

# INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS FOR TEACHING LITERATURE VIA SHORT STORIES

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study generates some instructional materials for the teaching of Literature via the short stories, which in turn are used as instructional materials for teaching the Values Education subject. Divided into introduction, themes and they are built-in values and suggestive activities and instructional materials that deepen aestheticism and moral values. With the thematic approach to the short stories, three prevailing themes which encompass (1). Calmness and patience paving ways for objective solutions to life's-altering decisions, (2). Love begets self-sacrifice, gullibility, tolerance, and understanding, among others, and (3). One for all, all for one characterizes clannishness among Filipino families. The short stories that are collated and selected include those that are written by Filipino authors. The same short stories have been analyzed based purposively on character delineation in order to picture the personal, attitudinal, and behavioral attributes, which are in turn considered moral values. Applying the interdisciplinary approach to teaching Values Education, the same instructional materials, the analyzed short stories, can serve as its springboard. This study concludes with the findings that other literary types may be utilized as instructional materials, provided that activities should be amplified and varied. Possibly, a multidisciplinary approach to teaching may be applied not only in Literature and Values Education but also in Mathematics, History, technical subjects, and other academic subjects.*

**Key terms:** instructional materials, Literature, Values Education subject, interdisciplinary approach, short stories, the literary genre

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Initially, when a teacher launches himself into a brand-new world composed of –information hunger –[1] students, he arms himself with varied pedagogies, techniques, and approaches, which he has acquired from his long years of formal training in the school. Hence, he has gained mastery in his major field of concentration which in this study is Literature. And what he needs to exemplify his methodologies in teaching are instructional materials that are specified to be –tools used in educational lessons that include active learning and assessment; (although) basically, any resource a teacher uses to help him teach his students is an instructional material. Moreover, instructional materials are apparently the backbone of information by which students experience, learn and apply as they interact with one another in the classroom. How exciting and thought-provoking the instructional materials are can be gauged by the degree of motivating or demotivating students, as the case may be.

Why Literature, one might ask. First and foremost, Literature, which comprises genres of drama, poem, essay, novel, and short story, is rich –with significant human experiences (SHE) –[2]. This school of thought has been reinforced with the following passage.

*Literature offers a bountiful and highly varied body of written material which is essential in learning fundamental human issues, is an authentic material, enriches cultural awareness, (and) provides language enrichment; its relevance moves with passing of time (students) may discover inner thoughts, feelings, and customs (and) helps personal enrichment.* [3]

One instructional material in Literature is a short story that oftentimes drives home a didactic element on honesty, fortitude, resiliency, and other values. Incidentally, the K to 12 Curriculum requires Edukasyon Sa Pagpapahalaga subject, a fusion of Values Education and GMRC, an acronym for Good Manners and Right Conduct. Adapting the interdisciplinary approach, the teacher may use the same short story as he teaches values. In Values Education subject. However, instructional materials –must be carefully planned, selected, organized, (and) refined . . . for maximum effect. The planning and selecting of instructional materials should take into consideration the breadth and depth of content so that student- learning is optimized.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is rooted in the aesthetical-historical approach advocated

[4] in his book, *Theory of Literature* and localized [5] in her book, *Originality as Vengeance in Philippine Literature*. Evidently, this approach to Literature is described as an integration of the

experiential, the analytical, and the contextual continua. However, only the experiential phase of the aesthetic-historical approach is utilized as the conceptual framework of this study in the sense that the experiential phase, which is labeled to be subjective and impressionistic, basically starts with the reader's interaction with the literary work and his "reader's rapport and personal enjoyment (which become so dynamic) that criticism can only supplement the reader's enjoyment, understanding and knowledge of Literature [5]. In effect, the said author stresses that this experiential phase, otherwise called the reader's aesthetic pleasure, is considered the universal appeal of Literature. Yet no matter how personal and impressionistic the reader may be, he has some objective basis which is the "literary work itself (because) the proper study of Literature is the literary work. He can (therefore) transcend subjectivism and impressionism toward a justifiable critical interpretation and evaluative judgment of the literary piece".

## 3. METHODOLOGY USED IN THE STUDY

This study is rooted in the thematic approach to analyze literary pieces, specifically short stories. To commence a critical analysis centered on character delineation, this researcher modified the qualitative method or descriptive method of research advocated by [6, 7, 8, 9]. Modified because the qualitative method has been integrated with the thematic approach to Literature proposed [5, 10]. The previous short stories are lifted from different sources, which altogether constitute the scope and limitation of the study. The process of delineating lead characters is geared towards identifying their moral values. Thus, the procedure of this method is arranged chronologically as follows: (1) grouping and describing the short stories based on themes, (2) stating in a complete sentence each theme, (3) eliciting the moral values equated with the themes, (4) illustrating attributes of the lead characters in the stories that depict the theme, and (5) suggesting activities and instructional materials that develop the deepen aestheticism and moral values.

### 3.1 Themes and their Built-In Values.

Noticeable is the notion that some stories have more than one theme; nonetheless, the preference is on the theme that can be used as instructional material for the Values of Education subject.

**Theme 1: Calmness and patience pave the way to objective solutions in life's-altering decisions.** "Footnote to Youth" is portrayed by the fathers of the first and the second generation, respectively. When Dodong, the son of the first generation, asks permission from his father to get married at the age of sixteen, the latter keeps momentarily quiet, but when the former has been insistent, his father calmly and patiently answers a question, "Must

you marry this early?" His father implies his apprehensions and uncertainties of young marriage, but he respects his son's life's altering—decisions. Similarly, when Blas, the son of Dodong, asks his blessing to marry at the age of eighteen,

Dodong cannot bluntly negate but calmly and patiently, although doubtfully, approves Blas' life's altering decision. In contrast with the real world of the early 90s when this story was published, parents were known to be one-sided in communication. They were strongly opinionated and subjective in their ideas, and children had to bow in silence and obedience [11].

Allied with the foregoing theme are the stories "Of Cocks and Hens" and "Of Cocks and Kites" [12] In the former story, the elder brother, who is the author himself, is described to be calm and patient towards his younger brother's persistence about the questionable gender of his chicken until such a time that he (younger brother) decides to subject his chicken to a one-on-one fight against a Texan gamecock. And when the bettors grow mad because they consider the war deceitful, the elder brother has not lost his commonsense. This time he actively grapples his younger brother's arm, and both run for their lives and hide between thick bushes. The said theme holds true in the story "Of Cocks and Kites" [12] which presents the elder brother who has not lost his temper nor become impulsive for the inveteracy in gambling of his younger brother, training his gamecock to swallow bits of lead to prepare it to be defeated in the fight, and then making secret connivance to bet a large amount on the opponent's gamecock, while he bets small money on his own gamecock. Anticipating the shame and embarrassment that his younger brother might encounter if and when bettors discover his deceit, the elder brother's calmness and patience enable him to plan wisely and execute the plan into action by casting his bet on his younger brother's gamecock publicly. As expected, the younger brother discreetly wins while his elder brother openly loses. Over and above the elder brother's course of action is the crystallization of his calmness and patience that pave the way to objective solutions to his life's altering decisions.

**Theme 2: Love begets self- sacrifice. Gullibility, tolerance, and understanding, among others.**

Daguio's *-Wedding Dance* [12] brings home a discernment that loves, at times, begets self-sacrifice. That is why both Awiyao, the husband, and his wife, Lumnay, even if they deeply love each other, sacrifice themselves by separation because tradition mandates that a couple has to sever their relationship from each other if and when after seven years of union they remain childless. In juxtaposition, Zita [13] displays the lead character, a teacher for that matter, who is compelled to suppress his feelings of love because the object of his affection is his student, named Zita, who in requital falls in love with him too, but he prefers not to reciprocate, instead submit himself to self-sacrifice.

Gullibility and tolerance happen when a person out of love accepts being fooled or tricked by his loved one. This observation is showcased by the stories "Of Cocks and Kings" and "Of Cocks and Battle Cocks". [12] The former tale discloses the elder brother as gullible and tolerant in leaving his younger brother, being an inveterate gambler, creating illegal means and ways to win in the cockfight. The elder brother, too, is being persuaded and convinced to validate his younger brother's lies and alibis that his cock will and can never lose because it is the king of cocks. In this connection, the younger brother manipulates his gamecock by swallowing an amulet which he believes can transpire his gamecock to be indefatigable and invulnerable from any harm. Ironically, the charm is inefficacious, for his gamecock is fatally hit by the opponent's gamecock. At this juncture, the elder brother asks why the cock has lost when he (the younger brother) assures him it will and can never be defeated because it is the king of cocks. And the elder brother sustains his gullibility and tolerance

when during the mild confrontation, his younger brother sarcastically underestimates his knowledgeability depicted in the following statements:

*For God's, don't tell me that you still believe in diving rights. This is already the century of the common man. The era of royalty is over.*

*Haven't you heard of the revolt of the masses? Why don't you study your History more?* [14]

**Theme 3: One for all, all for one, characterizes clannishness among Filipino families.**

True enough, the impoverished but strong and healthy children of the farmer-father in the story, „*The Laughter of my Father*” [15] is all together all the time, smelling the aroma of the food coming from the tall house of the rich neighbor. Being poor, these children often go hungry and therefore feed themselves by sitting by their window, looking up at the towering home of the rich man, and inhaling the smell of flavorful food cooked by their rich neighbor as they eat rice. They then feel full. Happy and contented, the poor family works as one in exchanging jokes and making domestic mischiefs which end in boisterous and contagious laughter that passersby cannot help but stop and join the laughter. All of them, as if belonging to one family, unite as one in enjoying themselves.

Meanwhile, in the story, *-Of Cocks and Super Cocks*”, the elder brother, albeit resolved never again, will he participate with his younger brother's inveteracy in gaming cock, pities him in his downtrodden spirit brought about by a series of losses in gaming cocks. Because of love and empathy for him, the elder brother invigorates his attitude by bending his promise and granting his request to borrow and use the government fund temporarily that he (elder brother) keeps as the treasurer. The younger brother reassures him that the money will be refunded after the fight, which he feels confident of winning because his gamecock is a super chanticleer who can fight dauntlessly against two opponents at the same time. Be that as it may, there has been –an unexpected twist of fate (because the super chanticleer) stabs itself on its head and falls dead on the pit. [16] Amidst the misfortunes occurring and recurring, the elder brother has never deserted nor disowned him. All the time, the elder brother resembles the Three Musketeers, whose byword is –All for one, all for one," as he has been a part of his younger brother's failures. Although at times, he grows passive, he remains consistently tolerant, forgiving, waiting and seeing and consequently providing him his shoulder to lean on and for his younger brother. This sibling's close bond typifies the clannishness of Filipino families, a trademark tradition of Filipino families. It has been manifested steadfastly by the test of time immemorial.

**3.2 Suggestive activities and instructional materials that deepen aestheticism and moral values**

The relevance of instructional materials in the teaching of Literature via short stories is considered near-fetched once suggestive activities are identified, outlined, and illustrated. In particular, continuing the story, transforming the ending of the stories into an open-end or hanging ending, composing summaries with wrongly constructed sentences or with incomplete sentences, and drawing or sketching the character whose values are most striking [18] are some recommended instructional materials with varying activities in all literary genres, but in this study, only the short stories. To concretize the interdisciplinary approach are the facts that the activities are done by groups, and eventually, this approach is used to teach values in Values Education subject by using the same stories.

One illustration of the activity to actualize the values of calmness and patience, conveyed in the stories "Footnote to Youth," "Of Cocks and Hens," and "Of Cocks and Kites," is the instructional material on **continuing the report** [17]. Here the teacher reads the

paragraph or paragraphs of the story which present the actions of the lead character. Consequently, the students, working by group, continue the report based on their creativity on a possible, meaningful, and logical continuation, and they see to it that in doing so, they are able to unveil calmness and patience in the material and activity on **continuing the story** can be applied to the remaining stories under study.

Another illustration to materialize the instructional material which transforms the ending of the story into an open ending is the activity by which the teacher, in the process of careful planning and organizing his lesson, cuts on a one-on-one basis the part or parts of the story, "Wedding Dance" or "Zita," or "Of Cocks and Kings" or "Of Cocks and Battle Cocks" that reflect either one or two or all of the values of love, self-sacrifice, gullibility, tolerance, and understanding. And then, the students, still working in groups, compose their own ending, containing built-in components of the aforementioned values hand in hand with explanations of their implications. Eventually, the group compares and contrasts one another's work and discusses improvements in the arrangement and flow of an organization. The teacher observes in silence how the exchange of ideas prospers but is ready to give comments if the group asks her/him to do so. Otherwise, this instructional material and activity will end with the teacher's evaluation and feedback.

Still another illustration to bring about the instructional material is on writing summaries with wrongly constructed sentences or incomplete sentences. In this case, the teacher, in her lesson planning, composes a summary with wrongly constructed sentences or with incomplete sentences but imbued with values of clannishness and unity in the family. As a follow-up, the students, still working in groups, hold a brainstorming examination of the given summary and spot the wrongly constructed sentences in it. Right then and there, they revise the sentences by focusing on and supplying appropriate words or phrases, at the same time including the values of clannishness and unity in a family. Once finished, the group representative reads to the class the product for the class to react and proact.

Repeatedly, the said values of calmness, patience, love, self-sacrifice, gullibility, clannishness, tolerance, and understanding in Values Education subject can be used as lessons by adapting the interdisciplinary approach. Therefore, all the stories analyzed will be the same instructional materials in the Values Education subject, and to avoid monotony, teachers should vary the activities in order to gain momentum of interest and hunger for information of the students. The rationale for working in a group is the development of social relationships or interrelationships among students. And one variation that can be adapted here is working individually, the target of which is nurturing intra-relationships.

#### 4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In recapitulation, this study has successfully and comprehensively elucidated the instructional materials for the teaching of Literature through the use of short stories. The selection and collation of the short stories have been rooted in imbued moralistic elements with built-in components of the values of calmness, patience, love, self-sacrifice, gullibility, tolerance, and understanding. Part of careful planning and organizing, which is the intentional choice of the said

actions, facial expressions, body movements of the lead character. Each group then reads his/her output while the other groups listen, after which they interact with one another regarding the strength and weaknesses of the products presented. The same instructional

values in order for the exemplification of the interdisciplinary approach to Values Education subject via Literature in the genre of the short stories can be tangibly achieved. In conclusion, other literary genres may be tried as instructional materials to demonstrate more values to be instilled in the hearts and minds of the Millennials.

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