in education.

What is unique about the bilingual approach at the AKAM?

The AKAM has been working to refine their bilingual PYP for many years. They recognize that such an endeavour is a longitudinal commitment to investigating what is working and refining what is not. This has led to the differentiation in model between the years 1–3 and years 4–5 classes in order to meet the unique needs of the students and the programme. The fact that they are doing something that has never been done before has given them freedom to inquire into their own processes and programmes, but also a great responsibility to get it right, as the programme is so inherently linked to the mission and vision of the academies.

Figure 5

Bilingual programmes aim to meet the unique language needs of their students



International School of Geneva, La Châtaigneraie

Primary School

In brief: Switzerland; private international school offering the PYP; local and international population; bilingual programme with either English or French as the majority language

Background information

La Châtaigneraie is one of three campuses of the International School of Geneva. Each campus has a different orientation in terms of language and curriculum, and La Châtaigneraie is the only one to have a bilingual PYP. The programme is from pre-reception to year 6, and the entirety of the school participates, in either the English-majority stream or the French-majority stream. The student population is mainly international, with an increasing number of local (French-speaking) students. Most of the students are multilingual, with many having learned French at local daycares prior to starting school, and just over half of the school population (including secondary) have declared English as a home language. The stable nature of the international population means that it is highly desirable for students to develop in French as well as in English in order to fully integrate into life in Switzerland. This made the development of a bilingual programme important for meeting the needs of the school community.

About the bilingual PYP

The school was using the PYP curriculum, with separate English and French streams, prior to developing the bilingual programme. In 2010, a decision was taken to merge the two streams into one bilingual programme with the aim of all students developing in both languages. In the pre-reception class, an English-speaking teacher and a French-speaking teaching assistant work in both languages in the classroom, using a flexible model that meets the needs of the students. In reception, the students are admitted into either the English-majority or the French-majority programme, based on their profile and the parents' wishes. In these years, the programme of inquiry (POI) is taught through the majority language, as is literacy and mathematics. Language B (minority language) teachers take responsibility for one line of inquiry in each unit of inquiry—to ensure cross-curricular connections—as well as delivering language B classes focusing on language development. Specialist teachers also teach in language B. This structure provides students with five years to develop their academic language through the curriculum in the majority language, as well as providing them with significant but lower-stakes opportunities to learn the other language. In order to provide all students with the possibility of developing academic proficiency in both languages, they shift in years 5 and 6 to a five-month immersion model. The students spend five months in intensive English (based on Canadian intensive immersion models), in which all subjects are taught in English with the exception of French language classes. In the second half of the year they reverse and have a five-month immersion in French. The units of inquiry are divided equally between the two languages, so the students get transdisciplinary exposure to their language B as well. This unique programme structure provides all students with access to the bilingual programme while respecting the cognitive and academic challenge of acquiring one or two new academic languages at school.

Using the PYP to deliver the bilingual programme means that both French and English streams are working within the same curricular framework, rather than defaulting to national curriculums. It also allows for the possibility of cross-curricular connections, which they achieve through having the language B teachers take responsibility for one line of inquiry. It also ensures that the focus is on **learning through language** as well as **learning language**, and the school considers that they are able to deliver a strong CLIL approach because of this. Initial guidance from the PYP had indicated that the particular challenge of the programme is the fact that many of the students are learning two new languages within a challenging curricular model, and as the whole primary school is bilingual, there is no provision to opt out. The school has risen to this challenge by providing substantive language support in both French and English for children who need one or both. Staffing this level of provision is an ongoing commitment on the part of the school in terms of providing equitable access to all its students. An additional challenge is in managing parent expectations: parents often have unrealistic ideas about how quickly and how fully bilingual their children will be,

especially, in this case, in the language B. Clear lines of communication with parents about the programme and realistic outcomes are a key aspect of the ongoing school–parent dialogue.

- Do parents choose the school for the bilingual programme, for the PYP or for other reasons?

The fact that many of the international families are settled in Switzerland long term means that parents recognize the importance of French while not wanting to put their children in local schools. The opportunity to have both a highly regarded international curriculum and pedagogy alongside the possibility of academic development in French means that the bilingual programme is a good fit for these families.

- How does the bilingual programme serve the needs of the local community?

The school community is mixed, with many international families and an increasing number of local Swiss families. For both groups, the choice for English and French is linked to raising children who can function in the local community, but also wanting English for global access. Parents choose the majority language for their children according to their own language profiles, and the perceived needs of their children, without needing to sacrifice the other language. The school also felt that in order to meet the mandate of international-mindedness, the importance of the local language needed to be emphasized—and the development of the bilingual programme has achieved this.

What is unique about the bilingual approach at La Châtaigneraie?

The bilingual programme at La Châtaigneraie is unique for two reasons. The first is the structure of the majority/minority language choice, which acknowledges that many of their students are learning both English and French. In many bilingual programmes the needs of students who are learning both languages are neglected, and they are expected to learn two new academic languages alongside students who are learning only one. The streaming of children into one majority language, with the other as a additional language, in the first years of schooling gives students a better chance to properly develop in both languages in a sequential, rather than simultaneous, model. The move towards the five-months on/five-months off model at the end of primary allows students to experience an intense immersion in both languages, which builds on the skills that they have already acquired. This configuration leads to strong results in both languages for many students, without compromising academic development. The second unique factor is the recognition that even in immersion programmes there is a need for structured additional language support. The school provides additional language support in both English and French, and recognizes that immersion itself is not always enough for students to develop adequate language skills. The commitment to dual-language and cross-curricular support ensures that even struggling students can benefit from the bilingual programme.

Mark Twain Elementary School

In brief: USA; public PYP school; local population; balance of Spanish- and English-speaking students in a one-class two-way bilingual immersion stream

Background information

The Mark Twain Elementary School dual language PYP is situated within a larger, English-dominant state primary school. Over 27 languages are represented at the school across the English and dual-language section. The whole school uses the PYP framework. The programme is designated as a two-way immersion programme as it aims to enroll equal numbers of Spanish speakers and English speakers. This bilingual model has been shown to be the most successful, particularly for minority-language-speaking students. There is one dual-language immersion class in each grade, alongside 6–7 regular classes. Parents complete a home language survey to determine dominant language on school entry. Students are allocated places in the dual-language programme via a lottery, but equal places are given to children who are Spanish dominant and English dominant in order to maintain the two-way nature of the programme. Teachers are bilingual in both languages as well. Students are mostly local, although a high percentage of Spanish-speaking students are first-generation US citizens. The Spanish-speaking children come from a variety of Central and South American countries, as well as Mexico and Spain. The English-speaking children are local,

have English as their dominant language on entry, and are Spanish-language learners. Students in the English-only classes receive two lessons of Spanish per two-week period.

The Mark Twain Elementary School developed the dual-Language programme 10 years before becoming a school offering the PYP. The impetus for development was the demographic of the local community and a recognized need to provide equitable access to education for Spanish-speaking students. The introduction of the PYP framework alongside the state curriculum has had positive effects on student learning across the school, especially within the immersion programme. The school uses an additive model, with kindergarten being 80% Spanish and 20% English, with a gradual transition towards parity (50/50) in grade 3. This model ensures that the Spanish-speaking children develop strong Spanish skills as they are developing English, and also provides the English-speaking children with intensified Spanish development in the early years. The school's programme of inquiry (POI) is shared across the two languages according to subject focus; certain subjects are taught in English or Spanish in different years, and the POI follows these. The specialist Spanish language teacher, who works with the whole school, tailors the learning in her lessons to be centred around the POI rather than stand-alone language classes.

Successes and challenges

Using the PYP to shape the dual-language programme provides the school with greater flexibility than would otherwise be possible. The transdisciplinary nature of the framework allows teachers to plan for a variety of learning engagements in both languages, thereby building academic proficiency in both. The student-centred nature of the pedagogy also allows teachers to “meet the children where they are” in whichever language works best for scaffolding meaning and understanding. Having an official designation as a school offering the PYP gives Mark Twain Elementary School some leeway in the stringent requirements of the state curriculum. The district benchmarks still need to be met, but the school does not have to adhere to the timeline and sequence in the same way. This gives them space to work with their language-learner students in more effective ways.

As with many other bilingual or immersion schools offering the PYP, resourcing in the minority language (Spanish) can be a challenge. Assessment is also a challenge. In the early years, assessment is mainly linked to the in-house developed curriculum, and is carried out in the language of instruction. As the students move up in the school, assessment shifts more towards English, because of the approaching high-stakes tests. All district or state tests are available in Spanish as well as English, with more than half of the families choosing to use the Spanish versions. Meeting the content demands of state assessments can also be challenging, as although the school teaches beyond the state standards, it isn't following the same timeline as other schools. A final challenge is language balance within the school. Although the dual-language classes strive to maintain the use of Spanish as much as possible, when the students mix with the greater student body, the language used is often English. This means that the early years are most fruitful for Spanish language development, when the children are receiving higher amounts of Spanish input and are less influenced by children from other classes. Having all students study Spanish is a step towards supporting the status of Spanish across the school, although perceptions remain that English is the more useful/valuable language. Mark Twain Elementary School disagrees strongly with this perception and strives to build equal respect for both languages through their programme—by balancing both languages and cultural aspects, and providing institutional support for Spanish as equal in the curriculum to English.

Community

- Do parents choose the school for the bilingual programme, for the PYP or for other reasons?

Parents choose the school for a variety of reasons. For many, it is the school that is in their area, so they choose by default. Some choose the school because of the PYP element. However, applying to the dual-language programme is a choice, and so parents who put their children forward are actively seeking out the possibility of a bilingual education. This is equally true for the English-speaking parents. This year, the school had 65 English-speaking applicants and 22 Spanish-speaking applicants for 24 kindergarten places.

- How does the bilingual programme serve the needs of the local community?

The bilingual programme was originally developed to meet the needs of the Spanish-speaking community in particular. The neighbourhood surrounding the school is now more English-speaking, so the school has a

harder time recruiting equal numbers of Spanish-speaking students. Despite the changing population, it could be argued that the school is still meeting the needs of the community in the sense that they are promoting strong local language bilingualism for English-speaking students.

What is unique about the bilingual approach at Mark Twain Elementary School?

The dual-language PYP at Mark Twain Elementary School is, in many ways, a classic immersion bilingual programme. It is based on research that supports two-way immersion and the additive model, with higher percentages of the minority language early on. The choice to use the PYP across the school has had an impact on planning—the year groups plan collaboratively across all sections, and the perspective of the dual-language teachers has had a positive influence on the delivery of the dual language and the PYP overall. The combination of a strong model and the PYP provides excellent results, with students meeting year-group levels in both languages by grades 4–5. The success of the English-speaking students in fully developing in Spanish is exceptional. In recognition of the unique role language plays within the PYP and within a dual-language programme, the school is currently developing a year-long unit of inquiry focusing on language, and inquiring into different language-related topics. The connected nature of this approach lends weight to the importance of language and raises language awareness across the curriculum. The potential for this unit of inquiry is immense in terms of helping students develop clear understandings of the nature of language from personal, social and political perspectives.

Figure 6

All languages are welcome in IB schools.



Glossary

Glossary term	Glossary definition
Academic language	This refers to the oral, written, auditory and visual language proficiency required to learn effectively in schools and academic programmes—that is, it is the language used in classroom lessons, books, tests and assignments, and the language that students are expected to learn and achieve fluency in, but they will not commonly hear or use it outside the classroom.
Additive bilingualism	When the goal of bilingual development (through education) is the addition of a new language to the students' repertoire with no detrimental effects on their first language. (See "subtractive bilingualism").
Basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS)	Everyday language, usually context-bound and not cognitively challenging. In school situations, it is the language of the playground and social interactions. BICS usually takes 1–2 years to develop in a full-time immersion situation (Cummins 2008).
Bilingual programme	An educational model in which two languages form the basis of teaching and learning, with the aim of developing fluency and academic competency in both.
Biliteracy	The ability to read and/or write to an (age-appropriate) academic level in two languages.
Cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)	Students' ability to understand and express, in both oral and written modes, concepts and ideas that are relevant to success in school, including academic language.
Content and language integrated learning (CLIL)	A teaching model in which content is delivered through a second/additional language in a language-enhanced teaching model. This means that subject teachers pay attention to language development, as needed for learning in their subject, in an explicit way.
Developmental bilingual programme	A bilingual programme that is designed to provide ongoing support for the development of two languages, usually the home language of students and the language of instruction.
Dominant language	The language a student feels most comfortable and confident in using at any point. The dominant language can change over time and circumstances, but each student should be at age-appropriate level in at least their dominant language.
Dual-language programme	The term used in the United States for a bilingual school.
Early immersion	An immersion programme that starts in kindergarten or grade 1.

Glossary term	Glossary definition
First language	The first language, or languages, mastered by a child (formerly called “mother tongue” and now often referred to as “home language”).
Heteroglossic orientation	A view that languages are connected and complementary, and that they should not be rigidly separated in education.
Home language(s)	The language(s) that a child has been exposed to in the home from birth. Often referred to in research as “first language(s)”.
Immersion education	Education in which the language of instruction is not the language of some or all of the students. The language is expected to be learned through the delivery of content in the target language.
L1	The term used in research for the language(s) a child has been exposed to from birth and that they use regularly.
L2	The term used in research for the language(s) learned after the initial period of language development (onset after 4 years old).
Language portrait	A document created in the admissions process that outlines a student’s language background and expected language development pathway in a school.
Language status	The perceived socio-economic, sociocultural and/or political prestige of a language in relation to other languages around it; languages can have high, low or neutral status.
Late immersion	An immersion programme that starts in early secondary school.
Majority language	The language spoken by most of the people in an environment.
Minority language	A language spoken by some people in an environment, but not by most. A minority language is often associated with immigrants or other migrants who arrive in a country as speakers of another language, but it can also refer to an official or unofficial regional or indigenous language or dialect.
Monoglossic orientation	A view of languages that sees them as separate entities that should not interact, for fear that one will interfere with accuracy in the other.
Mother tongue	A term formerly used to designate the first or strongest language of a child. It has been replaced by “first language”, “home language” or “dominant language”.
Multilingual environment/school	An environment or school in which multiple languages co-exist and are valued by the community. Institutional support for different languages may vary, but children’s first languages are considered to be fundamental in linguistic and academic development.

Glossary term	Glossary definition
Subtractive bilingualism	This refers to when learning a second language (through education) has negative effects on the development of the students' first language.
Transitional bilingual programme	A bilingual programme that uses students' first language as the language of instruction while they acquire the majority school language. The first language is discontinued after a threshold in the school language is reached.
Translanguaging pedagogy	A pedagogical approach in which two languages are used for teaching and learning in a planned and systematic manner, as a model of bilingual education.
Two-way immersion	Bilingual programmes that have students who are dominant speakers of each of the two target languages, with the goal of each group continuing development of their own language while acquiring the language of the other group as well.

Bibliography

Recommended reading

Baker, C and Wright, WE. 2017. *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* (sixth edition). Bristol, UK. Multilingual Matters.

This book provides a solid theoretical basis for all decisions regarding bilingual learners and bilingual education. While it is not necessarily for a whole-staff initiative, it is a must-read volume for anyone hoping to lead on a bilingual programme.

Mehisto, P and Genesee, F (editors). 2015. *Building Bilingual Education Systems: Forces, Mechanisms and Counterweights*. Cambridge, UK. Cambridge University Press.

This book is the second of two critical volumes for a lead role in developing a bilingual programme. Through a series of case-study chapters, it investigates the major aspects of bilingual education.

Mehisto, P. 2012. *Excellence in Bilingual Education: A Guide for School Principals*. Cambridge, UK. Cambridge University Press.

While the school principal is unlikely to be the lead on curriculum and pedagogy in a bilingual programme, this book leads them through their critical role in setting up conditions for success.

Jaumont, F. 2017. *The Bilingual Revolution: The Future of Education is in Two Languages*. New York, USA. TBR Books.

This book of 10 vignettes of different bilingual programmes is a valuable resource for whole-staff reflection and involvement. The schools profiled cross a wide range of languages and address many of the situational and contextual factors that influence the success of a programme.

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