

DEVELOPMENT OF A PROPOSED ELECTIVE COURSE IN BICOL LITERATURE

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Abstract

This study documented the development of a proposed elective course in Bicol Literature. These learning experiences were organized using Active Learning Strategies and Communicative Language Teaching strategies that allowed the students to work collaboratively with others, utilize technology and other social media platforms and be able to use English confidently and their local language judiciously. In the evaluation part of the course, the objectives of the course and the interests and needs of the students were considered along with the competencies that were expected from them. In conclusion, the interests and needs of the students are influenced by their ability to complete tasks, the competencies needed in their future careers, and to be appreciated or recognized through technology and social media platforms. Further, in formulating objectives, selecting content and learning activities, and organizing the content and learning experiences for a course, the years of experience of the teachers are reliable since they understand the interests of the students as well as the expected competencies, and school policies. Moreover, to engage the students in the content, the strategies must also be aligned with their interests, needs, and cognitive level.

Keywords: *Development of Elective Course, Bicol Literature*

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum development is imperative in improving teaching and learning situations. With the needs, abilities, and interests of the students, along with the nature of society as the basis, curriculum development design, organize, implement, and evaluate learning experiences. In evaluating the curriculum, it is crucial to find out if it is still relevant and responsive to the needs of the society and the learners. One of the several important functions of curriculum evaluation is it guides in initiating curricular changes and innovations (Pawilen, 2015).

Curriculum innovation is an idea, method, arrangement or technology that is focused on promoting the best interest of the educational program of a school. This involves planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating procedures. Curriculum innovation is of relevance to Philippine education today and in the years to come because of its socio-political system, rapid economic development, and technological revolution (Aquino, 2008).

One of the crucial factors of curriculum change or innovation is cultural values. The significance of culture and values has been recognized in different societies. Meanwhile, in the Philippines, it is a national goal to “strengthen national consciousness and promote desirable cultural values in a changing world”. In fact, during the implementation of the K12 curriculum, there was an increase in the interest among educators and researchers to improve the language skills of the learners through the regional literature. Like in the study of Florentino (2014) as cited by (Hijastro, 2023) the integration of local literature in language teaching is an innovative practice that helps the learners to preserve and promote their cultural heritage. Similarly, Gilbas (2015) as cited by (Paderan, 2016) (Velasco, Issues and Concerns in Teaching Philippine Literature) emphasized that local literature such as folk narratives must be used as instructional materials. They serve as a showcase of the culture and identity of people, as part of their expression through language. This local literature functions as the basis of social tradition, which contributes part of the social heritage, or she called it the living mirrors of the past. She also emphasized that learners should also be aware of their nature. This will lead them to understand their ways and the community where they belong (Aquino, 2008).

Posited in his book that there is a need for the acquisition of one’s cultural heritage. The major efforts of the school should include the most significant aspects of the student’s cultural heritage along with the skills and knowledge. This is true not just in the Philippines but also in other countries. Based on the study conducted by (Albantani, 2018) local pearls of wisdom such as the local languages is the self-identity of the nation should be included in the instructional activities in school even in the teaching of foreign languages.

The Commission on Higher Education’s (CHED) Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 4 Series of 2018 indicates the postponement of CHED Memo No. 20 Series of 2013 and to offer Filipino and Panitikan (Literature) in higher education as part of the New General Education Curriculum since the latter sparked debate among experts and stakeholders highlighting that its implementation discourages students to appreciate and learn their own language and literature. However, in the issuance of CMO No. 4 Series of 2018, the commission did not mention the inclusion of local languages and literature in the curriculum even though one of the factors to be considered in curriculum development is the nature of the society which includes cultural heritage, the needs and demands of the people as well as their economic, social, political, moral, and cultural problems.

This study aims to respond to the lack of local cultural preservation and local language cultivation in the tertiary curriculum by proposing an elective course on Bicol Literature. This course would promote local cultural awareness and will provide an advantage to those who will take the course in terms of being an active participant in their community through language and literature research and programs that would address its needs. Further, the course promotes appreciation and engagement in Bicol linguistic studies among language majors specifically in grammar, vocabulary, and the nuances of the Bicol culture that would lead to language maintenance.

With the discretion given to the colleges and universities in the teaching of literature, schools can teach literature in Filipino, English, and other languages for as long as there are enough instructional materials. It is deemed important to offer Bicol Literature even as an elective course in the tertiary level to elevate the students' consciousness of their own language and culture amidst the status of Bicol language and literature in the basic education curriculum through the scrapping of teaching mother tongue in the recently implemented *Matatag* Curriculum. Because of this issue, there is a great chance that Filipino learners will be more adverse in studying their own literature and language, in addition to the fact that it has been an old-aged concern to sustain the interest of the Filipino learners when it comes to their own language and literature. Antonio (2015) as cited by (Velasco, Issues and Concerns in Teaching Philippine Literature) posited that Filipino youth ignore literature. The generation of Filipino learners today are not interested in their own roots because of colonial mentality. Accepting other culture is easier for them and this kind of behavior is increasingly spreading throughout the country. With this, it is alarming to know that the current curriculum, both in tertiary and basic education have no elaborate concern in learning the local language and literature.

The curriculum is a specialized tool to direct the learners' interest not just toward their personal improvement but also as active participants in the life of the community. Therefore, this study is beneficial to Bicolano learners for studying their own language and literature, they are directed to succeed as individuals with genuine concern to his own culture and community.

Guided by the principles of Hilda Taba's Grassroots Rational Model (1962), the researcher developed a syllabus for Bikol Literature to be proposed as an elective course at the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Nueva Caceres. The proposed elective course in Bicol Literature will engage the students across all courses to the historical survey that would analyze the growth and development of Bicol Literature and the study of the selected literary works and genres from the different provinces of Bicol which includes Albay, Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte, Masbate, and Catanduanes from its beginning to 21st Century. The purpose of this study is to document the process of developing an elective course in Bicol Literature. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the question: What are the steps in developing an elective course in Bicol Literature?

METHODOLOGY

To conduct this study, the researcher utilized the principles of Hilda Taba's Grassroots Rational Model (1962) to developed a syllabus for Bikol Literature to be proposed as an elective course at the College of Arts and Sciences at University of Nueva Caceres. This study used the Descriptive Method to describe the process of developing the proposed elective course in Bicol Literature. Below are the steps followed by the researcher in developing the course:

1. DIAGNOSIS OF NEEDS

In the model of Hilda Taba (1962), the first step is to identify the needs, interests, and experiences of the students. To do this, the researcher sought permission to analyze the recordings of the consultation meetings conducted with the students alumni, and teachers. Also, an unstructured interview was conducted with students who were conveniently chosen from different colleges to gather more data on their needs, interests, and experiences.

2. SELECTION OF CONTENT

Hilda Taba's principal adheres to the fact that teachers know their students' needs and interests. Their input in the development of the curriculum is valuable. In this step, the researcher consulted language and literature teachers to what is appropriate to be included in the Bicol Literature course in which the students will be education students. The first draft of the syllabus was intended to use the local language where the university is located, however, during the consultation with language and literature teachers, the language policy in the university must also be considered in the context wherein the English language must be used in the classroom.

3. ORGANIZATION OF THE CONTENT

The organization of the content of the course in Bicol Literature is sequenced from the historical, cultural, and literary development of Bicol Literature to the contemporary genres of Bicol texts which were patronized by Bicolano youth in different social media platforms.

4. SELECTION OF THE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

The researcher considered in this step the interests of the students and the input of the language and literature teachers during the consultations. According to the students, learning the subject matter for them is easier if it is done collaboratively with peers and they must be comfortable in expressing themselves in local language and English language.

The researcher also took into consideration the suggestions of the language teachers where writing must also be highlighted since students even in the tertiary level have difficulty in the different modes of paragraph development needed in research writing.

5. ORGANIZATION OF LEARNING EXPERIENCES

For the learning experiences to be organized, the researcher used different strategies since the interests and needs of the students must be met. The strategies that were included in the course are active learning strategies and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Activities that were included in the course that use active learning strategies allowed the students to express themselves while targeting the competency that they needed to learn. While those activities that use CLT allows the students to judiciously use their local language but also using English as the target language based on the language policy of the school.

6. EVALUATION

In this step, the researcher decided on how the students will be assessed based on the course objectives. Since the course objectives are based on the interests and needs of the students in collaborative work, writing, technology and social media while using both English and their local language, the researcher opted to have an assessment that would target all of these through theatrical production, production paper, and since this must also be aligned with the course of the target students, a semi-detailed lesson plan is included in the assessment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the unstructured interviews and the analysis of the recordings of the consultation meetings with the stakeholders. The following needs and interests were derived: (1) Students find it difficult to conduct researches and present proposals- they are less interested in these but they are aware of their importance when they become professionals. The importance of research and proposal making was also confirmed by the alumni and the teachers and a skill which is lacking to most graduates; (2) Students have positive attitude on the current language policy of the university in which everyone is encouraged to speak in English and being integrated in their subjects. They see that learning English is important since it is an advantage in the field however, most students opt to use the local language to freely express themselves especially when they are having conversations with friends outside the classroom and even to their professors when they want to relay concerns; and (3) Students are interested in classroom activities that use technology and social media. They are mostly bored with classroom lectures. (4) Students like activities that require collaboration with peers, it is easier for them to complete tasks when they are working with a partner or a small group. They also added that language and literature activities or tasks must also be useful or aligned to their courses.

With the mentioned interests, needs, and experiences of the students, the researcher developed objectives which are focused on writing aligned to their course, collaborative work, Bicol language and English language, and the use of technology and social media. Since this proposed elective course is planned to be tested among education students at the College of Education at University of Caceres, the objectives are also aligned with teaching strategies and learning literature.

Through the conducted consultation of the researcher with other experts in the teaching of language and literature, it was suggested to include in the canon of texts different genres from different provinces of Bicol since not all students are from Naga City area. It was also suggested to check the reviews of the texts before including it in the course. Moreover, since one of the goals of the course is to developed appreciation of the Bicol roots and culture, the content must show the growth and development of the Bicol literature in the different provinces. This is the reason why the content of the course revolved on literary

texts from Albay, Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte, Masbate, and Catanduanes from its beginning to 21st Century.

The content of the course was organized for the students to gain knowledge and on how Bicol Literature developed from myths which are passed orally through generations to contemporary texts which are performed in different social media platforms. The content was designed and organized where students will be able to relate their own experiences about the myths and legends in their areas and how stories and folklore evolved in the present times as themes in Bicol love songs and metaphors in spoken poetry, movies, and theatre.

In selecting the learning experiences of the students, the researcher both considered the needs and interests of the students and the suggestions of the language and literature teachers of what macro-skills are needed by the students when they do their academic requirements. Since the course is being proposed in the tertiary level and will be tested in education students at the College of Education, the researcher also included strategies in teaching in learning language and literature such as translating, close reading, writing using the lens of literary theories, and writing a lesson plan.

Next step is organizing the learning experiences. The researcher used Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Active Learning Strategies in organizing the learning experiences to engage the students with the content. Since the learners are college students, the activities were matched to their cognitive level and interests; targeting their critical thinking skills through analysis of texts, translation, and writing and performing texts themselves. The course was also organized in a manner that they are introduced to collaboratively work with peers, teachers, and other professionals.

The last step in developing this course is evaluation. The aspects that were considered by the researcher in assessment for this course are the interests and needs of the students, specifically in collaborative work, use of local language and English language, technology and social media along with their academic and cognitive level. Further, there must be competencies that must be achieved according to the language and literature teachers like speaking and writing while targeting critical thinking through creating. These were carefully considered by the researcher that's why for the assessment of the Bicol Literature course, the students are asked to do an adaptation of a theatrical production, they are also asked to write a production paper and since the course should be aligned with course of the target students, a semi-detailed lesson is also part of the assessment. These assessment procedures were also aligned with the objectives of the course.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study described the process of developing an elective course in Bicol Literature. Consequently, it is concluded that the interests and needs of the students are influenced by their ability to complete tasks, the competencies needed in their future career, and to be appreciated or recognized through technology and social media platforms. Further, in

formulating objectives, selecting content and learning activities, organizing the content and learning experiences for a course, it is not only the needs and interests of the students that should be considered but also with the reliable years of experience of the teachers because they understand the interests of the students as well as the expected competencies required by the hiring companies. Teachers are also knowledgeable of the school policies that might affect the content of the course. Moreover, to engage the students in the content and allow them to participate in classroom discussions, the strategies must also be aligned with their interest, needs, and cognitive level. Further, the evaluation procedures must take into consideration the course of the students to provide a variety of assessments since this is an elective course that will be offered at the College of Arts and Sciences which is a servicing department. In addition to the considerations in the assessment of the course are their needs and interests aligned to the content of the course and objectives.

Furthermore, this study recommends a separate study looking into the acceptability and reliability of the elective course among the school administration, teachers, and students. Also, future researchers may explore reviewing the current curriculum exploring the gaps and conducting more research that would meet the needs of students and the community (Aquino, 2008) (Hijastro, 2023) (Paderan, 2016).

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