MOTHER TONGUE: AN APPROACH TO LEARNING

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Like many other issues when it comes to education, many debates regarding the ‘Mother tongue’ method. Mother tongue is a method of teaching that uses the native language of the child, in our case ‘Filipino’.

The dispute is regarding the development and progress of children at a young age since the Mother tongue method is best advisable to be used at the initial learning years. The antagonist of the method indicates that it is better to use English at the earlier years because it is the peek of the brain absorption thus it is also the best time to introduce another language because it is when it will most likely to retained. On the other hand, the protagonist of the method suggests that it is more productive to use the language that the child is more familiar with in the initial years given that by doing so the child will absorb more information and will understand the lessons better,

Like a coin with to different sides of both the arguments has valid points to consider. With the anti or against, it is truly proven that the earlier the introduction of a new language to a child the greater the probability for the language to be mastered. It is due to the retention capacity of the human brain. At the very beginning the human brain can be compared to a very dry sponge ready to absorb knowledge and information. There are tons more neuron connections and activity within the brain that cause the pick up and distribution of information. As humans grow older the connections and the activity lessen and the retention drops considerably. With the pro side, the points they’re trying to address is the over-all learning of a child. According to them, by using the native language the child will have higher chances of understanding the lessons being thought. By using
the language that they already know and is already familiar with, the focus of learning shifts to the actual topics and subjects. It is basic instruction and reception. Think of it in a scenario where in the Teacher instructs the young pre-school Filipino student to draw a flower within a box, by saying “Gumuhit ng bulaklak sa loob ng kahon” the instruction is clear. The child will understand what needs to be done.

It is really a matter of perspective, the goal aimed to be archived. Whether to teach a language that would be an advantage in the future and will help in the long run or to teach many subjects with the aim of building the academic foundation of a child. Though very tedious subject matter to discuss and dispute about, with both sides holding their own against the other, the truly capable solution there is, is finding a more even ground between the two. For the more neutral point of view the prospect of achieving both goals is possible if only the balance is met. It is not the argument of who’s the ‘Makabayan’ and who’s the ‘Makabanyaga’ like some projects it to be. The truth that learning the English language is essential in the modern world we navigate in is as palpable as the soil of our Mother land. It is an important aspect of the whole learning system. Although it can be agreed the incorporation of the mother tongue is also as important.

At the earlier years of learning the use of the English language should be fifty percent of the time in school. It should be used with the subjects that ask for it like Math and Science where some terms used can’t be translated to Filipino. The rest of the subjects are fair game. It lays with the discretion of the Teacher how they will apply it. It is very subjective to the type of students within the class. Every approach is different since not every class is the same. There is no cookie cutter way of teaching and learning. It is not a matter of language or use of thereof.
References:

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Mother tongue and basic education in the Philippines

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