



## **Exploring Students` Appreciation of Philippine Literary Works through BASA Project: A Narrative Inquiry**

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20413067>

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**Publication History:**

Date Submitted: April 9, 2026

Date Accepted: April 10, 2026

Date Reviewed: April 11, 2026

Date Revised: May 07, 2026

Date Published: May 27, 2026

**How to cite this work:**

Toreta, V. L., & Hurtada, J. (2026). Exploring Students` Appreciation of Philippine Literary Works through BASA Project: A Narrative Inquiry. *METILED TED: International Multidisciplinary Journal in Language, Education, and Culture*, 2(7), 391–405.  
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20413067>

**ABSTRACT**

*Engaging secondary students in Philippine literary works remains a persistent challenge, as many learners exhibit limited interest, shallow comprehension, and low participation despite the inclusion of local literature in the curriculum. This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically a narrative inquiry, to explore how the BASA Project influences students' appreciation of Philippine literature. Through rich narratives and reflections, the study revealed that participation in the BASA Project transformed students' engagement with literary texts by enhancing reading comprehension, vocabulary, pronunciation, and critical thinking skills. Students reported increased motivation, enjoyment, and confidence in reading, while teacher guidance and collaborative learning supported those struggling with literacy. Furthermore, the program fostered deeper cultural awareness by connecting literary texts to students' personal experiences, cultural identities, and community backgrounds, allowing learners to relate emotionally and cognitively to the stories. The BASA Project also promoted self-reflection, personal growth, and moral understanding, strengthening students' appreciation of Filipino traditions, heritage, and values. By integrating culturally responsive practices and reflective learning strategies, the project not only improved academic skills but also nurtured identity, cultural pride, and lifelong appreciation of Philippine literature. Findings underscore the importance of structured, contextually grounded literary programs in fostering both cognitive and socio-emotional development among students. These results provide a compelling rationale for expanding literacy initiatives that connect students' lived experiences with national literary works, ensuring that Philippine literature becomes meaningful, accessible, and impactful.*

*Keywords: Literary Engagement, Cultural Reflection, Student Motivation, Identity Formation*



## INTRODUCTION

### Background of Study

The appreciation of Philippine literary works among secondary students remains a persistent challenge, as many learners demonstrate limited engagement and shallow understanding of texts despite the inclusion of local literature in the curriculum. National assessments, such as PISA 2018, revealed weak reading comprehension skills among Filipino students, which directly affect their ability to interpret and value literary works. While initiatives like the Basa Pilipinas project have shown improvements in early literacy, there remains a gap in fostering deeper literary appreciation at the secondary level (EDC, 2018).

International research shows that deliberate, classroom-based literary interventions and scaffolded reading activities increase students' engagement with texts and foster higher-order aesthetic and critical reading capacities, while the medium of reading (print vs. screen) and the design of tasks shape whether readers develop sustained appreciation or only surface-level familiarity with literature (Calafato, 2022; Hakemulder, 2024).

At the national level, large-scale reading initiatives and assessments reveal persistent challenges: The Basa Pilipinas program demonstrated that targeted literacy investments (teacher training, leveled readers, reading corners) can produce measurable gains in early-grade fluency and comprehension, yet national assessments such as PISA 2018 underscored continuing weaknesses in adolescent reading proficiency that signal the need for sustained, curriculum-aligned efforts beyond early grades

(EDC/USAID Basa Pilipinas Final Report, 2018; DepEd, 2019). In the Philippine classroom literature, recent classroom-based interventions (for example, McLit Pouch and other action-research reading tools) point to promising gains in secondary students' understanding and engagement with Philippine literature, but these studies are largely intervention-focused and short-term, leaving a gap in rich, qualitative understanding of *how* students come to appreciate Philippine texts—their emotions, identity work, and meaning-making when engaged through projects like BASA (Jutba, Tabenas, & Baluyos, 2024; Rosales, 2023).

Regionally, South Central Mindanao (including SOCCSKSARGEN/Southern Mindanao) shows uneven reading outcomes and contextual particularities—socioeconomic diversity, multilingual home backgrounds, and varying school resources—that affect how literature is taught and received in secondary schools, yet there is scant narrative research that explores students' subjective reading journeys in this part of Mindanao. These layered gaps—(1) the international need to link task/medium design to lasting literary appreciation, (2) the Philippine need to extend early-grade reading gains into deeper secondary-level literary engagement, and (3) the regional need for context-sensitive, narrative accounts of student meaning-making—justify a narrative inquiry that documents students' stories of reading, interprets how BASA-style strategies interact with local conditions, and produces context-sensitive recommendations.

Aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), the study aims to inform inclusive, equitable instructional practices that



promote literacy, cultural rootedness, and lifelong learning opportunities (UN, 2015/ongoing SDG resources). The goal of the study is to explore and richly describe secondary students' experiences of the BASA Project in relation to their appreciation of Philippine literature, and to generate practical, locally grounded strategies that strengthen curriculum, pedagogy, and reading culture among secondary schools in General Santos City for school year 2025-2026.

## **Research Questions**

This research aimed to explore and richly describe secondary students' experiences of the BASA Project in relation to their appreciation of Philippine literature, and to generate practical, locally grounded strategies that strengthen curriculum, pedagogy, and reading culture among secondary schools in General Santos City for school year 2025-2026.

Specifically, research problem revolved around understanding the following key questions:

1. How do students describe their lived experiences of engaging with Philippine literary works through the BASA Project?
2. What meanings do students assign to their experiences of reading and interpreting Philippine literature as part of the BASA Project? (Explores how learners construct meaning from their reading experiences.) ?
3. In what ways do students' cultural identities and personal backgrounds influence their appreciation of Philippine literary works in the BASA Project?
4. How do students narrate the transformation of their perspectives toward Philippine literature after participating in the BASA Project?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

In this study, a qualitative research design, specifically a narrative inquiry approach, was employed to explore and richly describe secondary students' experiences of the BASA Project in relation to their appreciation of Philippine literature. Narrative inquiry is appropriate because it allows researchers to capture participants' lived experiences through stories, reflections, and meaning-making processes, providing depth and context beyond numerical data (Clandinin, 2021). This approach is particularly useful in education, where students' voices and perspectives are central to understanding how initiatives like reading programs shape their engagement and appreciation of literature (Xu & Connelly, 2020).

Furthermore, employing narrative inquiry can generate practical and locally grounded strategies that strengthen curriculum, pedagogy, and reading culture among secondary schools. By focusing on the stories of learners, the study contributes to culturally responsive practices that align with community contexts and educational goals (Kim, 2022). It also supports curriculum



and pedagogy development by highlighting authentic classroom experiences and challenges, thus enabling schools to design reading programs that are more meaningful and effective (Hunter & Nel, 2023). This makes narrative inquiry not only a tool for documenting student experiences but also a catalyst for educational improvement in the context of General Santos City.

### Participants of the Study

Table 1 displays the qualifications of the participants based on the criteria set by the researcher prior to the selection of qualified informants of the study.

**Table 1**

*Participants’ Inclusion Criteria*

<b>Qualifications</b>
Participants: 15 High School Students
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Enrollment in Selected Secondary Schools</b> – Students must be officially enrolled in the participating secondary schools in General Santos City for the school year 2025–2026 to ensure they are directly involved in the BASA Project activities.</li> <li>2. <b>Participation in the BASA Project</b> – Students must have actively participated in the BASA Project reading activities, including reading sessions, discussions, and reflection exercises, to ensure their experiences are relevant to the study.</li> <li>3. <b>Willingness to Share Experiences</b> – Students must provide informed consent (and parental consent if below 18 years old) and be willing to share personal reflections and narratives about their experiences and appreciation of Philippine literary works.</li> <li>4. <b>Ability to Communicate Experiences</b> – Students must be able to articulate their experiences in oral or written form (English or Filipino), ensuring that their narratives can be meaningfully collected, analyzed, and interpreted through the narrative inquiry methodology.</li> </ol>

The participants' qualifications, as determined by the criteria established by the researcher before selecting eligible informants for the study. The selection of fifteen (15) high school students from the selected secondary schools in General Santos City for school year 2025-2026.



## **Sampling Technique**

During the conduct of this study, a Purposive Sampling Technique was intentionally utilized to carefully select fifteen (15) high school students from the selected secondary schools in General Santos City for school year 2025-2026, who will meet the researcher's specified inclusion criteria.

Purposive sampling, alternately referred to as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, constitutes a variant of non-probability sampling. Within this approach, researchers exercise their own judgment and discretionary acumen in the selection of individuals from the population to partake in their survey endeavors (Alchemer, 2021). This method of sampling mandates that researchers possess prior knowledge of the objectives underpinning their study so as to effectively pinpoint and make contact with eligible participants through online survey platforms like Alchemer. Researchers resort to purposive sampling in order to secure access to a distinct subgroup of individuals, whereby all survey respondents are meticulously chosen based on their alignment with a specific demographic or criterion.

## **Research Instruments**

In this study, a semi-structured interview functioned as an exploratory instrument during both in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to explore the students' experiences of the BASA Project in relation to their appreciation of Philippine literature, and to generate practical, locally grounded strategies that strengthen curriculum, pedagogy, and reading culture among secondary schools in General Santos City for school year 2025-2026.

The validity and appropriateness of this tools as substantiated through a rigorous evaluation process conducted by a panel of experts who possess expertise in the development of relevant research instruments.

## **Data Gathering Procedure**

To ensure the research's reliability, the researcher maintained a strict adherence to a predefined set of procedures. The primary objective of this study is to explore the students' experiences of the BASA Project in relation to their appreciation of Philippine literature, and to generate practical, locally grounded strategies that strengthen curriculum, pedagogy, and reading culture among secondary schools in General Santos City for school year 2025-2026.

In the initial phase, the researcher will diligently seek formal authorization from both the Superintendent of DepEd-General Santos City and the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies (CGS). This authorization is essential to obtain the necessary permissions for the researcher to conduct the study, emphasizing the importance of ethical considerations.

Following this, a secondary authorization letter was sent to the District Supervisor, explicitly requesting access to the specific data required for this research. A meticulously crafted survey questionnaire was developed, subjected to rigorous evaluation, and then administered to the targeted participants.



The researcher will employ a Purposive Sampling Technique to carefully select secondary school teachers as participants in this study. Assuming strict adherence to established EWMCI-Research Ethics Committee, the researcher proceeded with conducting interviews and facilitating Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), all of which will be conducted through face-to-face interactions.

Ultimately, the data collected from interviews and FGDs will be systematically organized, subjected to comprehensive analysis, and interpreted using the thematic analysis approach. This approach is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the issues under investigation.

### **Data Analysis**

In this study centered on uncovering the students' experiences of the BASA Project in relation to their appreciation of Philippine literature, and to generate practical, locally grounded strategies that strengthen curriculum, pedagogy, and reading culture among secondary schools in General Santos City for school year 2025-2026, a content or thematic analysis approach was employed to examine the collected data. This methodology, as described by Flick (2014), Ngag (2023), and Braun (2009), involves the systematic categorization of textual components, including statements, phrases, and words, into organized groupings or categories. These categories were either derived from established frameworks or custom developed to align with the study's specific objectives.

To execute this analytical process, a series of essential steps will be diligently followed:

Initially, all data sources, such as interview transcripts, notes from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and relevant documents, will be meticulously organized and prepared for analysis. This phase ensures the systematic arrangement and accessibility of the data.

Subsequently, the researcher will deeply engage with the data by conducting a thorough review of interview transcripts and FGD notes. This immersive process aids in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the content and context embedded within the collected information.

The third step involves initiating a systematic coding process. Initial codes will be generated by identifying meaningful segments or patterns within the data. These codes will capture essential concepts, ideas, or themes related to the narratives of the teachers with regard to their professional development and its outcomes in their teaching effectiveness.

Following coding, the identified codes will be grouped into preliminary themes based on shared meaning or relevance. This step aims to establish an initial structure for organizing the data.

Next, the emerging themes and their corresponding codes will undergo a process of review and refinement. Researchers will ensure the consistency and clarity of these themes, making necessary adjustments. Each refined theme will be assigned a descriptive name that succinctly represents the content it encapsulates, facilitating easy identification and interpretation.



Relevant data excerpts, such as quotes or segments extracted from interviews and FGDs, will be selected and associated with the respective themes. These excerpts will serve as supporting evidence for the identified themes.

Finally, the thematic analysis will extend beyond surface-level identification. Researchers will interpret the meaning and implications of each theme within the context of the study's objectives. They will seek patterns, connections, and variations within the themes to provide a comprehensive understanding of narratives of the teachers.

This meticulous and structured process of thematic analysis will enable researchers to systematically explore and comprehend the students' experiences of the BASA Project in relation to their appreciation of Philippine literature, and to generate practical, locally grounded strategies that strengthen curriculum, pedagogy, and reading culture among secondary schools in General Santos City for school year 2025-2026.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The study was delimited to examining how secondary students develop interest, understanding, and appreciation of Philippine literary texts through their lived experiences in the BASA Project. It specifically involves selected secondary school students and teachers in General Santos City during the school year 2025–2026, focusing only on the narratives of participants directly engaged in the program. The research employs a narrative inquiry design, utilizing in-depth interviews, reflective journals, and storytelling sessions to capture personal accounts of learning, challenges, and insights. The study does not cover all literary appreciation programs or other cities, as it centers on the BASA Project as a contextualized platform for promoting Filipino literature. This scope and delimitation were set to provide deeper insights into why and how students engage with local literary works, thereby contributing to the promotion of Philippine literature in secondary education.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The appreciation of Philippine literary works among secondary students remains a persistent challenge, as many learners demonstrate limited engagement and shallow understanding of texts despite the inclusion of local literature in the curriculum. In this study, a qualitative research design, specifically a narrative inquiry approach, was employed to explore and richly describe secondary students' experiences of the BASA Project in relation to their appreciation of Philippine literature.

Results show that the appreciation of Philippine literary works among secondary students remains a persistent challenge, as many learners demonstrate limited engagement and shallow understanding of texts despite the inclusion of local literature in the curriculum. In this study, a qualitative research design, specifically a narrative inquiry approach, was employed to explore and richly describe secondary students' experiences of the BASA Project in relation to their appreciation of Philippine literature.

Also, the BASA Project positively transformed students' engagement with Philippine literary works. It enhanced reading and comprehension skills, expanded vocabulary, and improved pronunciation, while also fostering a deeper appreciation for Filipino literature and



cultural traditions. Students reported increased motivation, enjoyment, and participation in reading activities, and teacher guidance along with collaborative learning effectively supported those who struggled, helping them overcome literacy barriers.

Moreover, the BASA Project significantly enhanced students' engagement with Philippine literature by connecting texts to their personal experiences, fostering moral understanding, and strengthening cultural identity. Participation in the program also developed critical thinking and interpretive skills, while boosting confidence, motivation, and academic growth. Overall, students gained a deeper appreciation of Filipino literary works, understood the values and traditions embedded in the narratives, and were able to relate lessons to their own lives and communities. Finally, findings show that the BASA Project significantly enhanced students' appreciation of Philippine literature by highlighting the influence of their cultural identities, personal experiences, and community backgrounds. Students' understanding and engagement with literary texts were shaped by language differences, cultural contexts, and familiar life experiences, allowing them to relate emotionally and cognitively to stories. The program also fostered cultural reflection, pride, and awareness of heritage, while improving reading comprehension, vocabulary, and overall literacy skills. Overall, participation in BASA enabled students to connect Philippine literary works to their own lives, communities, and Filipino identity, making literature more meaningful and accessible.

## **Conclusion**

The following conclusions were made in light of this study's findings:

Culturally responsive literacy programs like the BASA Project not only develop essential reading skills but also strengthen students' cultural awareness, personal growth, and intrinsic motivation, highlighting the value of integrating literary engagement with supportive, interactive learning strategies in education.

Also, the structured literary programs like BASA not only improve reading comprehension but also cultivate ethical reasoning, cultural awareness, and learner self-efficacy. Integrating personal reflection and cultural context into literature education can meaningfully enhance both cognitive and socio-emotional development, making Filipino literary works more relevant and impactful for students.

Further, programs like BASA not only promote comprehension and engagement but also nurture identity, cultural pride, and reflective thinking, reinforcing the role of literature in shaping both personal growth and national consciousness.

Finally, it has been concluded that engaging students with Philippine literary works not only strengthens their reading and analytical skills but also nurtures cultural pride, personal reflection, and lifelong appreciation of national literature, emphasizing the importance of contextually grounded educational interventions.

## **Recommendations**

In light of the findings of the study, the following were recommended:



1. Department of Education (DepEd) may fund and expand reading programs like the BASA Project to reach all schools, especially supporting students struggling with literacy. They may also provide teacher training on culturally responsive teaching to help students connect Philippine literature with their personal and community experiences.
2. School Administrators may encourage collaborative and guided reading activities that make literature engaging and relatable for students. They can also allocate dedicated time and resources for reading programs that strengthen students' literacy and cultural appreciation.
3. Policy Makers may develop policies that integrate Philippine literature and cultural heritage into school programs. They may also ensure funding and support for teacher training, materials, and research-based literacy interventions.
4. Curriculum Planners may include Philippine literary works reflecting diverse cultural identities and experiences in the curriculum. They can also design learning activities that promote critical thinking, comprehension, and self-reflection alongside reading lessons.
5. Reading Teachers may use interactive strategies that help students relate literature to their lives and cultural backgrounds. They may also focus on improving comprehension, vocabulary, and pronunciation through guided reading and discussion.
6. Future Researchers can explore which specific approaches in programs like BASA most effectively improve literacy and cultural appreciation. They may also investigate strategies to support students with language barriers or lower literacy skills for more inclusive outcomes.

### **Compliance with Ethical Standards**

In preparation for the conduct of this study, all the aforementioned plans and recommendations will be presented to East-West Mindanao Colleges Inc. to ensure compliance with prescribed procedures and protocols. Within the context of the research focused on examining the students' experiences of the BASA Project in relation to their appreciation of Philippine literature among secondary schools in General Santos City for school year 2025-2026, it is imperative to emphasize the paramount importance of ethical considerations. Prior to commencing this study, the following ethical principles will be highlighted:

**Informed Consent:** Before participation, explicit and informed consent will be diligently obtained from all school heads involved in the study. It is imperative that they possess a comprehensive understanding of the study's objectives, methodologies, potential risks, and benefits. Furthermore, participation will remain entirely voluntary, affording participants the autonomy to withdraw from the study at any juncture without encountering any adverse consequences.

**Anonymity and Confidentiality:** To safeguard the identities and responses of the teachers, rigorous measures will be enacted to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Rather than using actual names, pseudonyms or codes will be employed, upholding the privacy of the



participants. The collected data will be securely stored with access restricted solely to the research team.

**Avoiding Harm:** Delicate subjects, such as the challenges inherent in their roles, will be discussed with meticulous consideration for the potential emotional and psychological impact on the participants. Strategies will be in place to minimize distress, and a support system will be readily available to assist participants should the need arise.

**Researcher-Participant Relationship:** The researcher will maintain a professional and respectful rapport when engaging with the school heads. Any actions that may exploit or cause harm to the participants will be scrupulously avoided, ensuring their utmost dignity and respect throughout the research process.

**Protection:** Adherence to data protection regulations and laws will be unwaveringly followed to safeguard the personal information of the participants. Stringent measures will be employed to ensure the secure storage and transmission of data.

**Voluntary Participation:** Participants will be assured that their involvement in the study is wholly voluntary, devoid of any form of coercion or external pressure.

**Researcher Bias:** The researcher will remain vigilant regarding potential biases that might influence data collection and analysis, upholding objectivity and transparency throughout the research endeavor.

**Institutional Approval:** Before initiating the study, the researcher will diligently seek ethical clearance from the pertinent institutional review boards or ethics committees.

**Honesty and Integrity:** The research findings will be reported truthfully and accurately, devoid of any manipulation or distortion to align with preconceived notions or biases.

**Beneficence:** The potential benefits of the research to educational practices and policies will be thoughtfully considered, ensuring that the study positively contributes to the enhancement of the education system.

**Cultural Sensitivity:** The researcher will display cultural sensitivity by respecting local customs, beliefs, and practices within the research setting, refraining from imposing external values on the participants.

**Inclusion and Diversity:** The study's structure will prioritize inclusivity and diversity, encompassing a wide spectrum of the students' experiences of the BASA Project in relation to their appreciation of Philippine literature among secondary schools in General Santos City for school year 2025-2026.



## **Acknowledgment**

The researcher would like to extend her appreciation to all those who contributed to the completion of this study:

To **BAILAH B. SANDIGAN, MAED**, our esteemed School President, for her visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to the Graduate School. Her dedication to fostering a culture of academic inquiry and professional excellence has been a profound source of inspiration throughout this study.

To **JULIET P. TAMBUNGALAN, MAED**, Graduate Studies Consultant, for her continuous encouragement and the wealth of opportunities she provides for research and development. Her guidance has motivated the researcher to strive for excellence and to make a meaningful impact within the community.

To **EMELIA M. LOTILLA, Ph.D.**, Dean of the Graduate School, for her pivotal advice and reinforcement. Her leadership and the support she extends to all graduate students were essential in navigating the complexities of this research project.

To **JOSEVIC F. HURTADA, Ph.D.**, the researcher's thesis adviser, for his scholarly expertise and immense patience. His constructive feedback and constant encouragement provided the necessary foundation for the development and success of this work.

To the members of the examining committee, **JAIME BOY U. NGAG JR., Ph.D.** and **AMILUDIN G. MASABPI, Ph.D.**, for their meticulous evaluation and insightful critiques. Their professional guidance was instrumental in refining the quality and depth of this thesis.

A heartfelt thanks to her husband, **CYRIL P. CABRERA**, and their son **CYVEN ACHILLES T. CABRERA** for being her greatest source of strength. Their unconditional love and understanding during the most challenging chapters of her journey gave her the courage to persevere.

To her greatest supporters, her parents, **FERNANDO C. TORETA** and **FERSING D. TORETA**, and to her siblings, **RONNIE D. TORETA**, **GLENN D. TORETA**, **HANE CHARL D. TORETA**, **FERNANDO D. TORETA, JR.**, **HAZEL MAE T. SOLANO**, and **CHRISTINE GRACE D. TORETA**, The same gratitude is extended for their lifelong support and for believing in her dreams from the very beginning.

To her classmates and friends, including **Bebie Joyce D. Sacramento**, **Jemilyn Diamante**, and **Haydie Capundan**, she expresses her sincere gratitude for the shared laughter, academic camaraderie, and for encouraging one another not to give up on the dreams they built together.

Above all, to the **ALMIGHTY GOD**, the ultimate source of wisdom and grace, she offers her deepest praise for the divine guidance and strength that made this entire research endeavor a reality.



## **Declaration AI Tools Utilization**

I do hereby declare the use AI tools, such as Chat GPT and Grammarly for grammar checking and sentence organization purposes only.

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