

Program Adoption - Frequently Asked Questions

What are the guiding principles of the program?

The non-native program is guided by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) general principles that provide the foundation for implementation and expansion of language programs at all levels of instruction:

- All students should learn or maintain at least one language in addition to English.
- Learning languages should be a central part of the curriculum at all levels of instruction, from young learners through graduate school and adults (Pre-K through 20).
- Language learning should be offered in extended, well-articulated sequences that develop increasing levels of proficiency at each level of instruction by teachers who are well qualified in language proficiency, cultural knowledge, and teaching skills.

It is based on the Communicative Language approach that tackles all 4 language skills (reading writing, speaking and listening) but the emphasis is on functional language that is needed in everyday life.

What are the key features of the program?

- A student-centered, communicative approach – engaging students in higher-order thinking and dialogue rather than rote-memorization
- A standards-based approach. *Hiwaraat* is aligned with the ACTFL standards
- Scenarios and dialogues from Arab daily life, children's Arabic music and art, and cultural notes for non-native learners
- Exciting and engaging Arabic text, illustrations and activities

Which schools are presently using this program?

Initially the program was limited to a small scale implementation in a core of pilot schools. It is presently being used in 15 international schools and one national school in the Gulf region, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman. Riffa Views International School in Bahrain is in its fourth year of implementing the program and is the home of the WLI. RVIS welcomes visits from those who wish to see the program in action. If you would like to arrange a visit contact the WLI Administrative Assistant, Lujein Ashi lashi@iss.edu.

What do they think of the program?

Most of the schools only began using the program in September, 2011. However, even in this short term they have offered a good deal of positive feedback.

"The standards will serve us, as Arabic teachers, to know the expected and required competencies of the Arabic language in each level. From my point of view, this course is like a revolution in teaching Arabic as a 1st and 2nd language. The stories were excellent and they fulfill their purpose. I personally used them with my "Heritage Students" and came with impressive results and the students really enjoyed the lesson. I also chose specific topics related to the daily lives of the Arabic non-native speakers and the results were also remarkable."

Rima Bitar, International Schools Group

"I found the program very promising . It leans strongly towards giving Arabic instruction a new and vital glow. I'm very fond of the program and look forward to more of it!"

Rima Al-Kurdi, KAUST

While it is undoubtedly more challenging to teach this way than through a traditional Arabic textbook approach, the range, quantity and quality of resources available within the program help to make the program manageable. Furthermore, it enables the teachers to make the critical transition from 'activity planners' to 'managers of student learning'. Above all, we are seeing new and exciting levels of student engagement and achievement in Arabic language acquisition for our non-native students. While we are acquiring a wealth of anecdotal evidence to this effect, efforts are also underway to measure and document student learning data, and to conduct research initiatives to validate the approaches being used.

How much time would we need to schedule for Arabic?

Schools implement the WLI Arabic programs in many and various ways according to their needs - and this is by design. Our pilot schools range from offering Arabic to non-native language learners for one class period (45 min-1hr) daily, to two periods per week.

What facilities are required?

Under ideal circumstances Arabic will be taught in a dedicated classroom. This allows teachers to create centers, displays and libraries to support student learning. Smart Board, laptops, flipchart, carpeted areas, book tubs, and other features of an English literacy learning environment all apply to its Arabic counterpart. With the volume of required materials it would be extremely difficult for a teacher to manage the program successfully while changing classrooms.

What materials do we need?

Recommended Resource	Role Within the Program	Approximate Cost
Student Learner Packs	Thematic units containing ideas, dialogues and activities	\$49-59 per student
Teacher Guides	Comprehensive teacher guides for each level.	\$59 per level
<i>My Arabic Library</i> Order directly from Scholastic.com	Used for the leveled/take-home reading program.	Levels 1-3 \$750 Levels 4-8 \$600

How do we order materials?

Order forms are available from Keith Cincotta, Director of School Supply kcincota@iss.edu.

My Arabic library can be ordered directly from Scholastic

<http://www.scholastic.com/aboutscholastic/worldwide/mepi/english.htm>

What training and support for implementation is available?

With regard to training and support, we are in the midst of a two-year literacy coach training program with the pilot schools. The intention of training coaches is to ensure that Arabic teachers in each site will have the support they need to successfully implement the program. However, we do not anticipate starting a new cohort of coaches until the fall of 2013.

In the interim we can offer onsite training on a number of aspects of the program including:

Implementing the Arabic WLI	5 day intro	All trainings balance theoretical content with practical implementation including modeling, observation, coaching and feedback
Instructional Strategies for Arabic Language Learners	2-3 days	
Standards-based assessment	2-3 days	

Contact ISS Professional Development Consultant, Bridget Doogan bdoogan@iss.edu.