

**GRASSROOTS LEGITIMACY:  
THE FIRST LANGUAGE COMPONENT BRIDGING  
PROGRAM PILOT PROJECT OF REGION 2 AND CAR**

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Society needs innovation. Hamilton (1996) cites Asker on innovation, "The capacity to innovate is what keeps institutions, industries, economies, public service departments and businesses flexible, responsive and self renewing." This capacity also is essential to the education service. Innovation holds the key to raising standards in that it promotes a sense of well-being in the teaching profession.

The First Language Component-Bridging Program (FLC-BP) is an innovation requiring teachers' hard work. It is not a grandiose scheme, nor is it a short term flash of inspiration. It is modest and it has advanced slowly. It is a product following an analytic and organized way of teaching, is systematic, and often demands exhausting work. The FLC-BP as an innovation is a driving force which enhances a teacher's career and makes it constantly self-renewing and worthwhile.

The responsibility over the FLC-BP must be shared between the teachers themselves and those who create the organizational arrangement under which this program operates. These arrangements effectively determine whether or not the FLC-BP initiated by the NVSIT through its Graduate School Program adopted by DECS, Region 2 and CAR as conceived by SIL and DECS, Ifugao has the potential to spread.

The FLC-BP needs good ground to flourish. The FLC-BP, if not embedded in the educational terrain due to lack of support of all people concerned, may not succeed. Most good teachers have something of the innovator in them; however, this potential all too often lies latent. It should be the role of decision-makers in the field of education to ensure that the opportunity is provided for the emergence of the innovators within all those for whom they have responsibility.

Philippine society requires people to speak intelligibly in Filipino and English, not just a few who can speak very good Filipino or English. What we need to do as teachers is to help our students become confident thinkers who can make language work for them.

Nearly all of what is taught is all too easily forgotten because it was based on meaningless memory. What needs to be addressed is how best to foster skills and attitudes toward learning that will carry the child for a life time. We also know that for a change of attitude to take place from the traditional mode of teaching, a shift in public opinion is necessary. We alone in our classrooms are not capable of effecting it.

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Teachers are members of society and schools are of society, not outside it. The FLC-BP as an innovation is not outside it: the FLC-BP as an innovation is a social process. For this reason, teachers need to operate with others, not against others. Innovators over the years have promoted alternative ways of learning – but they are voices in the wilderness, because their ideas have been rejected by society. If the FLC-BP is to take root, it has to be legitimized. The teachers need to take control as “innovators”, to have confidence in themselves, possess the drive to push things they believe in, and be on the alert to find their solutions to improve the delivery of basic education.

### **1. VISION**

As teachers we have a dream. We dream that the children who come under our wings will learn to read well, that they might master the basic skills given through education, to succeed in school, and consequently, secure a job and make a better life for themselves and for future generations. We dream that all people might have access to the best that life has to offer – through education. The cornerstone of the educated man is that he can read. Reading is the most basic building block a teacher can offer a child.

The teaching of reading and writing in school has, of late, become a topic of great concern for DECS as it repeatedly stresses that basic education is the means by which one attains quality education. The educators involved in the curricular reform realize it is foundational that effective reading can be taught; therefore quality education can be attained and progress made in all related fields of learning.

To achieve this goal, we must redirect our strategy. The focus of education must shift from a façade of numbers to the actual learning acquisition of students. Our success can never rest on enrolment numbers, or the continued participation of warm bodies in ineffective programs or even, in the number of students who graduate completing certification requirements. *Asiaweek Magazine* cited our literacy rate of 93% plus. These features are based on those who entered the system – not on actual learning acquisition. For if we are 93% plus literate, why is our country still classed a third world nation? Let us therefore go on and adopt a program to reform this problem! Therefore my emphasis today is that actual acquisition of these skills, which has eluded us until now, must be accomplished.

### **2. METHODOLOGY**

The first language program builds a bridge which even the most timid student can confidently cross over into the unknowns of the world. That bridge is built by utilizing the first language in the teaching and learning of the child in the context of his culture.

Such a program is critically needed throughout the world wherever the first language of children differs from the medium of instruction in the school. The FLC-BP is a program which is anchored on the basic principles upon which learning depends;

1. The child's first language is the medium of instruction.
2. The child's cultural model of the world is used so he can process perceptual information, understand concepts, and be able to form new ones.
3. New concepts and skills are built on existing knowledge structures, rather than bypassing them by using a rote-memorization methodology. Teaching of the unknown

always proceeds over the bridge of the known to the unknown.

I have used the bridging concept in three basic ways: First, through trilingual instructional materials for bridging in both implicit and explicit ways. The implicit bridging is accomplished by first using the mother tongue to teach the lesson; then the entire lesson is repeated in the prescribed language for the subject (Filipino or English). The impact of implicit bridging is made by using the three languages in succession, and by using them strictly, with no code-switching. Explicit bridging is done by the teacher when she points out the differences in the three languages: differences in their concepts, vocabularies, and grammar structures.

The second way of bridging is bridging concepts by using the vernacular. This type of bridging is done by showing the child a picture. First, the child hears the concept associated with the picture in his own language; then he hears it verbalized in the second and third languages. Thus, he learns that a concept may be represented in multiple ways, depending on the language. In this way, he also learns to think in each language based on the foundation of the picture, which has been explicitly described and referred to in his first language.

The third way of bridging is done by using language decoding skills. As a word is sounded out in his mother tongue, words in the second language with the same sounds are practiced. These skills are more easily bridged between languages of related sound systems, for example, a vernacular such as Itawis, and Filipino, which allows bridging to start immediately. However, it will take longer to bridge from a Philippine Language to English, which has additional sounds and also symbols that have multiple sounds. These problems are introduced in succeeding lessons after pupils have already mastered their first language decoding skills, which form the foundation on which the student builds decoding skills in the other language.

### 3. PHILIPPINES: A CASE STUDY

The Philippines is a good example of rich language diversity. There are eight major languages with 162 indigenous languages spoken in the country, as listed by Grimes. Nine of these languages are spoken by 1 million or more speakers, 29 have at least one hundred thousand speakers, and 96 have at least 10,000 speakers. (Quakenbush 1998).

Authorities agree on the eight indigenous languages designated as major regional languages because they are spoken natively by the eight largest ethnic groups: Tagalog, as having the highest number of speakers, followed by Cebuano, Ilocano, Hiligaynon, Bikol, Waray, Pampango, and Pangasinan (Galang, 1999).

In his paper, 'Other Philippine Languages in the Third Millennium', Quakenbush cites Ferguson who has classified 5 major language types: standardized, vernaculars, pidgins, creoles, and classical languages. In the Philippines, Filipino and English are standardized, the former the national language, the latter, the international language. My languages, Balangao and Madukayong, are clearly classified as vernaculars.

The educational system operates with a bilingual policy, which employs the two standardized languages, Filipino and English, as media of instruction. There is an underlying assumption that the learner will excel in both languages. Teachers assume that those who make rapid progress are intelligent and those who make slow progress have a more limited intellectual capacity.

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Slow progress, however, may be attributed to the lack of opportunities for practicing the activities of speaking, listening, reading, and writing in these two languages since the home and community can't offer the pupils these opportunities in communities where Filipino and English are not spoken.

The educational policy has allowed for languages other than Filipino or English to be used as auxiliary means of instruction. However, various policy statements have used different terms for the languages that are allowed as auxiliary languages. Some of these terms are vernacular, regional, local, and the latest, 'lingua franca'.

Recently, the Department of Education, Culture and Sports is advocating, through a memorandum, the use of 'lingua franca' in the first grades of school, in addition to the two mediums of instruction, English and Filipino. Depending on one's interpretation of the memorandum, in Region 2, Ilocano, the lingua franca, may be used. It is less certain whether other 'regional' or 'local' languages of the area such as Ibanag, Itawis, and Ivatan may be used. The question that still remains is to what extent the local vernacular can be used.

Since learning comes naturally to children through their first language and culture, it is the intent of the First Language Component Bridging Program advocates to take advantage of this to hone the skills of learning and reasoning. We believe teaching in two languages which the child does not know paralyzes the development of his thinking skills. Ignoring his language and culture also demolishes his secure bridge into the world of learning.

Filipino, the national language, is a second language for students who speak vernacular languages. The other medium of instruction, English, is a third language. To add a 'lingua franca', rather than the local vernacular, to the school curriculum of a homogenous classroom will not help, but hinder, learning. Few students, if any, will gain mastery of any of three languages that will equal the skills that they have in their first. It is therefore wise for us to realize that a child can progress rapidly in his first year of school only when his current level of knowledge and skills in his first language is taken into account.

The teaching of reading and writing has of late been a topic of great concern for many of us in the Philippines, including the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). It is repeatedly being stressed that basic education is the means by which one attains quality education. The educators involved in the movement for curricular reform realize it is foundational that effective reading be taught so that quality education can be attained and progress made in all related fields of learning. CHED is concerned with producing teachers who are competent in the delivery of knowledge and skills to the pupils. My greatest concern is that we may not be facing the fact that student will never develop good comprehension and critical thinking skills if we teach decoding skills in languages that they have never learned.

There are linguists and notable educators, such as Dr. Bonifacio Sibayan and Bro. Andrew Gonzalez, who agree that the first language, the mother tongue, should be the medium of instruction in the first school year of a child; however, there are serious problems with this 'ideal' scenario. The two foremost problems are financial and teacher education. It is impossible to prepare and publish instructional materials for 164 languages. Also, early education teachers would need special training to be language teachers. The obstacles seem overwhelming and insurmountable.

Those of us who have been involved in the development of the First Language Component Bridging Program believe that we have some answers at the 'grassroots level'. The grassroots level phase refers to the teachers who live in local communities throughout the Philippines who speak and teach children who speak indigenous languages, the vernaculars. Many of these teachers, with appropriate training, are capable of producing quality instructional materials and visual aids at limited cost. But they need encouragement and support from local administration and higher-level DECS personnel.

#### **4. FITTING IN**

The First Language Component-Bridging Program (FLC-BP) is committed to the principle voiced both by UNESCO, EDCOM (Congressional Commission on Education), and PCER (Presidential Commission on Educational Reform). It is a concept which has dared to try something new in order to make learning not only easier, but also more relevant and more effective. I agree with Anne West, SIL Philippines Academic Affairs Associate Director, and Alma Navarette, Superintendent of Schools, Batanes, that this program is the most up-to-date teaching method which makes students successful in learning a second language and renders teaching more effective. Although this is true, as pointed out by Joanne Shetler, SIL ethnologist, as a frontier methodology it also invites dissenting opinions, indifference, and often even cynicism.

#### **5. To Begin at the Beginning (Hungduan, Ifugao)**

The First Language Component-Bridging Program was launched in the Hungduan School District, Ifugao Province, Cordillera by a joint effort of DECS and the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). There, children in the outlying barangays were not learning well – not because they were unintelligent, but because they could not understand the medium of instruction through which all new materials were imparted. These pupils' test scores were among the lowest in the division, and they were not enthusiastic about school. Neither were their teachers.

Then one of the district supervisors dared to break away from the tradition in his desire to raise the level of his district. With the help of SIL linguists based in Kiangan, Ifugao, Dick and Lou Hohulin, the First Language Component-Bridging Program, a concept born in 1962 with an order from DECS, was launched.

The first experimental classes added an extra hour at the end of each school day for teaching language arts in Ifugao, the pupils' first language. In this additional hour the teachers used the First Language Component-Bridging Program methodology for introducing reading, writing, and math skills in the first language with transfer of those skills to the regular course work in Filipino, English, and Math. The control classes used the traditional methods, i.e. purely English as the medium of instruction or a mix of English and the vernacular, Ifugao. In the experimental classes, the student's first language was used without code-switching (or mixing) for teaching the concepts and skills, then they were bridged into the two languages of official instruction. Instructional materials were trilingual.

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Pretesting was done in all classes to determine levels in English, Filipino, Grammar, and Math. Later, when post-testing was done, the results were remarkable! The experimental classes using the FLC-BP methodology far outperformed the control classes in every subject. Because of the significant results of the pilot projects in Hungduan District, we have incorporated this bridging program as one option for graduate studies where I teach in Nueva Vizcaya State Institute of Technology, Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya.

### **6. THE NVSIT PROGRAM**

To train teachers in these new techniques and methodology, the Nueva Vizcaya State Institute of Technology offers a Master of Arts in Education with specialization in Language, Reading, and Numeracy. At first, we organized a summer workshop. One component of the workshop was the organizing of two classes to be taught as part of the workshop: one of Grade I pupils and another of Grades II and IV pupils who were considered to be slow learners. These pupils in the demonstration classes were taught English and Math by the workshop participants using the First Language Component-Bridging Program (FLC-BP) methodology. To complement the methodology, the college simultaneously offered a class in Preparation of Supplementary Materials, and Reading Methodologies in which the participants actually made the materials that they would use in the demonstration lessons and subsequently in their own classrooms. These materials were culturally relevant to the context and language of the pupils. In addition, the course Conceptual Structure and Cognitive Processing was also offered to cover pedagogy and learning theories.

The workshop lectures covered topics on educational problems stemming from the multilingual and multicultural environment of Philippine classrooms. We used basic pedagogical principles, going from the known to the unknown. We focused on ways to stimulate students' thinking skills rather than rote memory skills, and we specifically discussed helping students to abstract principles from concrete examples. We also developed contextualized activities for the classroom.

There was intense excitement on the part of the teachers in this workshop because they learned actual classroom strategies and activities which they needed. The teaching was done in a seminar atmosphere in which all shared and participated. We actually designed lesson plans for teaching and developed supplementary teaching materials and devices related to the actual context of the students, rather than using the context of the city that the rural learners have never seen. All of the materials reflected the actual needs of workshop participants in their classrooms. Demonstration lessons were relevant to what the teachers would use during the school year. The professor and participants worked together to construct games, devices, and activities to achieve specific goals for each class. The participant-teachers became 'hunters' of everything that could be used in their classrooms: old boxes, cement sacks, cigarette wrappers, etc. Our workshop was designed to provide the actual teaching materials that could be immediately used in the classroom.

The following summer, 1994, I had 24 enrollees in the Bridging Program courses. Again, to give the participants practice on how the methodology works, 21 pre-grade I pupils enrolled in one demonstration class and 22 Grade III and Grade IV pupils, all considered to be slow learners, were enrolled in another. Pretesting was done before classes using a validated English test for Pre-Grade I, and a Grade IV achievement test for the other class. After just a five week period, the length of the demonstration classes, the same tests were administered. The students tagged as slow learners had all raised their scores

significantly, and no longer fit the category of slow learners. Even the Grade I demonstration class could decode and read short stories with comprehension, both in their first language and in English.

After these two summers of training, I was approached by some officials from my own mountain home who had heard of the new approach to teaching reading and other basic subjects. They requested that such a program also be launched in their own districts. These local benefactors not only agreed to provide all the raw materials for the workshop, but also to provide board and lodging for all teachers who consequently enrolled in the training. In that summer, I trained 90 teachers from four districts of Mountain Province.

Basically the same curriculum was taught as in the previous workshop. Courses in linguistic and translation principles were offered during the regular semesters for the sake of accurate and natural translation of stories from the first language to English and Filipino. Linguistic principles were the basis for developing good instructional materials with readable orthographies, appropriate vocabulary choices, and correct grammatical structure. We also added a class in literacy concepts, as literacy is more than a person just learning how to write his name or even sound out words; to be literate is to decode meaning in written form.

Besides the language barrier between the student and the media of instruction, another serious handicap that teachers constantly face in remote areas of the Philippines is the lack of visual-aid materials to use in the classroom. During the workshop in my home area, the 90 participants in the six week workshop made over 680,000 pieces of material to be used in their classrooms. Whereas some workshop participants entered the summer program skeptical, all 90 have become enthusiastic proponents of this methodology which has given them hope for their classrooms. The atmosphere at the end of the workshop was electric.

Yet another teaching opportunity came in the summer of 1997 in Lubuagan, Kalinga. A consortium of SIL, DECS, NVSIT, and St. Teresita's personnel held a seminar-workshop for Grade I and II Kalinga teachers. This was followed by another four-day seminar for higher grades in October of the same year, using the FLC-BP for beginning reading and for remedial approach to the basics.

Recently, a graduate student who used the FLC-BP methodology in a research project, defended his thesis by showing that after the first grading period alone, Grade IV math pupils who were taught by the bridging method (the experimental class) performed significantly better than those taught by the traditional method (the control class), in both computation and problem-solving. It was further noted that, while the improvement was only slight for addition and subtraction, it was quite spectacular for the more difficult math processes, not just doing them by rote – which is very difficult to do in a language foreign to the student.

Also a Grade I teacher whose supervisor was supportive of the methodology reported that her Grade I pupils could write creative sentences of four to five lines in Ilocano of pictures or objects shown to them. The most recent study using the methodology is a concluded thesis on teaching Dolch's word lists. The experimental class tested significantly higher over the control class where the teacher used the traditional method of teaching.

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In June, 1999, DECS, Region 2 opted to implement the program region-wide. All nine scholars implemented the methodology. The result of the test administered in March 2000 indicated that the experimental classes were higher in the mean percentage scores over the control group.

Although I can cite many stories which show the successes of the methodology, there has been criticism and skepticism through the years of its development.

For example, after the summer 1994 training, a number of teachers adopted the bridging program for their school year. However, new barriers now surfaced. These teachers learned that just because a concept works does not mean it will meet with enthusiastic reception or approval by all who have authority over them. Such opposition is not new. When the Wright brothers, back at the turn of the century, conceived of how man could fly through the air, their idea met with cascades of resistance, indifference, disbelief, and even downright hostility. However, due to their persistence, flying has become an assumed mode of travel.

We now recognize that this program and the teachers who are excited by it may meet resistance. They may encounter a colleague and/or administrator opposing – ranging from skepticism to strong criticism. In some cases, teachers, because they were totally convinced of its effectiveness, have used the bridging program secretly.

One teacher in the Cordillera has documented her activities for four consecutive years. She did an action research program in Grade I reading, and also creatively expanded the bridging curriculum to include a class in Geography, History and Civics, a class normally taught in Filipino. When she tested these two classes, the pupils in her class, using the bridging method, had significant gains in scores as over against other classes which were taught by the traditional method.

### **7. A SPIN-OFF**

In 1998 we joined hands: SIL and NVSIT Graduate School hosted a symposium focusing on the use of the First Language Component Bridging Program Concept. Our participants were 135 administrators of DECS, Nueva Vizcaya headed by Superintendent Gerry Ibasco including the two Chiefs of Basic Education of Region 2. Part of the symposium were two demonstration lessons: Grade IV math and Grade I reading (English). After watching the demos, the administrators were persuaded that this methodology might be the best alternative for teaching the basics. Thus began our interaction with the DECS Regional Office.

In the summer of 1999, Region 2 sent nine scholars and SIL sent eight scholars to the regular summer program. In addition to these scholars were nine sponsored by various agencies. My trainees that summer numbered 92. We produced nearly a million pieces of instructional material and devices.

On top of the demonstration lessons and the manufacture of teaching aids, lectures on various topics like bilingual education, learning styles, learning theories, and second language acquisition were lectured on by Dr. Patricia M. Davis, a visiting SIL professor. Mrs. Lou Hohulin lectured on conceptual structure and cognitive processing towards the end.

In June 1999 Region 2 opted to try the approach. The Regional Office organized the experimental and control classes. They tested the pupils sometime in early March.

The test showed that the overall mean percentage score (MPS) for the experimental classes was higher than that of the control group.

Let me share some comments given by the teachers relative to the use of the FLC-BP:

- The pupils are adept at reading Ilocano and Filipino. There was easy transfer of skills from Ilocano to Filipino. They are not yet so fluent in English. In comprehension, they have adopted a strategy for themselves (eyesweeping) to find answers from the Ilocano chart when they are not sure of their answers in the English phase.
- All children were active participants in the second phase of the lesson, the bridging part. In previous years, pupils were passive as a result of the old way of teaching. The children's active participation makes us happy teachers. We feel we are both involved in the teaching-learning process.
- Except for two classes who each had five non-readers, all pupils were readers. They were good at decoding, encoding and good at answering comprehension questions as observed.
- Teachers have said that they liked it so much when their children can answer how and why questions in Ilocano and at least do their best to also answer in English. In the traditional way of teaching, pupils did not even want to try to answer questions.
- One teacher said, I am a very happy Grade I teacher today. With bridging, I have accomplished all my objectives required in English by the PELC. In the previous years I never finished my objectives, much as I tried. I have had drop outs in the past years. This year I have zero. This comment is shared by seven teachers who implemented the program.
- Teachers who implemented the program have asked if they would be allowed to use the bridging approach in mathematics and in science. Some conjectured that since the methodology makes pupils learn, then why not extend the approach beyond Grade I?
- One teacher said, I always made my pupils decode in English the previous years and thought I was successful. With bridging I have added comprehension skills to the skill of decoding in English as early as November. This method is certainly the best method because my pupils can think well and answer inferencing questions. To me, I can easily teach values education in reading because what pupils think, they can express in Ilocano.
- The teachers said that the bridging was a very productive way of teaching. It enhanced their self-esteem because their pupils scored higher than most of the other grades in the achievement tests given at the end of the year.

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- In Lubuagan, Cordillera, I observed a class of Kindergarten. These little children were reading Lubuagan language and answering comprehension questions. At the time I observed in January, they were already reading CVC English words.
- I'd like to add a comment here of a graduate student who concluded her thesis this school year using bridging to teach Dolch's words. Her own pupils were the control class. Another teacher's class was the experimental class. The experimental class's performance proved highly significant over the control class. Her own pupils complained that the other class had fun learning the Dolch's words whereas they didn't. In the weekly evaluation, the experimental class consistently garnered higher scores over the control group. In a school test, the teacher's own pupils scored poorly as compared to the experimental class that scored the highest among all the three sections. The graduate student felt sorry for her class. She said it wasn't fair that another teacher's class got collectively the highest score. Although her class was sacrificed, she proved the methodology effective for teaching Dolch's words.

### **8. THE FIRST LANGUAGE COMPONENT-BRIDGING PROGRAM – A NUISANCE?**

Objections have been raised against the use of the FLC-BP.

Some observers say that the children become dependent on the first language by constantly reverting to the vernacular cognates and grammatical structures after exhausting their English knowledge in the second part of the lesson which is bridging. Gradually, the pupils will be able to continue longer in correct English usage and fall back less frequently on the vernacular as they increase their skills in English acquisition. This strategy is a normal, inevitable part of the language learning process.

“More is better” is an argument which is logical. One member of the NVSIT Personnel during a symposium held in 1999 vehemently objected to the program because of this logic. Let me use an analogy in this situation. Our mind has multiple channels like a television. When we switch on a particular channel on our TV set and we don't like what is on the screen, we switch off and go to another channel. Such is the mind of the child. When a child doesn't understand what the teacher is saying, he switches off the teacher's channel and switches it on to his. His own channel may contain his hunting events.

Another objection raised against First Language Component-Bridging Program is that it requires so much work. The reason why this methodology requires too much work is because the teacher-innovator has to produce all her materials including devices to teach the lessons. However, when these problems are taken care of through provision of books and other supplementary instructional materials, teaching will not be too cumbersome.

Some parents also say, “Why teach our children Ilocano?” “Why teach our children Lubuagan?” When children come to school at age six or seven, they have not yet assimilated all cognates in their first language. Since they have not absorbed all concepts in their world and calling them their names, it is necessary that the school help these children acquire these concepts and their cognate words.

Also, the intention of the FLC-BP is not to teach the first language but to use the first language as a bridge to learn the two languages: Filipino and English. The FLC-BP allows the child to pass via an overpass rather than letting him go down a deep cliff and go up on the other side of the cliff. This is dangerous. In the course of going down and going up the cliff he could lose balance and stumble and get hurt. When he does, he won't make another attempt to go down and go up that cliff. That child is our drop-out!

### 9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, I want to return to my original topic: grassroots legitimacy – the first language bridging program. What does the Philippine case study and the FLC-BP have to do with this paper? The goal of the UNESCO's latest program in education established for the twenty-first century is "toward basic education for all". This is to be realized by providing adequate education as a foundation for lifelong learning for everyone, young and old.

The strategy spelled out by UNESCO promotes the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, but the FLC-BP goes beyond that. The FLC-BP as a methodology for teaching is actually a bridge towards the learning of two other languages, our national language Filipino, and an international language English. This program is committed to the principle voiced both by EDCOM and UNESCO. It is a program which has dared to try something new in order to make learning not only easier, but also more relevant and more effective.

I would like to suggest to this group that the First Language Component Bridging Program is one means of attaining effective teaching. I would also like to suggest that some parts of the program might serve as a model for a life support system for speakers of languages other than the eight major languages, so that these languages do not die before they are affirmed and transferred.

In conclusion, let us remember that beginnings are important. A pupil's beginning is crucial to his whole future, and active participation in the classroom is necessary to ensure learning that will allow children to reach their fullest potential. The bridging program methodology is based on how people learn effectively. Its strategies have been designed to use instructional materials and teaching aids which are based on the child's context, his language and his environment. We advocates of the FLC-BP would like to see more teachers and pupils experience the advantages of the program for the development of second language competency.

Philippine society requires people to speak intelligibly in Filipino and English, not just a few who have very good English. What we need to learn as a teacher is how to help our pupils to be confident of themselves, ambitious, risk-takers who can make language work for them because they have fully internalized the operation of a second language by using their mother tongue as bridge to understand the intricacies of a second/third language. To do this we need to have confidence in ourselves and in our ability to play the role of the effective teacher.

Nearly all of what is taught in school is all too easily forgotten because it was based on meaningless memory. What needs to be addressed is how best to foster skills and attitudes towards learning that will carry the child for a life time. We also know that for a change of attitude to take place from the traditional mode of teaching, a shift in public opinion is necessary, and that we alone in our classrooms are not capable of effecting it.

## BAGUINGAN

Teachers are members of society and schools are part of society, not outside it. Neither is the FLC-BP as an innovation outside society. FLC-BP as an innovation is a social process. For this reason teachers need to operate with others, not against others. Innovators over the years have promoted alternative ways of learning, but they are voices in the wilderness because their ideas have been rejected by society. If the FLC-BP is to take root, it has to be legitimized.

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