

MOTHER TONGUE - BASED VS. FILIPINO LANGUAGE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

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In the Philippine education system, using the mother tongue and the Filipino language is crucial for shaping student learning outcomes. Both approaches are essential for fostering language development, cognitive skills, and cultural identity. However, their effectiveness varies based on the context of their application, with each method presenting unique benefits and challenges in the teaching and learning process.

The mother tongue plays a significant role in shaping personal, social, and cultural identity. Children who have a solid foundation in their first language tend to have a stronger sense of self and their role within society, leading to improved well-being and confidence. This naturally extends to various aspects of their lives, including their academic performance.

The first language a child learns from birth plays a vital role in their education for numerous reasons, while also shaping their social, personal, and cultural identity. Many child psychologists suggest that a strong foundation in the mother tongue leads to a deeper comprehension of educational concepts and fosters a more positive attitude toward social interaction.

Filipino, which was understood to be a common national language under the 1973 constitution, evolved by the institute of the national language. In the absence of a law to the contrary Filipino, which shall continue to be used as a medium of official communication and as a language instruction referred to in the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

Incorporating the Filipino language in education strengthens national identity, encourages inclusivity, and enhances comprehension. However, the challenge persists in finding a balance between using Filipino and addressing the linguistic diversity of the various regions across the country.

The use of the Filipino language in education plays a vital role in shaping the identity, culture, and cognitive development of learners in the Philippines. Delivering instruction in Filipino helps students grasp complex concepts more effectively, as it provides a familiar and comfortable learning environment. Studies have shown that learners perform better and are more engaged when taught in a language they are most at ease with, which is often their native or national language.

Both Mother Tongue-Based (MTB) and Filipino language teaching approaches offer unique strengths. MTB enhances understanding and retention by using the learners' native language, supporting cognitive development at an early age. It also aids in preserving cultural traditions and promotes an inclusive environment, especially in linguistically diverse regions.

In contrast, using Filipino as the language of instruction strengthens national identity and serves as a common medium for students from various regions. It bridges cultural differences and fosters communication across the nation, while still valuing local dialects.

Adopting a balanced approach that integrates both Mother Tongue and Filipino instruction, especially in the early stages, can boost both local and national identities. This method also equips students with the necessary language skills for the 21st century, catering to both their immediate and broader societal needs.

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