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Abstract

**“Filipiniana Online”: Learning Strategies through the WEB**

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The dynamism of knowledge production on the Internet is a critical reality that scholars, academicians, scientists & artists who are involved in the dissemination of knowledges and information must acknowledge if they want to continue to overdetermine the shape of their respective societies today. In terms of the humanities and social sciences, in particular, there are 29,910 websites on Philippine Culture which incessantly construct their own discourses on the Filipino and Philippine social practices. Topics addressing various interests of different audiences from here and abroad, taking the form of official pronouncements of the various branches of government, reports from non-governmental organizations, articles from professional and private organizations are all equally accessible through the click of a mouse. Thus, the Internet has a way of flattening out Philippine hierarchical discourses. No distinctions are made between private/personal and public; between commercial and academic; between official and informal; between knowledges and information, between fact and wild imaginings. The Internet has truly democratized access to information & knowledges. Therefore, the Internet is an arena that we educators have to aggressively enter.

In 1998, the Filipiniana Online Team of researchers, writers & multimedia artists with myself as Project Leader, conceptualizer

and main writer, under the auspices of the University of the Philippines Open University, constructed a course on Philippine Culture that was piloted on the web as early as Second Semester, 1999-2000. Its most recent online offering as Cultural Studies 250 was First Semester 2002-2003 (June-October 2002) to post-baccalaureate students of the Open University coming from as far north of the Philippines as the Cordilleras and as far south as Cotobato in Mindanao. Accompanied by the **Filipiniana Reader** (a printed anthology of critical essays on Philippine Theater, Art, Literature & Popular Culture) and a **Filipiniana CD, Filipiniana Online or CS 250** sought to contribute to the twin projects of nation-formation and identity-construction. To build a sense of "Filipino-hood" and a concept of nation that recognized the diasporic nature of Philippine Society was our political agenda. These goals were effected through the interactive structure of **Filipiniana Online** — i.e., threaded discussions facilitated by four specialists in each of the modules of Philippine Theater, Literature, Art & Popular Culture as well as a digital library that gave participants hyperlinks to other websites on Philippine Culture and History. Thus, its online nature, enabled participants from different Filipino communities to participate in discussions and projects which would not have been possible had the traditional classroom, residential mode of instruction been used.