


Foreign language learning: The pasch initiative as partner

By Teresita Tanhueco-Tumapon  June 18, 2015

OUR conversation in this issue illustrates affordable internationalization, specifically through learning a foreign language assisted by a partner.

On March 19, 2015, the DepEd issued DO No. 5 to Regional, Division and Public Secondary Schools heads specifying the items and funding sources for teachers' participation in local training for the current and incoming Special Program in Foreign Language (SPFL) to upgrade Foreign Language (FL) pedagogical skills effective 2015 onwards. <<http://www.deped.gov.ph/orders/do-5-s-2015>>

As a background, since SY 2009-10 DepEd has advocated internationalization by having select sections in some 88 public high schools throughout the country hold basic classes in Spanish, Japanese and French, adding German the next SY. Selected for the SPFL are “3rd and 4th year sections with speech laboratories and where students are already proficient in English.” Hence SPFL classes are usually the honors sections. Foreign embassies and their cultural institutes (China, France, Japan, Spain and Germany) coordinate with the DepEd to strengthen the SPFL remit.

'Parasite' bags Outstanding Performance by Cast in Screen Actors Guild Awards

With SPFL in mind, we start this topic with learning German — the latest foreign language DepEd adopted for the SPFL. We'll discuss learning the other SPFL languages soon as we have enough information.

At present are nine public high schools and two private schools holding German classes, assisted by the Goethe Institute (GI). One of the public schools, the New Era in Quezon City and two private schools — the International Section of the German-European School in Paranaque and Liceo de Cagayan

University High School in Cagayan de Oro City, are the three Philippine schools officially identified as PASCH by the Federal Republic of Germany and supported by the Goethe Institut (GI).

PASCH is the German acronym for Schulen der Zukunft or Schools: Partners for the Future. A German government initiative, PASCH aims “to develop active and lasting connections with Germany and inspire the school community to engage in an open exchange of ideas and cooperate with one another.” This initiative “supports PASCH schools with a broad range of services to help ensure the long-term qualification of both students and staff for study opportunities in German universities and advance their subsequent professional career.”

Of the 1,700 PASCH schools worldwide, 560 are referred to as FIT and are supported and supervised by the GI. Support includes scholarships for teachers in “advanced methodological and didactic training and language courses,” aside from “sending teaching experts to supervise partner schools throughout the world,” and equipping “schools with multimedia-compatible modern teaching-learning and cultural materials.”

PASCH schools students are sent to Germany for youth courses/language camps where they rub elbows with other PASCH schools students from other parts of the world. This experience “improves language skills, strengthens cultural competence and brings the local culture to life.”

<http://www.goethe.de/ins/cn/en/hon/lhr/pas.html>

As one of two Philippine private schools officially identified as a PASCH-FIT school since 2012, Liceo’s High School has received generous assistance benefitting also upper curricular levels in the campus (http://www.goethe.de/ins/ph/en/map/lhr/pas/activities_2014/20392520.html). Three teachers and four from other PASCH-FIT schools have trained in Germany for Deutsch. Likewise, four of our teachers and four from other PASCH-FIT Philippine schools trained at GI, Makati to further their competence to B-1 level of Deutsch. In May 2013, a well-organized one-week teachers’ academy of PASCH partner schools in SEA and Australia was held in Tagaytay where seventeen PASCH school teachers from Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam including one from our school participated to develop joint projects among them. http://www.goethe.de/ins/ph/en/map/lhr/pas/activities_2014/20430111.html Fully funded too is the participation since 2012 of the annual conferences in Bangkok/Singapore of PASCH-FIT school principals together with Philippine high level education officials. GI partnership also provided Liceo a “German room” with state-of-the-art equipment and learning materials — our only investment being an empty classroom aside its maintenance. Course and workbooks, posters, books on German culture and give-away bowlers, pens, key chains, usb’s, notebooks, etc. are welcomed prizes to class competition winners. Teaching and cultural materials from the Hanns Seidel Foundation and its Philippine alumni association and

textbooks for international students of Deutsch from the Federation of German Caregivers are added attractions at the Deutsch Sprache Raum.

On the student level, 51 from PASCH schools were sent since 2008 to international youth camps in Germany with full funding for travel, food, lodging, health and travel insurance and pocket money. The month-long association with other students worldwide had our five students make new friends, widened their worldview and enhanced their intercultural communication skills. For University constituents and the public, cultural events such as comic exhibits and the “Germany in a Suitcase” exhibit are events which audiences enjoy. Last December, GI had 10 of our students fly to Manila to witness the SEA Tour of the German Electro Band Stabil Elite.

For the rest of the year, we look forward to several events. Six of our students and a teacher will be with the “ASEAN + 6 Camp in Thailand” networking this August. Our school is a part host for October to December of the forthcoming international science festival – a loud and clear response to the Philippine education’s emphasis on STEM— science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Since its debut three years ago festival interactive activities has reached more than 100,000 viewers in the Philippines. Finally, there is an additional fully funded scholarship in Germany for one of our teachers.

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