

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STORYBOOKS IN LEARNING AMONG THE AYTA MAGBUKUN IN LIMAY, BATAAN

by:

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Storybooks have long been recognized as important tools for literacy and learning. Their impact is even greater when used in Indigenous communities. Among the Ayta Magbukun in Limay, Bataan, storybooks are effective in teaching reading and comprehension. They also help strengthen cultural identity, preserve language, and improve learner engagement. As formal education becomes more integrated into Indigenous communities, storybooks that are culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate become vital resources. The Ayta Magbukun language, like many Indigenous Philippine languages, is traditionally oral and at risk of decline. Storybooks written in Magbukun or featuring bilingual texts (Magbukun and Filipino/English) are key tools for literacy development while promoting language preservation. When children see their own language in print, it legitimizes their identity and boosts their confidence in reading. Teachers in Limay say that learners are more attentive and motivated when lessons include stories in their native tongue.

One major strength of using storybooks in the Ayta Magbukun context is their cultural relevance. Unlike mainstream textbooks, culturally tailored storybooks reflect the real-life experiences, environment, and values of the learners. Stories that include elements like foraging in the forest, community gatherings, and ancestral wisdom resonate deeply with Ayta Magbukun learners. This connection fosters emotional ties, improves comprehension, and increases participation in classroom activities.

In Limay, where many Ayta Magbukun learners are first-generation students, learning materials that reflect their lives create a more inclusive and supportive educational

environment. This approach helps bridge the gap between home culture and school culture, addressing dropout rates among Indigenous learners. Storytelling has always been central to Ayta Magbukun culture. Elders traditionally pass down stories, beliefs, and survival knowledge through oral narration. Printed storybooks offer a way to complement this oral tradition. They do not replace spoken word but provide a format for recording and sharing stories across generations and with non-Ayta audiences. This combination supports both traditional and modern learning practices.

Moreover, involving elders in creating and validating storybooks ensures that the stories remain culturally authentic. When elders and community members contribute to educational materials, learners are more likely to respect and value what they are learning.

The Kinaragan Integrated School, the only one school in Limay serving Indigenous Peoples Education (IPED) have noticed that storybooks improve early literacy outcomes. Learners develop vocabulary, sentence structure, and comprehension skills more effectively through narrative-based learning than through memorization. Storybooks also improve listening and speaking skills, especially when read aloud in groups. Additionally, story-based learning encourages imagination, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence skills that are crucial for lifelong learning. When learners engage with storytelling, they are more likely to stay in school and develop a positive attitude toward education.

Despite the effectiveness of storybooks, challenges remain. There is a shortage of published materials in the Ayta Magbukun language, and limited IP teachers who are allowed to use indigenized and contextualized storybooks of Ayta Magbukun in Limay. Funding and institutional support for developing localized educational materials are also limited.

To tackle these challenges, partnerships between local governments, NGOs, the Department of Education, community and Ayta Magbukun Tribal Council are crucial. Community-based workshops, teacher training, and youth storytelling programs can further enhance the use of storybooks in Ayta Magbukun education.

Storybooks are more than just reading materials; they connect language, culture, and learning. For the Ayta Magbukun in Limay, Bataan, culturally and linguistically appropriate storybooks have proven to be effective educational tools. They improve literacy, support cultural pride, and make learning meaningful and inclusive. Investing in these materials and the work behind them is a significant step toward educational justice and cultural preservation for Indigenous learners.

References:

depedbataan.com
The Official Website of DepED Division of Bataan