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The Philippines' Masskara Festival: a nonfiction picture book

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The Philippines’ Masskara Festival:

A nonfiction picture book

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

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MASSKARA FESTIVAL: A NONFICTION PICTURE BOOK

Abstract

Third-graders in the Philippines learn more about their country by studying their region. Children are usually tasked to learn and memorize facts and places, without having firsthand and relevant experiences. The lack of integration in the classroom and one-way learning often does not encourage the children learn more and appreciate their own culture.

According to the developmental-interaction approach, it is important that children experience the world around them to make sense of experiences. Likewise, children in third-grade are in the concrete operational stage, wherein they need to perceive a material directly for them to fully understand a concept. To address the gap between the developmental-interaction approach and the realities of the classroom, I focused my study on festivals, as festivals are an integration of a region’s beliefs, history, practices, art, and music. I then wrote a nonfiction book to pique children’s curiosity about their own region. This book will then jumpstart a series of lessons in the social studies unit, which includes an exploration of the region’s history, dance, and art.
Acknowledgments

My deepest gratitude goes to my mentor, Roberta Altman, for her support, guidance, and feedback as I was developing my lessons and book. Her insights encouraged me to view the Philippines’ educational system in a different light, and in the process, deepened my understanding of the importance of multicultural learning in the classroom.

None of this would have been possible without the continued support, love, patience, and encouragement of my family. My heartfelt gratitude goes to my parents and siblings; they have never failed to encourage me to pursue my dreams to study in New York. They continue to support me in this exciting journey.
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Rationale

Most public and private schools in the Philippines teach several major subjects in upper elementary school. Beginning third grade, students are studying math, Filipino (a language course on Tagalog), English, science, and HEKASI (a combination of geography, history, and civics). Minor subjects are art, music, Physical Education (P.E.), and health. Different teachers implement and teach each subject, and rarely do they work together for an integrated lesson and curriculum.

Despite learning about the Philippines in HEKASI, music, and Physical Education, children are learning about different aspects of the country that are separate and distinct from each other. In third grade, for instance, children are required to learn about the different provinces of the region they’re residing in. They are taught the capitals and provinces of each region, major landforms, and most popular tourist attractions.
Children are also expected to learn facts and figures in a span of few weeks, and because of this, most teachers result to drilling concepts, without considering the children’s previous experiences and knowledge. I think that the combination of children’s one-way learning and lack of integration of subject areas discourage children’s natural desire to learn and understand their own culture.

An integrated curriculum takes into consideration a country’s educational requirements and standards while being cognizant of the different ideas and knowledge of the children in the class. An integrated curriculum also addresses the critical role of experience and environment interaction in children’s lives. Through an integrated curriculum, there are more chances that children of various learning styles and developmental levels understand a lesson.

With this in mind, I thought about connecting HEKASI to the different subject areas by relating regions using one similar feature: festivals. Festivals are celebrated throughout the Philippines during different times of the year. Festivals are observed for various reasons and events; may it be religious, political, or social reasons. I think that festivals provide insight to a place that no textbook nor plain discussion can do; it gives individuals several opportunities to learn more about a region’s traditions, art, music, stories, beliefs, and rituals in a holistic manner. Along with these come the rich history of a place, and how that festival was shaped in the community.
To bring awareness and extend children’s learning about festivals, I will develop a nonfiction picture book. I aim to create an interesting and engaging picture book that will pique children’s curiosity about their own culture. This nonfiction book may be read at the beginning of a unit, as well as open a discussion on what the children know about the region that is about to be investigated.

My nonfiction text will only focus on one festival. I will create a book on Masskara, which is celebrated every October in Bacolod City. Masskara, which means “a multitude of faces”, symbolizes the city as a city of smiles, as well as reminds its people to smile in spite of difficulties and challenges they encounter in life. In this book, readers will learn about the festival through the narration of a young girl’s experience in the preparation and participation in the festivities.

One particular reason why I want to talk about festivals using a nonfiction book is because most children don’t have enough exposure to nonfiction text. Most nonfiction texts are textbooks, which it is not always interesting and engaging for children. Second, I feel drawn to festivals because I think that it is through these celebrations that a place comes animated, alive, and fascinating. By learning more about festivals, I don’t feel the need to memorize facts and figures; rather, I am compelled to learn more about a place because I am intrigued about its character and beliefs.

I am hopeful that my motivations will be translated onto paper. As I developed my nonfiction book and set of lesson plans, I hoped that teachers would get excited and
motivated to discuss festivals and regions with their students. With the teachers’ own knowledge combined with the children’s experiences and learning, there is a multitude of opportunities for richer and deeper learning. As a result, children may also get excited and interested to learn more about their culture. They will also be learning how to understand a study of cultures starting with their own; then other regions in the Philippines, and finally to the wider context of countries throughout the world.
Review of Related Literature

Educators are often required to teach a social studies unit to a certain group of students. However, these units “cannot always take into consideration children’s development, social environment, or unique funds of knowledge” (Jaffe, 2000, p. 174). As mentioned earlier, teachers in the Philippines are often required to teach about the region they reside in, and talk about the region’s capital, land and water forms, and tourist attractions. In spite of the relevance of studying their own region, there is no integration among subject areas and there is little room for the students to bring in their own knowledge and experiences to enrich the classroom discussion and deepen their learning.

Child Development

Children between the ages of 7-12 seek various ways to make sense of the world around them. According to Piaget, school-age children are in the concrete operational stage. Their use of logic is blooming, and they are becoming more proficient in using inferences to understand and make decisions in situations. School-age children are also expanding their social worlds. They are getting to know more about their neighborhood, school, and nearby communities. Along with this, they are learning how to empathize with others and take others’ perspectives (“Cognitive Middle”, n.d.).

Aside from this, children in this stage are “learning to represent their work symbolically”, wherein they express their thoughts, emotions, and learning through drawings or written work (Wood, 1997, p. 73).

In spite of their development cognitively and socially, it is important to remember that children in the concrete operational stage need to perceive something
directly for them to fully understand a concept (Takaya, 2008). They have difficulty grasping ideas that are far too abstract or foreign. Children cannot simply receive knowledge from the teacher to understand a concept; they have to be active makers of meaning (Bruner, 1996; as cited in Takaya, 2008; Wood, 1997).

With these theories in mind, it is challenging for children to immediately understand, remember, and appreciate their own regions if their only exposure in school is through textbooks, drills, and quizzes. It is essential that they actively make sense of what they’re learning, such as being given more opportunities to discuss, question, and explore the topic. One way to ensure that children’s learning is maximized is by adopting the constructivist theory in the classroom.

**Constructivism in Education**

“Knowledge has to be built on existing knowledge and one’s background and experience contributes to this process” (Powell, 2009, p. 249). The main tenet of the constructivist theory is the individual’s active role in learning and making sense of experiences. Constructivism is divided in two parts: cognitive constructivism and social constructivism. It is my goal to discuss both schools of thought and tie them together, as both are essential in teaching a community of learners.

Piaget’s theory on cognitive constructivism theory discusses the importance of disequilibrium in learning. Disequilibrium occurs when an individual has to adjust a way of thinking to understand new information. When a learner is able to adjust new information to fit into their funds of knowledge, equilibrium is achieved (Powell & Kalina, 2009).
Vygotsky, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of social learning and collaboration in the construction of knowledge (Martin, 2000). He furthers that an individual’s culture, language, and social experiences affect how knowledge is learned. When children collaborate with one another and work on materials, they are able to internalize abstract concepts, “reflect on their experiences” and “become conscious of their learning” (Martin, 2000, p. 81).

Given these, it is the teacher’s role to guide and facilitate children’s learning. Teachers don’t merely dictate and drill facts and concepts on children; rather, they must open up discussion so that children can learn from one another and find new ways to adjust their prior knowledge to fit in new ideas.

Dewey also discusses the importance of the teacher’s role in the classroom; learners have different needs and will process information in a variety of ways. It is then necessary that teachers know each student as an individual, as well as learn about their strengths and weaknesses so that students may learn at their own pace (Powell & Kalina, 2009; Shapiro & Biber, 1972). It is also a challenge to make curriculum materials effective for every individual, and the teacher acts as a mediator who transforms curriculum materials to be able to account for different learners (Deng, 2007).

The different ways a teacher may incorporate constructivism into the classroom is discussed in the following sections.

**Curriculum Design**

According to Vygotsky, individuals are influenced by social experience; “very little human experience is not mediated by culture” (Martin, 2000, p. 79). It is therefore imperative that teachers use the immediate community and personal experiences and
place it in the context of students’ learning. Students’ experiences in their community have an effect in what and how they learn; therefore, it is natural to have a connection between diverse experiences and lessons in school (Shapiro & Biber, 1972).

The developmental-interaction approach emphasizes that cognitive and social growth are interrelated processes. Kohlberg supported this by saying that the cognitive and emotional structures develop when the child is encouraged to interact with the environment. (Shapiro & Biber, 1972). This approach is also advantageous when it comes to raising cultural awareness and deepening children’s understanding of their own region. They are able to talk about their own experiences about the festival, learn from others’ experiences, and ultimately construct their own understanding and knowledge through collaboration and discussion (Martin, 2000).

It is through experiencing and interacting with their peers and environment that children’s learning is maximized; theory and concepts meet with real life experiences (Shen, 2011).

A curriculum that builds on students’ strengths and relate to their personal experiences are what constitute the developmental-interaction approach. This approach not only takes into account the students’ “linguistic and cultural funds of knowledge” but also “the role of the materials and of the teacher” (Sluys & Laman, 2006, p. 224; Martin, 2000, p. 83).

**Multicultural learning and literacy**

One of the most important factors for individuals to thrive in society is having a deep working knowledge of their own culture (Hirsh, 1997; as cited in Huang &
Kowalick, 2004). To develop this knowledge and understanding of culture and heritage, literature may be used to aid children in learning more about their society.

Literature is one of the most effective ways that promote cultural awareness, as literature is able to bring the diversity and richness of the world into the classroom (Livingston & Kurkjian, 2005). The introduction of a culture’s history, tradition, and beliefs through literature provides opportunities for children to make self to text connections, which will aid in their comprehension and appreciation of a concept (Au, 2007).

Literature also gives students opportunities to experience an event or a practice vicariously. Whilst children are learning more about their own regions, not all students are able to join and participate in all the celebrations of a festival. It is through the nonfiction picture book that I hope children get a glimpse of the Masskara Festival and “live the lives other than” their own (Lukens, 1999, p. 8).

**Read-aloud as a shared experience**

Reading, particularly reading aloud, has benefits even for children older than six years old. Oftentimes, parents and teachers think that once children learn to read by themselves, a read-aloud isn’t necessary. Read-aloud is a wonderful chance to learn ideas that are too abstract, learn new vocabulary, and gain deeper meaning from the text (Lukens, 1999). Through a read-aloud in the classroom, individual minds are connected to others, and they all have a shared experience that they may use for future discussions (Williams, 2008). The shared experiences and the introduction of new ideas are essential aspects in the cognitive and emotional development of children (Lukens, 1999).
I am hopeful that this nonfiction book and curriculum will aid teachers in bringing in students’ knowledge and personal experiences in the classroom. There are a multitude of ways that children learn outside the classroom, and as educators, it is our responsibility that our students’ understanding of concepts are enriched in school.
Guide for teachers

Teaching a social studies curriculum that engages the children may seem like a daunting task. With the different cities and provinces in each region, it has been a challenge to teach children about the events, concepts, and beliefs of each province.

As I have mentioned in my rationale, talking about festivals provides more information about a region in a holistic manner. Rather than talking about landmarks, dances, and beliefs separately, different aspects of a region are incorporated through a discussion and lessons on a festival.

Below is a concept web that may be used when talking about a festival. I’ve connected everything that is involved with a festival to the main topic, and from each branch, I will add characteristics of the festival that are specific to that province.

Figure 1. Concept web of a festival
I have provided an itemization of the different parts of the concept web to help you in your research for each festival.

**History**

I think it is important to begin your research by looking into a festival’s history. Look into how and why a festival began in that area. Some questions that may guide you are: Was it spurred by religious beliefs? Was it during a time of crisis or abundance? Did the government have something to do with the conception of this festival?

After looking at a festival’s origins, you may then research and connect the province’s beliefs, literacy, art, and dances.

**Beliefs**

Deeply rooted in a festival’s history are a region’s religious and cultural beliefs. Masskara, for instance, began to inspire positivity and resilience. The festival was to remind people that in spite of difficult times, there are still a multitude of reasons to smile, work together, and be positive.

Some festivals, on the other hand, have religious origins. You may talk about the province’s religious beliefs, as well as why and how it is celebrated in the festival.

**Literacy**

This social studies curriculum aims to teach third graders about regions and their histories. With that being said, the lessons on festivals hopes to address their oral language skills and writing skills.
Oral language may be developed through storytelling about the festivals. Children who have rich background knowledge about the festival may have a short storytelling session on what happens during the festival. Moreover, you may ask the children to dramatize or role-play the events of the festival, and ask them to talk about their experience afterwards.

Writing skills may also be developed through a discussion on festivals. Children may be asked to write essays on what they learned about the region through festivals. They may also write poems, short stories, and letters inviting others to visit a region and experience the festival for themselves.

**Arts**

Festivals are a rich source of discussion about a region’s art, dance, and music. Some questions to consider are: What kinds of media are used to promote art in this region? What kinds of music and dance are used during the parade and other events?

You may also want to consider talking about the change with regard to arts in the region. Have the music, art, and dance evolved ever since the festival has started? Does the festival adapt to the modern times? Does it incorporate the old practices with the new?

Some regions celebrate more than one festival. Because there is not a lot of time allotted to discuss each festival in one region, I suggest that you pick a festival that the children are most familiar with. This festival may be the most popular one, or the one majority of the class has been to. After discussing this, you may then study a festival
that the children are not familiar with. You may use the first two lesson plans to introduce the second festival, and the children may apply the skills they have learned when they were discussing the first festival. By studying two distinct and separate festivals, the students are able to deepen their appreciation and understanding of the culture of their region.

On the next page is a guide on how you may recreate this book and apply it to the different festivals that you are going to discuss with the children. Masskara is just one of the festivals that you will tackle in the school year, and you may use this guide to help you make your own book.
A Narrative Nonfiction How-To Guide

When you are writing your own book, research about two to five major events that occur in the festival. For instance, in my Masskara book, I focused heavily on the parade, and the dance contests. At the end of the book, I briefly discussed the reasons why those aspects of the festival are important, as well as its rich background and history. It is also important to include any religious or cultural reasons why a festival is celebrated.

Lastly, include what people do during the festival. What activities do they do outside the main events? What do people do to prepare for the festival? What kinds of art, music, and dances do they use?

With regard to your illustrations, you may try to search Flickr using a handful of keywords. For my book, I searched in Creative Commons using Masskara Festival as my key words. You may use the images directly if it is free to use or share; but don't forget to cite their work at the end of the book. If you get the photo directly from a website, you will have to ask permission from the owner of the photograph if you may use it in your book. In Appendix A is the letter asking for permission to use the photographs.
Lessons

Lesson 1: KWL chart on festivals

- A KWL (What I Know, What I Want to Know, What I have Learned) chart is a graphic organizer that helps children track their learning about a topic. This chart activates the children’s prior knowledge on a topic (to be written under What I Know), gives a teacher an idea on what they want to know (under the Want to Know column), and helps the class track on what they have learned after reading the book. A copy of the KWL chart may be found in the Appendix B.

Key Concept/s: Community

Organizing Idea: A festival is one way to celebrate one’s community.

Purpose/Goal: My goal is to introduce the concept of a festival to the students through a KWL chart and a short video clip showing the Masskara Festival.

Materials Needed:

Teacher: video clip of Masskara Festival parade, chart paper, markers

Students: Social Studies notebooks, pencils
Sequence of events:

1. The teacher will introduce the KWL chart to the children by briefly explaining what each column represents. The teacher may provide one example to guide the children in their thinking (such as, “I know that this festival is celebrated during October”).

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<thead>
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<th>Masskara Festival</th>
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<tr>
<td>Know</td>
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2. After introducing the KWL chart, the teacher may ask the students what they know about that festival. The teacher may ask the students to list down at least 1-2 things they know about the festival and share their ideas with a partner during turn and talk.

3. After spending 2 minutes on turn and talk, the teacher then asks the class to share what they know about Masskara. The teacher may write 3-5 answers on the chart.

4. Before moving on to what the children want to know about a topic, the teacher may then show a short video clip about Masskara (such as a clip about the parade or dance competition).
5. The teacher may then ask the children, "What do you want to know more about the Masskara Festival?" The children’s answers will then be recorded under the Want to Know column.

6. When the two columns have been filled up, the teacher may then give a short recap of the lesson and use this to jumpstart the discussion on the book, which will occur the next day.
Lesson 2: Picture book story and discussion

Key Concept/s: Communication, cooperation, interdependence

Organizing Idea: During the Masskara Festival, individuals come together to celebrate community

Purpose/Goal: My goal is to introduce Masskara through the eyes of a 9-year-old girl, as well as show what the community does in preparation for the different events.

- This girl encounters Masskara as a participant of the contest, as well as a spectator of the parades.

Background Information

- The class has talked about what they know about the Masskara Festival, what they know, as well as the facts they want to know. The KWL chart was used to activate the children’s prior knowledge about festivals and will be a guide for future discussions.

Sequence of events:

1. Before reading the book, the teacher will recall their previous lesson and talk about their KWL chart. The teacher will then use the children’s answers and connect what they know to the book they’re about to read.

2. The teacher will then start the read-aloud on the book.

3. After the read-aloud, the teacher can then discuss the events from the perspective of Ella, the main character. Some questions that may be asked are:
a. What events did Ella watch?

b. What event did she join?

c. What music did she hear?

d. What kind of masks did she see?

e. What is the history of the festival?

- The children’s answers may be written down on chart paper, and they can refer back to their answers when checking the KWL chart.

4. After the teacher has written down the children’s answers, she may proceed to talk about the events Ella watched. The children may then be asked to come up with the different things the groups do in preparation for the event. Aside from this, the teacher may ask how they think the entire city of Bacolod works together to make a 20-day event successful.

5. To close the discussion, the teacher may go back to the KWL chart and check what the students learned during the read-aloud and discussion.

**Informal Assessment**

- The children’s answers during the discussion are an informal assessment of what they have understood from the discussion and the book.
Lesson 3: History of Bacolod

Key Concept/s: Communication, cooperation, interdependence and independence

Organizing Idea: Bacolod has a rich history, including its rise to prominence, as well as the region’s solution to tragedy and economic crisis.

Purpose/Goal: My goal is to teach Bacolod’s history through the use of storytelling, mask-making, and making music.

Materials Needed
- Teacher: Story Map, example of a mask, audiotape of Masskara music
- Students: Social Studies notebook, pencils, coloring materials

Background Information
- The class has previously read the Masskara book, as well as discussed the different events that take place during the festival.

Sequence of Events
1. The teacher will begin the lesson by referring to the chart filled up previously and briefly discussing what they saw and heard from the Masskara book. Some questions to be considered are:
   a. Why did the Masskara festival begin?
   b. What happened to Bacolod before the festival started?
   c. What is the history of Bacolod?

   - The teacher may write down the children’s answers on chart paper for future reference.
2. Connect their answers and introduce a storytelling activity. The teacher may use
the storytelling map and script found in Appendices C and D.

   a. Before the activity, remind the students that this activity requires and
      needs audience participation, and teach the students of actions and beats
      they would need to do while you’re telling the story.

3. After storytelling, discuss the importance of conducting the Masskara Festival
   for Bacolod. Some questions to prompt discussion are:

   a. What is the importance of Masskara for Bacolod?

   b. What did the people of Bacolod do to lighten the mood of the people?

4. After the storytelling and discussion, the teacher may further the children’s
   learning by asking the students to recreate their own festival in the upcoming
   days. The children may prepare for this festival by recreating their own masks
   and dancing to the music.

5. The teacher may show an example of one mask and bring it around the room for
   the children to inspect. Afterwards, the children may plan the design of their
   mask on their notebook.
Follow-Up Activities

Art: Papier-mâché mask activity, mask designing activity

Dance: Dance choreography/activity

Music: Create drumbeat/music for the parade

Technology: Google Earth presents multiple possibilities for the children to travel without needing to leave the classroom. It may be used to plot the route of the Masskara parade, and open up a discussion on the streets and establishments they pass from the beginning to the end of the parade.

Google Earth may also be used to plot Bacolod, Philippines on the globe, and discuss its similarities and differences with other similar festivals that are held around the world.

Informal Assessment

The children’s answers during the discussion will act as an assessment on how they understood the discussion on the history of Bacolod.
Masskara Festival
Dancing with Ella

By
Monica Denise V. Javelosa

Illustrated by
Patricia Regina G. Espiritu and Ma. Victoria Q. Almeda
About the Author

Monica Javelosa is a graduate student at Bank Street College of Education. She is finishing up her program in General Elementary Education and Teaching Literacy.

She was born and raised in the Philippines, and spent one year of her life in Bacolod, where the Masskara Festival is held. Since then, she has always had a fascination for the different festivals celebrated throughout the year.

She hopes to encourage teachers to use their ideas and talents in creating their own books for the classroom.
History of Bacolod City and the Masskara Festival

Bacolod City is the capital of Negros Occidental, a province in Western Visayas, Philippines. The province is nicknamed as The Sugarbowl of the Philippines, because sugar is the main source of the province’s income and growth.

In the 1980s, people did not want to buy sugar and sugar prices went crashing. As a result, the province was not earning as much money, and there was an economic crisis. Aside from this, a ship named Don Juan hit a tanker and sank. More than 500 people died in this accident.
For the past two months, my class has rehearsed for the elementary school street dance category. My teacher, Ms. Castro, made sure that our dance was on beat and in sync.

It was easy at first, but I became extra nervous when we started rehearsing with our costumes- I couldn’t twirl as gracefully! Now I’m extra nervous for the dance competition!
When the contest began, we all took our positions. I focused on the beat of the music and I tried to let go of all my worries.
At the end of the dancing, they announced the winners. A school named Magdalena Jalandoni School won first place.

The students were so graceful as they twirled, turned, kneeled, and pranced to the music. In the end, they even went behind giant colorful masks and they all bobbed to the drumbeats at the same time.
For the next five days, I watched the preparations for the Masskara parade, and also visited the other events. There were mask-making contests, singing and sports competitions, games, and prayer ceremonies.
One of the highlights of this year’s festival is Masskara by the Sea. Fishermen from different barangays designed boats filled with beautiful masks and lights. It was a spectacular parade on the sea.

The lights twinkling and the masks beaming were a wonderful sight even if I was watching from the shore.
On the last weekend of Masskara is the inter-village street dance competition and parade. It was like an explosion of color: crimson, turquoise, magenta, lemon yellow, lime, and tangerine. These people were dressed in different colors and shades, from the top of their heads, to the tips of their toes. All of them had one thing in common: their masks are brightly painted, and all masks are gaily smiling. Not one mask is frowning.
I watched the different teams perform on the street. I was watching out for my favorite team: they were wearing intricate masks with fan-like headdress, and feathers. Their costume had ruffles and loose cloths attached, which billowed and swayed to the music.
A few hours after the Masskara parade, I went back out to watch the electric Masskara parade at night! The masks and costumes were lit up, and they went through Bacolod by foot or on floats.

Some were also playing their own music and playing instruments.
At the end of the day, I was tired but extremely happy. I was reminded that there are many reasons to smile no matter how many problems I have.
Masskara Dance Competition

Every year, villages and schools compete for the street dance competition. There are two divisions for the competition: school category and barangay (village) category. Each entry is judged on their choreography and costumes.

The masks are smiling, and the costumes are bright in color. This is to encourage people to stay positive and happy in spite of what they’re going through in life. The festival is a reminder that there are many reasons to smile and be positive, despite challenges and difficulties.
Make your own mask

Materials:
- Newspaper
- Tape
- Wire
- Cardboard construction
- Wheat paste (buy safe wheat paste from art stores)
- Pulp mixture

Pulp Mixture:
Tear newspaper or other recycled paper and soak in water overnight. Using a blender, blend in small batches until smooth. Squeeze excess water by pressing through a strainer, so that the pulp is almost water free. Add wheat paste to make pulp malleable.

Wheat Paste
To make a quart of paste, start with 4 cups of water and sprinkle 1/4 cup of wheat paste while whisking. The mixture should have a consistency between heavy cream and sour cream.

1. Fold one opened up sheet of newspaper two times to form a band that is about 3/4" wide.

2. Place this band around face or across the top of head, like a hat, and measure for a loose fit. Tape band to form ring.

3. Take several sheets of newspaper and wad loosely into a core to fit into ring. Cover the filled ring with another sheet of newspaper and tuck under and tape to secure.

4. At this point you can add features using wire or tape. Shape the mask to make ears, or other designs.

5. Dip newspaper strips in paste and criss-cross over entire surface, using 3-4 layers. Make sure the strips are covering the rim well.

6. If you didn't add features before, you can model with pulp or wads of papermache.

7. Let dry a few days, pull out the core, and decorate.

Source: Gwathmey, E. (nd). Papermache puppets, masks or figures [Art for Teachers handout]. Bank Street College of Education.
Recommendations

My biggest challenges in developing the book and lesson plans were related to how and what I wanted children to learn and remember after studying the regions. I will discuss what these challenges were and how you may avoid encountering similar ones when it is your turn to adapt the book and lesson plans into another region’s festival.

Book Focus

One of the most challenging parts in writing the picture book was conceptualizing on what parts of the festival to focus on. Because I grew up in Manila and had only heard of the Masskara Festival through friends’ and families’ stories, I did not have a lot of prior knowledge to guide me with what I wanted to focus on in the book. I ended up focusing on the parades, but I briefly talked about the other events that are held during the 20-day festival.

I focused on the parade because I think it is the heart of the Masskara Festival; tourists flock to Bacolod City every year to witness the dancing and the masks. Likewise, it encapsulates the very reason why the festival is held; which is to remind people that in spite of hardships and difficulties in life, there are many reasons to smile and celebrate. When it is time to create your own book and lesson plans, it is important to think about what the celebration is for. What is the ultimate objective of the festival? By focusing on what the festival aims to do, it is easier to write and develop the book’s focus.

Aside from considering the festival’s focus and main objective, it is helpful to immerse yourself in the festival before writing the book or implementing the lessons in
class. Festivals change and evolve yearly, and you may want to learn more about a specific aspect of the festival which you have not noticed before. Moreover, you are viewing this festival not merely as a spectator, but as an educator that aims to teach children about their region. This perspective will give you a different lens on what children may be interested to learn, or what is relevant in their lives.

**Lesson Plans**

I discussed that a festival’s objective must be considered before writing the book. Because the lesson plans serve to jumpstart discussion and support the read-aloud, you should also adapt your lessons according to what the region’s festival’s focus is. For instance, if your festival has more religion integrated into it rather that music or art; it makes sense to delve into it more with your class.

More importantly, it is vital that you view your students’ individual interests, strengths, and weaknesses before conducting the lessons in class. What are the children interested in learning? What is their prior knowledge on a festival, and what can you do to make sure that they deepen their understanding and appreciation of their own culture? Keeping the students in mind is at the heart of constructivist teaching, whether it’s teaching what is relevant to their lives, or remembering their stage of development. It is then up to you, the educator, to make sure that every learner is engaged and successful during the lessons.

Lastly, I recommend that you also reflect and think about what you deem important that the children would learn. Children aren’t the only ones who are going to learn different things in a lesson; teachers are also individuals who have a variety of
ways of expressing and interpreting a curriculum. What part of the lesson plan is the most exciting? What is scary or challenging?

Reflection is a vital part of the teaching process. Reflecting on what is potentially challenging in a lesson will allow you to learn more about an activity or a concept before teaching it to the children. In doing so, you are well on your way to becoming an expert of your own region, and this will hopefully translate in your teaching. Your children will look to you as an example of someone who is knowledgeable about their region, as well as someone who has a great appreciation for culture. Your expertise will entice children to engage in the activities and learn more about their region.

**Resources**

Family members, fellow teachers, and community members are great resource people when studying the region. They will have many things to say about the Masskara Festival (such as how it has evolved from when it started), and provides wonderful opportunities for the children to develop their speaking and listening skills. It is through listening to others’ experiences that children may ask questions to deepen their understanding of a concept or event. Likewise, inviting members of the community to the classroom is a great way to connect children’s school life with their life at home and in the community.

In addition, I think it is very helpful to make use of the Internet to research more about festivals, reach out to experts, or introduce other festivals to children. You may want to check www.itsmorefuninthephilippines or www.choosephilippines.com for articles about the different festivals and activities that are held in the country.
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Appendix A

Consent Letter for Photograph Use

Dear ____________,

A part of the third grade social studies curriculum is the study of regions in the Philippines. To help children understand regions using a more holistic manner, we are teaching regions through the different festivals celebrated in the country. To introduce festivals to children, I am making a picture book on the ______ Festival.

I would like to ask for your permission to use your photos from the event. I will be citing your website as one of my sources in the reference section.

Please let me know if it is possible for me to use your photos for my book.

Thank you.

Best,

__________
Appendix B

KWL Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masskara Festival</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know</td>
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<tr>
<td>Want to Know</td>
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<td>Learned</td>
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</tbody>
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Appendix C

Story Map
Appendix D

Storytelling Script

The settlement of Bacolod was found in 1770, and it was first known as San Sebastian Magsungay. Because pirates were constantly attacking them, the villagers moved to a hilly area.

In 1849, the gobernadorcillo (the governor of the Philippines during the Spanish occupation) declared Bacolod as the capital of Negros Occidental, a province in the Visayas region. In 1901, Bacolod became a US territory, and in 1938, the municipal of Bacolod became a city of Bacolod.

During the World War II, the Japanese forces occupied Bacolod. It was the home of a Japanese Colonel, until Filipino and American forces liberated it in 1945. When the Philippines gained freedom from the United States, schools, markets, and slaughterhouses were rebuilt. Bacolod became a highly urban city, and by 1950, sugar was the source of 60% of the province’s resources. Bacolod was a thriving city and the province of Negros Occidental was very successful.

However, in the 1980s, there came an influx of sugar substitutes and there was a low demand for sugar. Prices dropped, and the economy of Bacolod suffered. Aside from this, Don Juan, a ship on its way back to Bacolod, sank when it collided with a tanker.

To cheer up the local residents, members of local government units conceptualized an event that would give Bacolod, widely known as the city of smiles, a reason to smile. In spite of tragedy and crises, there was a reason to smile and shrug off despair.
Appendix E

Photograph Owners’ Consent

- Chyng Reyes (chyngreyes@gmail.com)

Chyng Reyes chyngreyes@gmail.com Jan 18
to me

Hi Nica,

Ok, go ahead. =)

Chyng

- Sidney Snoek (s.philippines@gmail.com)

Sidney Snoeck Apr 8 (3 days ago)

Dear Nica,

If it is NOT for commercial use you get my pictures free of charge. If it is only for educational purposes and you will not earn anything from it then you can use any of my pictures for free.

Good luck with your thesis!

Best regards,

Sidney
•  Imelda Yumul (themixedculture@gmail.com)

Hello Nica,

Thank you for contacting us. Please go ahead and use the photos in our website for any educational purposes they can serve you. Thank you as well for giving credit/citation to The Mixed Culture.

We wish good luck on your thesis and all the best.

Sincerely yours,
Imelda of The Mixed Culture

•  Choose Philippines (choosephils@abs-cbn.com)

Hi Monica!

Sure, You can use them, just make sure you source the name of the photographer and our website www.choosephilippines.com

Thanks! let us know once out! =)

NANNAH TOBIAS