

No reason to delay learning in Bahasa

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THE announcement by the Education Minister that the cabinet has decided to allow students who have started learning Science and Mathematics in English to continue to do so until they finish their formal education is most welcome. However, there is some ambiguity in the statement.

A complete and clear guideline on the implementation of the latest policy should be made available as soon as possible to avoid confusion among parents, students and teachers.

I am not sure what the minister meant by "soft landing". Since the cabinet has decided to allow the ongoing teaching and learning process in English to continue until the students complete their education, I do not foresee any more problems.

It is a very wise, yet bold and a daring move. The government, and the Education Ministry will definitely have to face some brickbats from those who are not happy with the reversal of the earlier policy.

The government has once again shown that it is willing to listen to the people.

While I was not totally against the policy to revert to teaching these two subjects in Bahasa Malaysia in national schools and in Tamil and Mandarin in vernacular schools, I was sceptical about the timing and implementation of the policy.

I had previously expressed concern about the reversal of

the policy with regard to those who have started learning the two subjects in English. I pointed out that the implementation of the new policy should start from 2010 with Year One students, instead of waiting till 2012. I do not see any reason why the ministry should delay the implementation when a decision has been made.

For the sake of the pupils, parents and teachers, let's start the new policy in 2010 with Year One students. We do not have to wait till 2012. By then, another two batches — Year One in 2010 and 2011; Year Two in 2011 — of students will be learning in English. If the latest policy is true to its meaning, these students should also be allowed to continue studying in English.

To avoid confusion, the ministry should start the latest policy with Year One in 2010. This will save a lot of trouble for a lot of people. Three months from now is ample enough to publish books in Bahasa Malaysia for Year One students.

One again, I appeal to the education minister and the government to consider implementing the teaching of Science and Mathematics in Bahasa Malaysia and mother tongues as early as 2010 and not wait till 2012. I am sure parents and teachers will be agreeable to this.

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