INTERVENTIONS FOR THE MTB-MLE CURRICULUM AMONG BEGINNING PUPILS IN ELEMENTARY LEVEL

by:
Elizabeth S. Hernandez
Teacher III

Language is one of the key elements that strengthens every family and society. It is an identity of any individual that goes through the processes of both formal and informal learnings. It must be nurtured, honed, and taught from the most basic to the most complex structure and level. Without doubt, language learning begins with the inputs that come from the surroundings when the children are exposed. Then, exposure through listening alone can provide children an idea of gradual knowledge absorption, like a pitcher that is filled in with water. Educators must consider the fact that young learners have the impression of imitating the sounds they here from people. These inputs (listening and hearing) are converted into outputs (speaking and social interaction) that serve as the developmental scale of language learning.

In the past, the Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) integrated the English language as part of the subject lineups from Grade 1 up to secondary level. However, it was ratified following the implementation of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 otherwise known as the K-12 Curriculum during the leadership of our former president Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino, III. In this law, curriculum planners have demonstrated the stipulations of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) where Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 must not be taught English subjects. Furthermore, other subjects like Math, Science, and MAPEH must be delivered using the Filipino or any other vernacular languages that are spoken in various groups or regions. The objectives of this curriculum are to establish a promotion and preservation of the
languages that are seemingly going extinct and to embody patriotism and nationalism by engaging into cultural endeavors.

Meanwhile, it has been a difficult task especially that majority of the elementary teachers are not yet given sufficient trainings and seminars on how to incorporate MTB-MLE in teaching languages and other subjects. We cannot say that our schools are not ready or prepared; however, this enhanced pedagogy is sensitive in nature and must be taught carefully and meaningfully through appropriate contexts. For example, in the province of Bataan, there are indigenous groups that speak their mother tongues – the Magbukun and the Ambala – and these tribes are part of the educational priorities. Their pupils must be provided interventions on learning their dialectic language with the help of the tribal council who have a depth knowledge and experience in the written and oral languages of their groups.

An article by Paul Juarez (2019) describes that MTB-MLE is intended to resolve Filipinos’ high functional illiteracy, where language plays a major role. Since the child’s own language helps him or her to readily express him or herself, there is no fear of making mistakes. It promotes active involvement in linguistic acquisition and learning by students as they understand and comprehend what is being discussed and explained and what is being investigated. In order to create and explain their environment, they can now speak their mother tongue, articulate their thoughts and incorporate original ideas into what they have already experienced and understood.

Apart from Filipino and English, there are 19 major languages specified in the MTB-MLE curriculum in the Philippines to be taught in particular communities. These include Tagalog, Kapampangan, Pangasinense, Iloko, Bikol, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Waray, Tausug, Maguindanao, Maranao, Chabacano, Ivatan, Ivanag, Sambal, Akianon, Kinaray-a, Yakan, and Sinurigaon, among others. To satisfy the needs of the aforementioned languages, textbooks and simpler reading materials were developed.
UNESCO believes that MTB-MLE has a positive impact on the learning outcomes of children that is why the organization is also promoting the inclusion of it in the school curriculum. Literacy is a goal that the MTB-MLE is advocating.

To address the common scenario, the following are the suggested steps to take and to consider upon teaching pupils with a strengthened MTB-MLE skill in learning basically:

1. Elementary teachers must specify the vernacular of the local group, i.e., Tagalog or any other linguistic variations.

2. Construct day-to-day lesson plans that highlight the use of the mother tongue in the activities where children are expected to interact with the teacher and the classmates.

3. Teachers must simplify the instructions because comprehension varies in levels. A pupil might find something difficult to understand.

4. Develop activities that are ideally a form of progression. Do not bombard pupils with too much activities because language learning and integration take time.

5. Follow up if the pupils have a keen understanding in the lessons to establish the relationship between the MTB-MLE and other subjects.

6. Translation must be done if necessary because there are pupils that have a background of speaking other languages at home.

7. Mostly, pupils are the interactionists and the teacher must be well aware of his or her role, to become the guide, the facilitator.

8. Nominate the intention of summing up a weekly learning to see if the objectives in teaching are attained.

9. Apply assessment and evaluation about the lessons that are only taught.
10. Lastly, apply the use of MTB-MLE as an extra feature of connecting it to authentic situations such as doing household chores, playing with friends, interacting with family members, attending to church, and other activities where the students can easily relate.

Remember, the use of mother tongue at an early age promotes a more authentic, message-oriented lessons that cannot be found in most generally written and printed textbooks. It may be irrelevant to teach a child beginning with a general approach on conversations down to specific ones. So, teachers must be well-oriented with the design of their lessons. Teaching is an art. It is a pedagogy.

MTB-MLE is a way to level up the reading comprehension of the pupils. Majority may think that basic literacy starts at home, yet technically, it isn’t. Formality happens in school, that is why most of the skills are structured in a place where the prime movers of education meet and maneuver.

References: