

PRESS RELEASE

DepEd offers students more foreign languages for global arena

Priming Filipino students for the global arena, the Department of Education is set to introduce more foreign languages in pilot schools as the department aims to produce more internationally competitive graduates.

Aside from English which is the first foreign language to be mastered by selected secondary students, other foreign languages being taught among third and fourth year students are Spanish, French Japanese and German.

Mandarin, which is widely used in world economic power China and Arabic which is spoken in the vast Middle East market, are set to debut this school year.

Deped's Bureau of Secondary Education chief Director Lolita Andrada said the Special Program in Foreign Language is designed for schools whose students have demonstrated competence first in English before they start to learn another foreign language.

"Studies have shown that facility in just one foreign language is now perceived as a disadvantage in a global market that is culturally and linguistically diverse," added Andrada.

She explained that while English is a major language, it only accounts for around 30% of the world gross domestic product and is likely to account for less in the future.

DepEd piloted foreign languages in selected high schools starting with Spanish, Japanese and French in school year 2009-2010. The following year, German was introduced. Mandarin and Arabic are set to be introduced beginning school year 2011-2012.

Currently, Spanish is being taught in 54 high schools across the country, Japanese in 13 high schools, French in 12 high schools and German in 9 high schools.

The program is piloted in public secondary schools (preferably with speech laboratory) for students who are in the last two year levels of high school where they are allotted four hours weekly to learn the language.

"We believe the last two years of high school is the most appropriate time to learn a second foreign language because that is the time they are most ready," Andrada explained.

To prepare the teachers in teaching the foreign languages, DepEd has made an arrangement with the Instituto Cervantes for the teaching of Spanish, with the Japan Foundation Manila for Japanese, the Alliance Francais for French and Goethe Institute for German.

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