

Right from the start with German

Let your children experience firsthand the culture of Germany during the annual Open House Event organized at the Taipei European School's Deutschen Sektion on Saturday

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Whether you want your children to enjoy the literature, music, art and philosophy of their motherland or simply look for opportunities for your loved ones to study and work in Germany in the future, knowledge of the German language is the key to increase all options. The language is not only the second most commonly used in scientific fields like chemistry, physics, engineering and medicine, but also a major vehicle of the Western culture, especially in philosophy, literature, music, art history, theology and psychology.

If you are facing the difficult task of finding a suitable school for your children to learn the German language and culture though, you should know that the Taipei European School's (TES, 台北歐洲學校) German Section (Deutschen Sektion) both helps native and non-native speakers stimulate their interest in an environment that is really bilingual.

A Language at the Heart of Western Civilization

Today, German is already the most widely spoken native language in the European Union (EU) as Germany is the most populous country in the EU with 82 million inhabitants. It is also an official language spoken in Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg and Liechtenstein as well as in Italy's South Tyrol, and an important minority language in Denmark, France, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. Around the world German is the third most taught foreign language, and the second most popular in the EU and Japan. But, where can your children learn the language of their communities?

The TES's German Section is the only school in Taiwan offering a curriculum in which German is learned by a really high proficiency level. "This is an opportunity for students to eventually go a German university and join the German labor market," Emmanuel Fritzen, head of the German Section, told The China Post.

Yet, there is no other easy and simple way for Taiwanese students to be prepared. If they want to study in Germany, they will have to learn German as a foreign language in local Taiwanese schools or in the TES's other sections. Still, they will have to either pass the "German language test for admission to university for international applicants" (DSH, Deutsche Sprachprüfung für den Hochschulzugang ausländischer Studienbewerber) or the "German as a foreign language test" (TestDaF) before they can enroll into college. The former is offered by a large number of universities in Germany, while the latter



(Above) Students and parents attend last year's Open House Event at Taipei European School Primary Campus. The annual event is an opportunity for parents to ask questions about joining the school's German Section.



(Left) Students from the German Section recently completed a poster with all necessary information on the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall. The homework shows how German teachers value the continuous efforts of children.

can be completed in Taiwan as well as over 90 countries around the world.

"Students who attend the German Section don't need to take the tests because they will have a bilingual diploma," he continued. "Our diploma is bilingual because the languages taught are basically English and German, but on the last two years of instruction, they study German literature at the native-speaker level."

A Significant Asset for Job Seekers

The German Section really strives to get as close as possible to the standards required in the national examinations as possible, so that they can achieve a proficiency level that will allow them to an adequate knowledge of German for university. And this will remain a significant asset for their future when they enter the job market.

In this area of globalization, Germany's significance is greater than just its GDP would indicate. The country's automobile, engineering, chemical,

pharmaceutical, and high-end appliance firms are internationally known, as is its leadership in design, sustainable development and information technology. Even in the world of sport, German-speakers figure prominently. Germany is consistently one of the most successful countries in the Summer and Winter Olympics. In soccer the country has few rivals and the 2014 World

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Cup victory represents the team's most recent success, but throughout Cup history it has shown a unique consistency. Tennis, swimming, basketball, riding, handball, ice-skating, auto and moto racing, are just some of the other major sports at which Germans excel.

Given all of these areas of accomplishment, it is clear that the knowledge of German can help you acquire a new range of skills which can improve the quality of both your work and private life by granting access not just to rich literary, philosophical and artistic traditions but also to many other kinds of contemporary cultural, economic, political and scientific developments.

"The only requirement to join the TES is to have a foreign passport," Fritzen said, adding that the German Section takes students who reach the age of three. "We don't have a deadline for the applications, but it may end in particular time, so first come first. It will be good if the applications hand in as soon as possible. Parents who are interested can contact us in any time."

When asked about the high-



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lights of the German educational system, he explained that the main expectation is that "all learning can be done by the children without any external assistance." In other words, German teachers are considered as "facilitators" in the educational system that values the continuous efforts of children.

This is a value that should be remembered by those who embark on a journey to learn the German language and culture. A principle that is rightly expressed in this old German adage that states "Übung macht den Meister!", meaning "Practice makes perfect." ■

► The Open House Event will be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 31, at the Taipei European School Primary Campus (No. 727 WenLin Rd., ShiLin District, Taipei).