Is Teaching Higher Math in Lower Grades Hurt or Help Students?

ANABETH L. VITANZOS, Teacher III
Sta. Rosa, Pilar, Bataan

While it seems every parent would like to see their children keep up with their peers and excel in school, particularly in mathematics and science, it is vital to know whether sophisticated lessons are really helpful or hurtful to students when they are in lower grades. For instance, introducing algebra in the eighth grades might be immature. Let's see. Some leaders, particularly politicians think that Algebra and other complicated Math should be taught as early as possible as the world is getting more technologically advanced and each country is betting on their graduates to keep up with the advancement. So, students are fed with complicated set of knowledge even at an early level in their schooling.

Educators and psychologists however understand that human brain has rapid growth periods and plateau periods. Middle school belongs to the plateau period where no growth seems to take place. Their recommendation, therefore, is to try to refrain from introducing complicated subjects such as Algebra. Rather, this stage is best to adapt to teaching abstract reasoning concepts.

So, to these sides, which then is the best way to follow? In particular, the right track for math classes would be introducing Algebra in as early as the eighth grade and advance to Calculus when the student reached senior year. Pushing students who are not ready will only jeopardize their learning potentials. This could be one culprit why many students dread the subject before they are even taught about it. The big disadvantage is that they close their minds already without even trying to know if they would even enjoy it.

Learning higher math is a case to case basis but as teachers, being mindful of the readiness of the students is a must before introducing any new math concept especially those with complicated context.

References: