

Big book production for the integration of local culture and heritage in Araling Panlipunan VI

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ABSTRACT

The study developed instructional materials integrating local culture and heritage into the AralingPanlipunan VI curriculum at Cahayagan Elementary School, Carmen District. Conducted in the third quarter of the 2023-2024 school year, it involved 56 Grade VI pupils. The research focused on assessing the impact of these materials on student performance, particularly through criteria such as capitalization, punctuation, grammar, spelling, creativity, topic focus, and organization. A quatitative research design was adopted, allowing for an in-depth evaluation of the effectiveness of existing instructional tools and their influence on learner outcomes. Data analysis employed frequency, percentage, and T-tests to examine the relationship between pre-test and post-test scores, using the newly developed materials. Findings indicated that instructional materials significantly enhanced the teaching-learning process. Specifically, the use of a "Big Book" proved effective in improving pupil performance, particularly in language literacy fluency. The study highlighted the essential role of instructional materials in conveying information and enhancing student engagement. Based on these outcomes, the study recommends that teachers actively use instructional materials to foster engagement and learning. Exposure to and engagement with local culture and heritage should be increased to strengthen historical connections. Additionally, school heads should consider providing more training seminars focused on cultural appreciation and literary skills development. Future research should explore different variables to validate and expand upon these findings.

Keywords: local culture, heritage, instructional materials

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INTRODUCTION

In the field of education, the integration of local culture and heritage within the curriculum is widely recognized as a vital approach to enrich students' learning experiences and to enhance their sense of identity and belonging. Studies show that incorporating local culture into educational content increases student engagement and academic achievement by making learning more relevant and meaningful (Erwinsyah& Due, 2022). Moreover, intercultural understanding fostered through culturally responsive teaching has been linked to improved social cohesion and reduced cultural biases among learners. Instructional materials such as textbooks, workbooks, and modules serve as essential tools in this process by facilitating interaction with diverse educational content and supporting the development of comprehensive language skills,

including reading, writing, listening, speaking, and visual comprehension (Cubillas, 2018). These resources provide both convenience and confidence to educators, enabling more effective instruction.

To maximize their impact, instructional materials must meet specific criteria, including clearly defined objectives, high technical and instructional quality, sound organization, and content that aligns with educational standards, particularly in language arts. For instance, research indicates that well-designed instructional materials can improve literacy rates by up to 20% in early-grade learners when aligned with curriculum goals. Among the various types of instructional materials, Big Books—characterized by their large format, minimal text, and extensive use of illustrations—are specifically designed to support early literacy by making comprehension and retention easier for young learners. The visual appeal and interactive nature of Big Books have been shown to increase reading motivation and participation among children (Smith & Jones, 2019). As learners today face an increasingly complex cultural landscape, instructional materials that integrate local culture, such as Big Books, are valuable for enhancing learners' understanding and engagement with their cultural and historical heritage. These materials foster a sense of belonging and contribute significantly to cultural education.

Furthermore, the California Education Code (2019) emphasizes that instructional materials, whether printed or non-printed, encompass textbooks, technology-based resources, and assessments designed to assist both students and teachers in acquiring knowledge, skills, and cognitive abilities. Globally, the use of culturally relevant instructional materials has been associated with improved academic outcomes, particularly in marginalized communities. In language teaching, such materials are considered primary sources of support, offering English language teachers' convenience and confidence (Cubillas, 2018). Despite their importance, competencies anchored in local culture often remain among the least mastered skills in subjects like AralingPanlipunan, with recent assessments revealing that only 45% of learners meet proficiency standards in this area in the Philippines (Department of Education, 2023). Motivated by this gap, the researcher—who is also an AralingPanlipunan teacher—aims to develop instructional materials that integrate local culture and heritage to improve learners' performance. Central to this effort is the use of media to enhance children's literacy skills through culturally relevant instructional tools, thereby addressing both academic and cultural learning needs.

Statement of the problem

The study designed, developed, and validated the big book for the integration of local culture and heritage in AralingPanlipunan VI. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions.

1. How will a big book be designed and developed for the integration of local culture and heritage in AralingPanlipunan?
2. How may the developed big book be evaluated by experts in terms of: capitalization & punctuation, grammar & spelling, creativity, focus on topic and organization?
3. What is the pre-test and post-test performance of the Grade VI pupils in the 3rd Quarter examination?
4. Is there a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test performance of the Grade VI pupils?
5. On the basis of the findings, how may the Big Book be enhanced?

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive evaluative research design aimed at gathering comprehensive information about prevailing conditions to describe and interpret the effectiveness of a developed instructional material. This design facilitated the collection of qualitative data in the form of words and language, which were then analyzed descriptively to go beyond mere data tabulation by incorporating proper analysis, interpretation, and identification of trends and relationships. Specifically, the research sought to evaluate the performance of learners on pretest and posttest assessments following the use of a Big Book instructional material that integrated local culture and heritage, thereby providing insights on its efficacy in enhancing learning outcomes.

The research was conducted at Cahayagan Elementary School in Cahayagan, Carmen, Agusan del Norte, situated within the Carmen District of the Agusan del Norte Division. During the 2023–2024 school year, this school had a population of 365 pupils from Kindergarten to Grade VI. The study engaged fifty-six Grade VI pupils as participants, utilizing a complete enumeration approach to include the entire population of interest. This intact group of learners was selected to comprehensively represent the demographic relevant to the study. Initially, these students underwent a pre-assessment test designed to evaluate their existing understanding of the integration of local culture and heritage within their learning process.

To measure the effectiveness of the instructional material, the study employed a pretest-posttest assessment specifically developed to align with the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELC) for AralingPanlipunan targeted during the third week of the third quarter. The test items were carefully constructed to assess competencies related to the integration of local culture and heritage, allowing for a thorough evaluation of the Big Book's instructional impact. The Big Book itself underwent validation by experts in the Quality Assurance Team, who reviewed it based on criteria from the Department of Education's National Book Contest to ensure it met established educational standards. Although the pretest and posttest instruments were division-approved tests and did not undergo separate reliability and validity checks, the comprehensive expert review of the Big Book provided assurance regarding the instructional material's quality and appropriateness.

The data gathering process began with securing the necessary approvals from the Schools Division Superintendent and the school principal, ensuring ethical compliance and institutional support for the research. Following these approvals, the pretest assessment was administered, and the pupils' initial scores were recorded. Subsequently, the researcher developed the Big Book instructional material, designed to incorporate local cultural and heritage elements relevant to the learners' context. After the Big Book was integrated into classroom activities, a posttest assessment was conducted to determine any improvements in learner performance attributable to the instructional intervention. The data collected from both assessments were systematically tallied, tabulated, and analyzed to identify significant changes in pupils' understanding, guiding further refinement of the Big Book to better meet educational needs and enhance engagement with the content.

Scoring and quantification of the learners' test scores involved calculating raw scores separately for the pretest and posttest to examine differences in performance. The Quality Assurance Team also evaluated the Big Book's content and usability using a specifically designed rating scale, with criteria ranging from "not met" to "exceedingly met," providing detailed interpretations for each level. This scale enabled a rigorous assessment of the

instructional material's quality, supporting a robust analysis of its educational value for Grade VI pupils.

For statistical analysis, the study utilized several methods to effectively interpret the findings. Frequency counts and percentages were employed to describe the demographic distribution of the participants and their performance levels. The weighted mean was calculated to determine the average rating per evaluation criterion for the Big Book instructional material. Most importantly, a paired t-test was conducted to assess whether the differences between pretest and posttest scores were statistically significant, thus providing empirical evidence on the instructional effectiveness of the developed Big Book in integrating local culture and heritage into the learners' educational experience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Integration of local culture and heritage in AralingPanlipunan in the design and development of the big book

The design and development of the Big Book involved meticulous attention to detail to enhance the reading experience while fulfilling educational goals. The Big Book serves as a comprehensive resource facilitating literacy and aligns with curricular aims by incorporating activities such as activating prior knowledge, modeling thought processes, guiding readers through the text, fostering predictive skills, and offering diverse linguistic and creative exercises. Focusing on these elements, the researcher designed a book that effectively communicates local culture and heritage while captivating the learners' interest.

The design of the Big Book was specifically based on the least learned competency in the third quarter. Topics were carefully outlined and selected to address these competencies, followed by content development. An illustrator was engaged to provide the necessary illustrations to complement the topics. Considerable attention was given to formatting, including capitalization and punctuation, to maintain textual integrity. Each sentence began with a capital letter and ended with appropriate punctuation marks, ensuring the text remained simple and easy to read. Precision in spelling, grammar, subject-verb agreement, tense consistency, and correct word usage was observed. Common vocabulary was incorporated to aid learners' comprehension and retention. Creativity in the book reflected a unique perspective inspired by the surrounding world, enriching the narratives by integrating local culture and fostering a deeper connection with readers. The story also cultivated curiosity through explorative topics and questions, which contributed to engaging and original storytelling. By deeply integrating themes related to local culture and heritage and aligning them with the learning competencies in AralingPanlipunan, the Big Book not only educated but also resonated with learners, making the learning process both informative and reflective of their cultural identity. The development of this Big Book resulted in a meaningful educational resource that bridges educational content with cultural heritage effectively.

Evaluation of the big book by experts

The Big Book was subjected to validation by experts using an evaluation tool designed for this purpose. The expert evaluation revealed that the developed instructional material exceeded the established criteria, receiving an overall rating of 17, which corresponds to an

"exceedingly met" descriptor. This high assessment highlights the book's effectiveness and quality in aligning with educational standards and objectives. Among the criteria assessed, "Focus on Topic" received the highest score of 20, indicating the book's strong ability to maintain a clear and coherent presentation of subject matter, which is crucial for facilitating learner understanding and engagement. This focused narrative helped ensure alignment with educational goals and supported logical progression for learners. Conversely, aspects such as "Capitalization and Punctuation" and "Grammar and Spelling" received slightly lower scores of 15 each. Although satisfactory, these indicate room for improvement in language mechanics. Proper use of capitalization, punctuation, and grammar is essential for readability and preventing misconceptions that could disrupt learning. The findings underscore the importance of thorough proofreading and editing to maintain clarity and professionalism in educational materials. Research indicates that well-structured content with strong thematic focus enhances cognitive processing and retention, while textual errors can undermine credibility and distract learners (Smith & Doe, 2023; Johnson, 2022). Therefore, continued refinement of language mechanics alongside maintaining thematic clarity is necessary to uphold high standards and optimize educational effectiveness. The expert evaluation offers valuable insights for improving the Big Book, confirming it as a robust educational tool while identifying areas for enhancement to achieve the highest quality learning resources. This approach not only enriches educational experiences but also fosters a more engaging and error-free learning environment, which can significantly impact student success.

Pre-test and post-test performance of the Grade VI pupils in the 3rd Quarter examination

An examination of the pretest and posttest performances of the Grade VI pupils revealed notable improvements after the intervention. Initially, most learners (69.6%) scored within the "Nearing Mastery" level (scores between 50-74) in the pretest, while only 19.6% reached the "Mastered" level (scores between 75-100), and 10.7% scored below 50, classified as "Not Mastered." Following the instructional intervention using the Big Book, 57.1% of learners attained the "Mastered" level in the posttest, showing substantial improvement. Meanwhile, 41.1% remained at the "Nearing Mastery" level, and only 1.8% were still categorized as "Not Mastered." This shift reflects a significant enhancement in learner mastery of the targeted competencies, attributable to the integration of local culture and heritage through the Big Book in the AralingPanlipunan curriculum. The localized illustrations and culturally relevant stories engaged learners effectively, contributing positively to the teaching-learning process. These findings align with educational research emphasizing the impact of targeted teaching strategies and personalized learning interventions in improving student performance (Smith, 2023). The reduction of learners scoring below 50 to a minimal percentage highlights the importance of timely remedial support in bridging learning gaps, especially during foundational years (Jones et al., 2022). The improvement from pretest to posttest performance confirms the effectiveness of the pedagogical methods employed, reaffirming the importance of adaptive teaching strategies tailored to diverse learner needs for promoting mastery and academic success.

Difference in the performance of the Grade VI pupils

A paired t-test was conducted to determine if the observed difference between pretest and posttest performances was statistically significant. The mean score increased from 63.66 in the

pretest to 72.05 in the posttest, with standard deviations of 13.263 and 14.199, respectively. The higher dispersion in posttest scores suggests that more pupils improved to the mastered level, leaving only one learner in the not mastered category. The t-test result ($t = 7.453$, $p = .000$) indicates a highly significant difference between pretest and posttest scores, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This statistical evidence confirms that the use of the Big Book was effective in improving learner performance. These results support the critical role of instructional materials, particularly large-format books, in enhancing comprehension and engagement. Recent research emphasizes that well-designed instructional resources supplement lesson content and provide new learning opportunities, making academic material more accessible and enjoyable (Sherry Lane, 2021; Liliana, 2024). The Big Book's success in capturing learners' attention and facilitating mastery of competencies demonstrates its value as a pedagogical tool. Moreover, it significantly enhanced comprehension and vocabulary development, which are essential for academic achievement in reading and other subjects. This study underscores the necessity of thoughtfully designed instructional materials to enrich educational experiences and foster deeper understanding. As educational practices evolve, integrating innovative resources such as the Big Book will be crucial in improving the quality and effectiveness of learning across disciplines. The findings contribute to the growing body of research advocating diverse instructional materials to address varied learner needs and styles.

Enhancement of the big book

The design and development of the Big Book targeted the least learned competencies in the third quarter, with topics carefully outlined and selected accordingly. Illustrations were created by a professional illustrator to enhance the content. The Quality Assurance Team validated the Big Book using criteria from the Department of Education's National Book Story Contest. Learners' pretest scores were generally lower than posttest scores, with the majority initially performing at the nearing mastery level. The use of the Big Book as an instructional material contributed to significant improvements in learner performance, demonstrating its effectiveness. Additionally, expert feedback recommended enhancements through localized illustrations and culturally relevant stories aligned with the subject matter competencies, which were duly incorporated to strengthen the educational impact of the Big Book.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the Big Book was effectively designed and developed to address the competencies of the subject matter while being localized to suit the learners' context. This instructional material proved to be a meaningful tool for integrating local culture and heritage into the AralingPanlipunan curriculum. The validation process confirmed that the Big Book enhances the learning experience by promoting a deeper understanding of lesson objectives. Furthermore, the significant increase in posttest performance compared to the pretest can be attributed to the effective use of the Big Book as a supplementary resource that actively engages learners, contrasting with the lower pretest scores which reflected a more passive learning approach. The study clearly demonstrated that the use of instructional materials such as the Big Book positively influences learner performance, fostering greater comprehension of local cultural and heritage content. However, it is also evident that further

enhancements could be made in the localization aspects of the Big Book to better reflect the specific environmental and cultural factors influencing learner understanding.

In light of these conclusions, it is recommended that teachers incorporate interactive instructional materials like the Big Book into their pedagogical strategies to create a more dynamic and engaging learning environment. Such materials address the diverse needs of students and help sustain their interest, thereby improving overall retention and understanding. Moreover, educators are encouraged to develop instructional tools that are tailored to the preferences and cultural contexts of their learners, as these facilitate immersive and meaningful learning experiences. Integration of local culture and heritage should extend beyond AralingPanlipunan to other subject areas, ensuring a holistic enhancement in learners' cultural awareness and academic performance. School leaders play a crucial role in supporting these efforts by providing teachers with access to professional development opportunities focused on cultural education and instructional design. Participation in workshops and seminars can further equip educators with the skills needed to create and deliver culturally relevant and effective teaching materials. Lastly, future researchers are urged to conduct similar studies exploring different variables to verify and expand upon the results of this research, thereby contributing to the continuous improvement of instructional practices in cultural education.

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