

Courses Offered at St. Mary's Academy: Building Practical Communication Skills in a Multicultural World

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Unlike many traditional institutions, St. Mary's Academy designs its courses around practical communication skills that are essential in today's multicultural, multilingual world. Whether it's mastering English as a foreign language, navigating cultural differences, or fostering dialogue through mediation, our programs emphasize real-life interaction, emotional intelligence, and adaptability. Below is a list of our core programs with extended descriptions and supporting academic references.

1. English for Global Communication

This programme equips learners with practical English skills essential for clear and effective communication in international contexts. Focusing on intelligibility, cultural appropriateness, and adaptability, it moves beyond traditional grammar-focused instruction to emphasize real-world tasks such as networking, presentations, and problem-solving. Learners acquire strategies to modify their communication style based on the situation and audience, including interactions in multicultural workplaces, online platforms, and during international travel. The course incorporates principles of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) to help participants succeed in a global environment where English serves as a common language (Canagarajah, 2007; Jenkins, 2000).

2. Intercultural Communication Skills

Participants in this programme develop essential skills to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries. Topics include understanding communication styles (direct versus indirect), power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and non-verbal cues. Through case studies and role plays, learners explore cultural miscommunications and increase cultural

intelligence (CQ). The course is ideal for professionals working in diverse environments, expatriates, and educators looking to improve inclusive dialogue (Hofstede, 2001; Hall, 1976).

3. Mediation and Conflict Resolution in Multicultural Settings

This course trains learners to become effective mediators capable of resolving disputes with cultural sensitivity. Participants explore emotional triggers, active listening techniques, and resolution frameworks suitable for diverse settings. By analyzing case studies from international organizations and NGOs, participants build confidence in managing complex interpersonal conflicts. Role plays simulate real-world scenarios to help participants practice emotional regulation and unbiased decision-making (Goleman, 1998; Ting-Toomey, 2005).

4. English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

Designed for professionals who need English in specialized fields, this programme offers focused language training for areas like business, healthcare, education, and hospitality. Instruction is tailored to specific needs, using authentic materials and role-specific terminology. The curriculum highlights task-based learning, such as writing reports, holding meetings, and interpreting technical documents (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

5. Communication and Emotional Intelligence for Leaders

This program equips both emerging and established leaders with vital interpersonal communication skills based on emotional intelligence (EI). Participants enhance self-awareness, empathy, conflict resolution skills, and persuasive speaking abilities. Real-world simulations enable leaders to build trust, motivate teams, and handle organizational challenges through effective relational communication (Bar-On, 2006; Goleman, 2004).

6. Teaching English in Multilingual Classrooms

Targeted at educators, this course prepares teachers to support English learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds. It covers translanguaging practices, inclusive curriculum development, and strategies for engaging multilingual students. Teachers learn to create affirming environments that draw on students' home languages and cultures as assets rather than barriers (García & Wei, 2014).

7. Cultural Adaptation and Integration for Migrants

This programme helps migrants, refugees, and international workers adapt to new cultural and language settings. Topics include local communication customs, navigating government processes, building social networks, and understanding cultural identity. Practical tasks involve preparing for job interviews, interpreting public signs, and handling intercultural misunderstandings (Berry, 1997).

8. Negotiation Skills for Multicultural Teams

Participants learn to navigate negotiations involving stakeholders from diverse backgrounds. The course covers power distance, cultural norms in bargaining, hierarchy, and the importance of saving face. Learners develop adaptive strategies through simulations that mimic cross-cultural business, education, and NGO settings, enhancing their ability to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes (Brett, 2007; Meyer, 2014).

9. Digital Literacy and Multimodal Communication

This course equips learners to effectively use digital tools for global communication. Participants learn how to craft messages for video, social media, and digital presentations, focusing on tone, audience, and format. It also includes online etiquette, managing cross-cultural virtual teams, and interpreting multimodal texts (Kress, 2010; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009).

10. Storytelling and Dialogue for Social Inclusion

Blending narrative theory with intercultural education, this program teaches participants how to use storytelling as a tool for empathy, inclusion, and transformative learning. Participants create personal narratives and listen to others to understand different perspectives across age, gender, culture, and experience. The approach encourages open dialogue in classrooms, community settings, and organizational environments (Bruner, 1991; Mezirow, 1997).

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