

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING ANOTHER LANGUAGE

1. We live in a world where competence in more than one language is an essential part of communication and understanding.
2. Learning a foreign language enhances the flexibility of thought.
3. Study of another language develops a deeper understanding of the native language.
4. The discipline learned during the study of foreign languages improves the students' cognitive, analytical and communication skills; in addition, it encourages contact with different cultures and mentalities that carries over into many other areas of their academic studies and future success.
5. Foreign language study adds to the students' Language Arts learning.

CONSIDERATIONS for 6th GRADE

1. In the Middle School, languages are taught as an academic subject, which also requires study and organizational skills, and a certain degree of student maturity. For this reason, it is important to evaluate your child's personal maturity.
2. Students who have had a foreign language learning experience in the elementary school will not *necessarily* be comfortable with the more formal/rigorous foreign language instruction in the middle school.
3. Another consideration is this:
Time on Task in the **ES** is as follows:
 - 1 year of language = 54 hours total
 - 2 years of language = 108 hours totalTime on Task in the **MS** is as follows:
 - **1 year of language = 120 - 125 hours total** (which means that even after two years of elementary instruction, students are still below the threshold of ONE year of instruction in the MS)
4. A strong basis of the language and the confidence in learning it is invaluable to a successful continuation in middle and high school. It is recommended that students are given time to mature linguistically at their own pace and that they be learning at a 'comfortable' level.
5. 6th grade allows student to explore different languages; however in 7th and 8th grades the emphasis moves from exploration to a more academic study of language. This slow but steady approach will prepare students for a successful and enjoyable experience through high school.
6. Consideration of foreign language preference is important, but early middle school can also be the time of exploration and a time for building language confidence. If students have learnt one language during their years in elementary school, they may be encouraged to explore another language during their middle school years. Students who enjoy their foreign language experience in the middle school tend to be more confident and successful throughout their later language experience.

LOOKING AHEAD

In preparation for high school, the time to start planning in the area of language is either in 7th or 8th grades when a selection/commitment should be made.