OF MOTHER TONGUE: THOUGHTS AND INSIGHTS

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It’s been a long year since the curriculum of the Philippines had its revision and implementation. One of the changes is making the mother tongue or the first language of the learners be the language to use in teaching academics at early education. It takes so much criticisms to some, but approval and support to those who advocate this abrupt changes in the education field. Forms of language such as verbal, gestures, sounds, and written play an important role in the learning of the students.

Reading serves as one of the skills that anchors learning. This leads an individual to literacy. Hence, literacy is not a necessary part of knowing a language. People through the century and around the world can speak very well in languages they do not read and write. However, literature and culture can define the value of the language in a particular setting. Printed and written languages could be remembered cognitively and later on may deliver in verbal communication.

Written and printed materials in a language, whether in children’s literature or mass media, can spread information even in the absence of many language speakers. Reading for older children supports in the retention of their language skills and their proficiency. In line with this, bilingual programs doubt the effect of reading in two different languages, but the research evidence claims it in the different way. These studies somehow become the basis of the use of Mother Tongue in the early age of a child. Many claim that a child must be efficient first in his own language in a certain period of time. This showed as a method adapted by the learning structure in our nation. The long and
unending battle of its efficiency has been heard. However, we were instructed to use the first language at the early age of schooling of a child.

   It is an evident that there are lots of adjustments done to pursue this. Some learning areas were decided to be taught at the next three years in elementary level. Some claim that this is the reason why we have poor performance in comprehending the second language which is English. On the other hand, we secure the mastery of our own language. This includes the exposure of the children to the manuscripts that use their mother tongue.

   Reading abilities and understanding transmit from one language to another. Even when the writings are different, there is an evidence of carryover, not interference (Bialystok, 2006). There will be one unique process in learning the language. The focus will be in the spelling and the script of the second language.

   In contrary, in the study reported in Language and Literacy in Bilingual Children (Pearson, & Umbel, 2002), children who learned to read in both languages, their first language and second one recorded significantly higher in reading that led to learning. This remains a belief to most of the parents in teaching language to their children, also ignites the advantages of bilingual language in some point of views.

   At the end, we are all expecting that the changes we made in the system will be all for the benefits of the students, teachers, and other DepEd stakeholders.

References: