

Service-Learning in Children's Literature: Teaching Young Filipino Learners Local Narratives and Oral Storytelling Tradition

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Introduction

- Existing notion that Service-Learning is the domain of the Social Sciences, not suitable to the humanities “particularly English, History and Philosophy”; consequently, many in the humanities have been “slow adopters” (Barrow, 2011)



- *Literature and Service-Learning: Not Strange Bedfellows* (Comstock, 1994)
- Paper presentation is on the first Service-Learning Project undertaken by the Dept. of English and Literature



Objectives

- Mentor elementary pupils in the art of Oral Storytelling
- Teach students to harness local knowledge and traditions to be incorporated in their future literature, history, culture and values classes (in consonance with MTb-MLE Policy)



Service-learners

- Sophomore - Senior BS in Elementary General Education and BS in Early Childhood Education enrolled in Children's Literature, a required course for both study programs



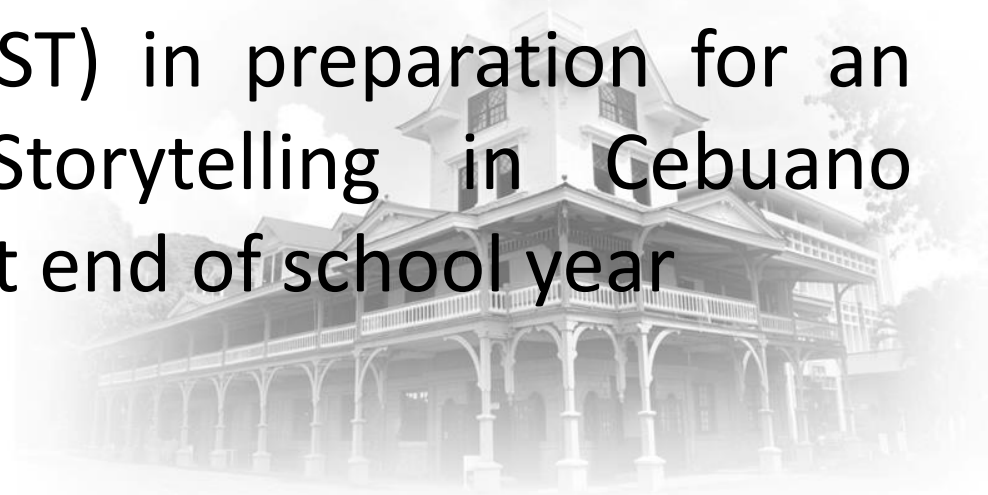
Partner community

- Elementary pupils (36) from ten public elementary schools in Dumaguete City who will learn the formal or stylized ways of oral storytelling
- 23 boys and 11 girls
- Grades 4 and 5 pupils



Context

- Children's Literature students, with cooperation of homeroom advisers, mentored selected Grades 4-5 pupils from Dumaguete City public elementary schools in the art of Oral Storytelling (OST) in preparation for an Interschool Oral Storytelling in Cebuano Contest to be held at end of school year



Mentoring process

- Team formation: 2 SU students and 3-4 pupils from one public elementary school
- Each team gathered 3-5 oral lores or historical narratives from known local historians/storytellers in their immediate community
- The team selected 2-3 narratives from gathered data



- Students mentored pupils in oral storytelling techniques using the gathered lores/narratives for demonstration
- Selected pupils performed to classmates their stylized oral storytelling in Cebuano (mother tongue for authenticity and ease of delivery)
- Class/group discussion of implications of lores/narratives on Filipino identity and values



- Students continued mentoring pupils selected as contestants to the Interschool Oral Storytelling in Cebuano Contest to be held at end of school year





Orientation of pupils on the S-L Storytelling Project





A grade 4 pupil telling his own story before formal mentoring





A Grade 5 pupil practicing his storytelling after some mentoring





Practice oral storytelling session in a class



Common themes in gathered community lores and narratives

- Ghost stories/Tales of the Supernatural
- Legends of prominent places in the area
- Idyllic community life in bygone days



Impact of oral storytelling project

- On university students
 - Oral storytelling gets pupils' undivided attention and maximum participation, thus, is a good teaching strategy for introducing new lessons
 - Oral lores should not be readily dismissed as superstitions or made up stories by people; these are actually fundamental part of a community's cultural life
 - The incorporation of community lores and narratives in schools will make young people more aware of and better understand their locality



Impact of oral storytelling project

- On elementary pupils
 - Oral storytelling in the classroom is fun and unintimidating, hence, expressing ideas in class is much more spontaneous and stress-free
 - The community is also a source of history; surprised to learn that own relatives are part of local history



Impact of oral storytelling project

- On community folks
 - Oral storytelling is a means of bonding between generations as well as between and among community members so everyone should participate in keeping this tradition alive
 - Very happy and proud to know that community life is discussed in classrooms; this emphasizes the need to nurture community historians and storytellers; also to be more diligent/systematic in documenting local events



Conclusion

- Literature is closely intertwined with the study of culture and society; thus, lends itself to endless S-L project possibilities
- It is high time that oral storytelling and local memory projects be formally included in the elementary curriculum



Thank you!

