



ma-áram:
Pagtanghal sa
katutubong
kaalaman

TEACHERS'

GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

Ma-aram: Pagtanghal sa Katutubong Kaalaman presents five short documentaries on traditions articulating the wealth of indigenous knowledge and creative practices. The impetus for the creation of these documentaries was to capture vanishing traditions before they become completely extinct and distant from memory. The onslaught of modernity has changed the milieu and the landscape from where these traditions spring and thrive. Inland and outland migration, loss of ancestral lands, changes in agricultural patterns, environmental maladies, even the eventual passing away of culture bearers— these are just some of the factors that threaten the continuity of these traditional cultural practices.

While shooting the documentaries and the photographs, we engaged with a spectrum of traditions emplaced in the category “vanishing.” The category of vanishing itself became more nuanced than ever, unfurling as gradations,, while

exposing the factors that make a tradition vulnerable to the social, cultural, and geo-political factors. Suffice it would be to say that 'vanishing tradition' is potentially a static category that is oblivious to modernity.

The goal of this teachers' guide is to show how to use the materials for classroom use, either as an integral part of the curriculum *or* as a supplement to the curriculum of selected core subjects in the Senior High School Program.

It hopes to foster critical engagement with the documentaries by interrogating concepts such as culture, arts, and traditions. From these broad concepts, we hope to zero in to other analytic categories relevant to the documentaries, such as vanishing traditions vis-à-vis living traditions, social actors, and culture bearers.

There are two main sections of the guide. The **first** section is a general introduction to analytic concepts that are fundamental to a more profound appreciation of art and culture in the Philippine setting, and a more historicized approach to the idea

of “vanishing traditions.” The **second** section tackles the five documentaries, and consists of a pre-, actual, and post-viewing sessions. A series of guide questions, learning activities, and in some cases take home assignments are expected to animate the learning process.

How to use this guide

The guide is intended for teachers; thus, it addresses teachers who are expected to facilitate the learning process and enable a learning environment where critical practice is of prime importance. While most of the episodes were designed for the Senior High School Program, its teaching potential can also climb up to the tertiary levels. In the Senior High School Program, it can be used in the other core subjects such as Understanding Culture, Society, and Politics, Media and Information Literacy, and other subjects in the HUMSS strand such as Disciplines and Ideas in the Social Sciences and Community Engagement, Solidarity, and Citizenship.

The guide talks to the teachers as facilitators of the learning process. It provides ample room for the teachers to elaborate on their own, use examples which they feel are more suited to their students, and devise additional activities as they deem fit.

MODULE 1

CULTURE, ART, AND TRADITION

At the end of this module, the students should have:

- a. Elaborated on the most common notions about the word culture, art, and tradition
- b. Understood the range of definitions of the above-mentioned concepts, and explained why definitions remain fluid, changing, and context-based;
- c. Explained social construction and a system of meaning making as essential to the process of studying culture, art, and tradition.

Lesson 1

Activity 1

Ask your students to bring an object that represents their idea of culture. They can bring pictures if it is not possible to bring the object to the class?

They will present the objects to the class. As they share, ask them the following questions:

- a. What is it? Does it have a history or a narrative?
- b. What is its significance to art and culture?
- c. What does it represent?
- d. Is it art, and why? If not, why?

Synthesize the activity. If you have time tabulate the answers, and group the objects by using some organizing principle (e.g., local crafts, historical objects, pictures of ethnic communities, etc.) Make sure to explain the manner by which you categorized the objects. Focus on some interesting narratives that the students will relate and see how much of these can be generated to enrich the discussion.

As you close the synthesis, you can ask them how they have engaged with the word “culture.” How is it used? Who uses it? What do they think about the institutions/people/entities that use the word culture.

Activity 2

You can continue to explore what is meant by the concept 'culture' by examining a number of statements using the term 'culture.' Examine the following statements and reflect on what is meant by culture in each.

1. Although Muslims are no longer the majority in the island of Mindanao, Islamic culture is still quite evident.
2. We live in a society that is so saturated with popular forms of culture.
3. Social media generates a culture of bullying.
4. People who go to see the ballet at the Cultural Center of the Philippine are cultured.
5. The culture of the Ifugao people speak so much about their reverence for the land.

You can end by discussing the etymology of culture. The word 'culture' originally meant the tending or cultivation

of something, in particular animals and crops. From the 18th century onwards, the sense of culture as cultivation implied that the concept had much to do with the progress of humanity. In the years ahead, as the world reeled off from the Industrial Revolution and the rise of nation states, the word culture has also come to mean many other things. There was a renewed interest in folk art and traditional groups, and the cultures of ethnolinguistic groups who have not yet assimilated into the fold the state. Thus it was appropriate now to speak of cultures, the plural underscored, to affirm the presence of diverse groups residing in a nation state.

Main discussion

Consider this: There are so many different definitions of culture in the literature of the social sciences. Definitions have evolved over time and this illustrates the vigorous production of knowledge in this area.

Edward B. Tylor (1832-1918) was the founding father of anthropology and was the first to lay down a foundational

definition of culture as “the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society” (1871: 1). However, his definition has come under rigorous scrutiny and many social scientists have developed many theories of culture. However, we can extract at least some defining elements that can serve as the foundations of our understanding of culture.

- Culture is learned.
- Culture utilizes symbols.
- Culture is in our daily life, part of humanity’s daily experience.
- Culture is shared.
- Culture is diverse.

Clifford Geertz (1926-2006) put forward a definition that says culture is a system of symbols through which people make sense of the social order. Symbols are objects that stand for something else. Geertz later on consolidated his ideas into an interpretative theory of culture that primarily asserts culture is embodied and transmitted through symbols. Ask your

students: what does the Philippine flag symbolize? Go back to the objects which they brought to share with the class. What do they stand for? What significance do these objects hold for our concept of culture.

Today, social scientists refer to culture as a diverse, plural, incoherent, and a dynamic system of meaning-making. Rather than ascribing it the properties of an object (e.g. "ballet is a cultured form of entertainment," "the ling-ling-o is an example of Ifugao culture), we assert that culture as a process where people actively construct, shape, share, negotiate and contest meanings. These meanings are circulate in our daily life, embedded in daily life, mostly on occasions of social interaction.

This approach does not regard coherence as a defining property, as earlier definitions would suggest. Instead, culture in a society is seen as *cultures*, the plural form of the verb to connote the diversity of meaning-making process. For instance, not all will draw national unity as the meaning of the Philippine flag. Some may see it as a symbol of resistance.

Culture as socially constructed means that it is not an objective reality; rather, institutions and other social structures influence individual and institutional behavior and perceptions of culture. Again this amplifies the perception that culture is a product of continuous meaning-making processes, but has a relative autonomy in shaping actions and institutions” (Alexander 2003:12)

Ask your students: how are values and beliefs shaped by institutions such as the schools, the church, the family, and the voluntary organizations which they belong. Use concrete examples to trigger reflection and initiate a lively class conversation. For instance, let them reflect on how both traditional media and social media influence their behaviors and social interaction. How do the wide array of media products, from advertisements to blogs to television series (e.g. teleserye, K-dramas) influence their views on gender? How do they make meanings out of the stories they encounter in mass media?

Even values, perspectives, beliefs, and lifestyles are moulded by the lived experiences under the general term culture.

Ask the students: Does everyone have a culture? Think of other communities near and far from where you are. How are they different from your culture?

The question is relevant because we tend to notice cultures more when they are *different* from us. In the social sciences, we have come to appreciate the notion of the “other” as those who stand in the margins, outside of the currents of mainstream culture. These are the minorities, the immigrants, the queer and non-heteronormative, and others who differ from the communities in the city centers and upper- to middle-class norms.

Cultural relativism is associated with a respect and tolerance for differences. It affirms the idea that context is critical to an understanding of people’s beliefs and traditions, even values and lifestyles. We owe our understanding of cultural relativism to Franz Boas (1858-1942) who was reacting to the pervasive

discrimination against "lower civilizations." He pointed out the perils of ethnocentrism, which is the belief that one's own culture is more valuable or better than another. An example of this ethnocentrism is how the local media easily associate terrorism with the Muslim minority. Ask the class to think of other examples of ethnocentrism as seen in our daily lives.

Lesson 2

Activity

Ask your students to visit a local museum. You may join them in the visit if you decide to do this as a class activity.

Coordinate with the staff of the local museum to guide the class to the collections and enable them to appreciate the following:

- a. Who are the artists and what are the art in the museum collection;
- b. What are the themes and topics they will encounter in the museum collection;

c. Explore how the museum represented the local way of life in your town or city.

As an alternative activity, in case your town has no museum, perhaps you can check on the provincial museum. If this is still not possible, and a visit to the National Museum of the Philippines even more impossible, you can make them surf online galleries or museums in the internet (https://www.nationalmuseum.gov.ph/Firefly/Go_Museum.html) or regional museums managed by the National Museum.

Two friends are deep in an argument at the National Museum. They are looking at one of the most important artefact in the collection—the Manunggul jar. One says, “what a beautiful piece of art.” But the other one argues “That's not art! It's a functional object.”

Between different tastes and different interpretations, who determines what is considered art in our society or in other cultures? There is no one answer to the question of what is art, yet the power of its influence is unmistakable.

In this lesson, you'll learn about what you consider art and how deeply these various forms of expression are connected with culture.

Defining Art

As illustrated in the anecdote above, artistic expressions come from a variety of different practices. Traditionally, crafts are items that are created that serve a function in society, such as pottery or clothing, though they may also be visually appealing or carry cultural meanings. Fine arts, on the other hand, are not typically created for their functional value but are created for their aesthetic beauty and meaning and also often require practice to develop skills. The fine arts include painting, sculpture, and photography, among others.

So, what do we know for sure about art? In every culture in the world, artistic expression has emerged to provide an outlet for thoughts, feelings, traditions, and beliefs. It's generally less important to define what art actually is and more useful that

anthropologists look at the impact and meaning of a particular form of expression.

Defining art can be a controversial undertaking. For some, it can be easy: tangible objects such a painting or a sculpture, a photograph, a novel or a book of poems. However, some can argue that this painting or sculpture lacks merit and therefore cannot be considered art.

It can be a tricky endeavor. It requires knowing the context that underpins our values about art.

Context here refers to the complex interplay of structures and history that shape and determine what is and what is not art (Fajardo and Flores, 2003).

First, we can agree that art is a human endeavor and is intricately linked to culture. As viewers or consumers of art, it allows us to experience a wide range of emotions. There are ideas attached to art, such as insights about history, current affairs, ideologies, or even visions of the future. However, art is

always a complex subject, and this unit may help us realize there is no one definition that can encompass its complex nature. Beyond this, the context that surrounds art both as a product and a social process, is of primary consideration.

When we speak of context, we take notice of powerful structures such as the government, mass media, religion, schools, and civil society organizations. It also includes vested traditions in the communities, belief and values systems, lifestyles. Lastly, it also includes dynamics of life such as power contestations, conflicts (even war and other forms of social strife), and social movements advocating for reforms and changes in the social order.

Suffice it would be to say that art is defined in different and diverse ways by people who are also as different and as diverse. Gender, ethnicity, and social class are just some of the top markers of differences. Life experiences, upbringing, perspectives, and value systems are also some of the factors that bear upon the diverse definitions of art.

A study of fabrics, for instance, is the study of how cloth is woven using techniques, raw materials, and technology. However, it can also be a study of how weaving is deeply significant as a form of livelihood and as a form of creative expression in a community of people who could appropriate it as a source of pride, a marker of their identity. Furthermore, it can also be a study of how productive forces such as capital, markets, value and supply chain stems interact with the weavers themselves so that the finish product can be considered as both having material and artistic values.

To answer the question *what is art?* is also to make ourselves aware of the contexts that underpins art.

For instance, art has always been identified with the word beauty. Art is all about aesthetics. An investigation into the history of art would reveal that this belongs to the classical ideal of beauty, as defined by Western philosophy. Art, always a slave to the idea of beauty, wrestles with its subjective nature, as the beautiful is located 'in the eye of the beholder.

Just a few examples of how art is defined by Western scholars. Guillermo et. al (1988) outlined a few examples of how the Western scholars, and the corresponding explanation why such definition is still rendered inadequate by the expansive concept of art.

Art is the attempt to create pleasing forms.- Herbert Read

Herbert Read implies that the goal of any artist is to please. We recognize that art has always been identified with the pursuit of beauty and the enchantment of our senses. But this is not always the intent of the individual artists to something that would appeal to the senses of the audience or viewers.

Guillermo et.al (1988) also cites the relativity of pleasure. What is pleasurable to someone may be repulsive to the other.

Finally, it is worth noting that some artistic products, some coming from indigenous communities, fulfil function first and foremost. The burnay jar, for instance, has always served as vessel for storing water, wine, food and water.

Art is a man-made object whose goal is to be experienced aesthetically.-Erwin Panofsky

There is emphasis here on the man-made aspect of art, and the word aesthetics was invoked. Art is taken as a product and dislodges nature (certainly not man-made) which can be pleasing to the senses in many ways. The definition is limited because it only takes into consideration the audience or percipient.

Art is the enjoyment of forms.- Ernst Cassirer

The focus here is the audience or the percipient whereas in the first definition the focus is the artist or the creator. The assumption is that the artist created something that was borne out of the desire to make the audience enjoy; the audience or percipient, on the other hand, is expected to enjoy what the artist has created. Assumed under this definition is the unity of intent of artist and audience, creator and percipient.

Art has the power to produce a pre-conceived result by means of consciously controlled and directed action.-classic definition derived from Greek and Roman concepts.

The focus here is the consciously controlled and directed action which may not be the case all the time. In Western art, there is so much room for and faith in improvisation such as jazz and improvisational theatre, among many other forms. In traditional communities, there are established rules or codified steps in artistic creation.

Art is the skilled performance or distinctive ability in any activity whatsoever.-James Jarett

Aside from being too broad, it puts so much weight on talent and skill, negating the possibility that those who are not schooled and have not yet acquired a high degree of ability and yet is able to produce something creative, pleasing, functional in processes that are both instantaneous and yet inspired.

As our understanding of context deepens and broadens, we should compel ourselves to be deeply reflective about our assumptions regarding art, keeping in mind that there is no one single, universal definition of art. At best, our definitions are framed by the broad context where we live in, as it interacts with our individual predispositions, values systems, and lifestyle.

Context allows us to frame our understanding such that we became more mindful of how structures impinge on our consciousness, and how history should be implicated in how we evaluate what is art, and how we value art's location at a specific historical juncture.

Take the case of the tepo mat weavers of the Sama , an ethnolinguistic group. Several historical events can be attributed to the growing popularity of these artisanal mats which were originally produced to serve a functional purpose in the rituals of the Sama. Modernity opened up the insular committee of Tandubas island and by conjecture, we can surmise that their products became more visible as the artisanal

flow of goods both in the national and global circuits. Along with the tepo sama, the reverence accorded to handmade crafts such as the T'nalak, the ikat weave, and the inabel grew exponentially as state institutions began recognizing the singular place of traditional and folk artist, through awards such as the Gawad Manlilikha ng Bayan (GAMABA), alternatively known as the National Living Treasures Award. There is also the establishment of Schools of Living Traditions (SLT) in indigenous communities. Both of these are administered by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA).

Our local context is but partial. The global context is another force field that calibrates our understanding and appreciation of the art that emerges and thrives in indigenous communities vis-à-vis our notions that were limited to Western categories.

Defining Tradition

Unlike culture, tradition has been loosely defined in the social sciences. It has been defined as the opposite of innovation, as

the apposite of modernity. We can claim that in societies that developed slowly, tradition or whatever people of that society might have called it, was something that was handed down from one generation to another.

Horner reminds us that tradition refers both to the process of handing down from generation to generation, and some thing, custom, or thought process that is passed on over time. Thus we can say, for instance, that a multi-generational dance is an item of custom, a performance, and at the same time, such a dance is an occasion for the passing of the technique and the feeling of the performance from older to younger generations. Until recently, this handing on was a natural, unself-conscious part of the dance. Until the continuity was threatened, until the possibility of the inability to hand things down arose, people were not so self-conscious of the process of the handing on of tradition.

Ask the students: Are souvenirs sold in museum and tourist shops (even in the local *palengke*) art? Is textile used in

everyday life art? Do Catholic rituals like processions have artistic significance?

The discussions that will ensue will only prove that we cannot really jettison the diverse and discrepant forms into one encompassing definition of art. Art is always constructed by contexts. If your students are now more aware of the significance of context as the frame from where we situate our definition and valuation of art, then that is a good starting point. You can enrich this understanding by presenting a mix of various context, and by encouraging them to implicate history in their analysis.

Culminating activity

Ask the students to write an essay of no more than 500 words elaborating on their own definition of art.

Culminating activity 2

Divide the class into groups. Each group should do a desk research on a GAMABA artist. Choose from the long roster of awardees since 1992, the year it was institutionalized. Ask the class to pay attention to the biography of the artist, whether living or deceased. What were his/her accomplishments? What did he/she contribute to the community? What legacy did he/she leave or continue to implant in the community? What forms of action can the community make to promote the legacy of the GAMABA awardee?

Now how are the GAMABA awards different from the National Artist Awards?



MODULE 2

VIEWING GUIDES

EPISODE 1

Panata at Panalangin: Ang mga Manunubli sa Talumpok Silangan, Batangas City

Pre-viewing activities

Part 1. You may ask the viewers the following questions.

How have you encountered dance? We encounter dance as various experiences such as

1) displays of popular culture in places such as the malls and town plazas; 2) in school, as a subject taught and as co-curricular events; 3) in religious festivals; and 4) in the so-called “high culture” where dance is performed in big venues, often catering to the elite.

What can you say about foreign influences in our dance forms, as expressed in the four examples above?

Let's focus on our religious festivals. Have you seen dance integrated into the festivities? Do you see it as a form of worship, as a way of honoring the divine? As a mechanism for displaying and performing faith?

You may consult some materials concerning *ati-atihan* and *sinulog* as the more popular dances that circulate in social media.

Readings for the Teacher and Facilitator

Ness, Sally Anne. *Body, Movement, and Culture: Kinesthetic and Visual Symbolism in a Philippine Community*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992.

Ness provides an ethnographic account of *sinulog*, the popular dance honoring the Santo Niño of Cebu. She discusses its various styles, and how each is hewed to a particular context significant to the rite and ritual of honoring a saint.

Oracion, Enrique. (2012): The Sinulog Festival of Overseas Filipino Workers in Hong Kong: Meanings and Contexts, *Asian Anthropology*, 11:1, pp. 107-127.

Accessed from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1683478X.2012.10600859> & https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261692926_The_Sinulog_Festival_of_Overseas_Filipino_Worker

s_in_Hong_Kong_Meanings_and_Contexts/link/
5b4dec550f7e9b240fe62082/download

Oracion maps the evolution of dance transported from its local roots to a diasporic space like Hongkong where a good number of Filipinos serve as OFWs.

Multimedia materials:

Legarda, Loren. [April 3, 2018]. "Dancing with Vessels."
DAYAW, Episode 4, Season 4. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/TuWz0CvTq3s>

Catholics and Cultures. [August 5, 2016] "Obando Fertility Dance and the Feast of Three Saints. Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/PyreXu4tvzY>

Viewing:

"Panata at Panalangin: Ang mga Manunubli ng Talumpok Silangan, Siyudad ng Batangas"

Locality: Sitio Sapangan, Talumpok Silangan, Siyudad ng Batangas

Ethnolinguistic Group: Tagalog

- Language: Tagalog

Post-Viewing Activity

You may ask the following questions to your students:

- What is subli to the people of Barangay Talumpok Silangan, city of Batangas?
- What is the context of subli? How is it important to their lives?
- How is the socio-economic status of the residents of Barangay Talumpok Silangan relevant to the practice of subli?
- What factors constrain the continued practice of subli?
- As a tradition, how was it handed down? What does school have to do with its flourishing?
- Do you see its demise? If it lives on, do you think it will be different from how the older generation display the dance?
- In a time of intense uncertainty, social strife, and economic upheaval, what does it take to make a cultural tradition live and survive?

Supplemental Reading:

Mirano, Elena R. *Subli: Isang Sayaw sa Apat na Tinig*. Manila: Museo ng Kalinangang Pilipino-Cultural Centre of the Philippines, 1989.

Mirano's work is a pioneering research on the subli in the lowlands of Batangas, specifically in the towns of Agoncillo and Bauan. While it has no mention of the particular subli in Talumpok Silangan, it nonetheless tackles the history of the subli, drawn from archival sources, and elaborates on the construct of *laro* and *panata*.

EPISODE 2

Huni at Himig: Ang Sludoy ni Bé Tunding

Pre-viewing exercises

You may ask the viewers the following questions:

How have you encountered music in your own life?
What are the instances you have encountered music and enjoyed it?

What unusual musical instruments have you encountered and indeed enjoyed? Have you encountered Southeast Asian instruments?

What is your idea of a musician?

Bring a musical instrument to class, if possible.

You may refer to parallel text and multi-media resources to encourage learning more about the indigenous communities of the T'boli.

Readings:

Manolete Mora. *Myth, Mimesis and Magic in the Music of the T'boli*, Philippines. Manila: Ateneo Press, 2005.

The book explores the musical sensibilities of the T'boli people, how the environment shapes and contributes to their musical practice, and how community life nurtures such practice. Mora privileges the notion of *utom*- a mystical and magical concept that guides the spirit world of the creative T'boli, affirming why most of these musical creations thrive on the concept of improvisation.

Casal, Gabriel S. *T-boli art in its socio-historical concept*. Makati: Ayala Museum, 1977.

The author lived in a T'boli community and based his accounts from extensive fieldwork and interviews with leaders of the creative communities. His particular interest is visual craft and the design that is embodied in the artefacts of material culture. A significant part of the book is how the author mapped out the history of the T'boli people, starting from the pre-Islamic

culture to the present, essaying social, political, and economic structures that underpin T'boli life.

Multi-media resources:

Manolete, M. (1997). **Utom, summoning the spirit: Music in the T'boli heartland.** On The world series [Compact Disc]. New York: Rykodisc/360 Degrees Production

Geoghagan, Alan.[undated.] "Preserving Culture: The T'boli of Mindanao," Part 1, Retrieved **from** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ObQqGCPuv4>

Geoghagan, Alan.[undated.] Preserving Culture: The T'boli of Mindanao, Part 2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=grYCWYNrG_0

Viewing: "Huni at Himig"

Locality: Lamalahak, Lake Sebu, South Cotabato

Ethnolinguistic group: T'boli

Language: T'boli

Post-viewing Activity

You may ask the following questions:

Try to conjecture how Be Tunding acquired her musical skills. Do you think this amplifies the idea that traditions are inherited and passed on from one generation to the next.

Search the internet or parallel platforms for musical traditions that resemble the s'ludoy. Should you be lucky to identify one or two, trace the similarities and differences.

The episode's narrative hints at the challenges of keeping alive the playing of the s'ludoy. What institutions are mentioned that could help enable the tradition? What institutions can still be tapped or created to help spur the tradition of the s'ludoy?

Do you think the younger generation will pick up the tradition of the sludoy? If yes, do you think it will closely resemble the tradition that Bae Tunding has fostered? If no, cite the reasons.

What can the state actors do to further the tradition of the sludoy? How about non-state actors?

From viewing the episode, how do you now parse the concept of vanishing traditions?
What makes them vanished?

What makes traditions vanish? What adaptive mechanisms do you foresee that will emerge to safeguard tradition or make it thrive even more?

In a time of intense uncertainty, social strife, and economic upheaval, what does it take to make a cultural tradition live and survive?

EPISODE 3

"Tres Maestras: Ang mga Manghahabi ng Binacul sa Barangay Mindoro, Vigan, Ilocos Sur"

Pre-viewing Activity

Survey the internet, particularly social media platforms such as Instagram and Pinterest, and look at multi-media materials (photos, videos, illustrations) of local fabrics used traditionally, or redesigned to suit current tastes and trends in fashion.

Ask yourselves: Why are the weavers women? What could be the reasons for this gender stratification? In traditional societies, if women performed the task of weaving, what do you think did the men do?

Compare hand-woven fabrics from the machine-woven and build a hypothesis about the differences in quality, price points, colors, designs, and function in daily life.

Tell the students that they are going to have a chance to learn how to do a type of weaving. Prepare improvised materials such as found objects like drinking straws, threads from spools, or fabric cut into thin strips.

Tie all warp strings together in a knot. Place knotted end of warp at top of strings and thread each string through a separate thread.

Push threads up to the knotted ends and weave over and under the threads. Begin realizing the pattern you have in mind.

Add a new color by tying a knot to the previous color and continue weaving. As the weaving progresses, push the woven section up and off the threads, freeing them for more weaving. Slip threads off the warp when weaving is finished. Weave the end strings into one another so they won't unravel.

Variations: Use several strands of warp through each thread. This allows for more intricate weaving. Vary materials used for weft (middle).

For further reading, you may also check the following materials:

Respicio, Norma. *Journey of a Thousand Shuttles: The Philippine Weave*. Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2015.

Respicio situates the weaving tradition in its historical timeline, presenting its beginnings as evidence by archeology, and how it flourished even during centuries of colonial rule to the present. In the introduction, Respicio summoned readers to have a more expansive view of textiles, not just mere materials for a dress but as artefacts of heritage and creative expression.

Respicio, Norma A. *Inabel: Philippine Textiles from the Ilocos region*. Manila: Art Post Asia, 2015.

The anthology celebrates the pan textile of the north, generically called the *inabel*. The entire collection shows the expanse and breadth of the tradition of women, and how it has nurtured generations of Ilokano families, from the 1800s to the present, and the motifs and themes that have sustained the tradition.

Respicio, N., Ingel, Ma. Lourdes, and Ligerio, Jeffrey James. *Tawid: The Living Treasures of Ilocos Sur*. Vigan: Sanicua Publications, 2010

The anthology delves into the many intangible cultural heritage of Ilocos Sur, to include the various weaves such as the binacul and the pinilian, as well as the famous pottery tradition in Vigan.

Multimedia resources:

“Hinabing Kasaysayan ng Kababaihan,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yByYvQ__kQ&t=449s, and work on a 300 to 500-word essay on how weaving is associated with feminine power. What does the episode teach you about indigenous knowledge? Weaving is a complex process that entails not only hand dexterity and skill with the loom but intense concentration. Somewhere in the video a discussant talked about “female intuition.”

VIEWING: “Tres Maestras”

Locality: Barangay Mindoro, Vigan, Ilocos Sur

Ethnolinguistic group: Ilokano

Language: Ilokano

Post-viewing activity

How are weaving traditions to be understood and appreciated in Philippine history and culture? What function did they serve in Philippine communities?

How would you hypothesize on the role of stratification of gender roles in traditional societies and how it was carried on in the modern times?

Do you think modernity will alter these gender roles?
Do you see men or members of the LGBT community taking on weaving as a creative and economic practice?

What hinders the younger generation from taking up binacul weaving as a source of livelihood?

What do the stories of the *tres maestras* reveal about the concept of a master weaver?

Reflect on the characters of the younger generation—Arlene, Letlet, and Vida. From what you viewed in the episode, do you think they will continue the tradition?

EPISODE 4

"KULAY AT BUHAY"

Ang Paghahabi ng Tepo sa Tandubas, Tawi-Tawi

Pre-viewing Activity

Tell your students to go to a public market and find what mats are sold there. Interview the vendor to find out the source(s), materials, costs and the characteristics of the mats they are selling. Note the design and colors of the mat. Find out with your students if there is anyone in your community who knows how to plait mats. If

there is, visit this person, and find out what you can about the plaiting of mats in your area.

Are there any other forms of weaving done in your area besides plaiting? What are these? Ask around: where do they source raw materials? How much time is spent weaving? Who weaves? What instruments are used for weaving? If your students can ask the amount of capital involved, as well as the earnings? How do they transport the mats and other weaves to the market?

You can design a powerpoint presentation using photos of various mats in the Philippines as illustrations of how mat weaving is such a popular craft all over the archipelago. In a textbook for a subject in the humanities, Fajardo and Flores (2002) attempted to map out the weaving traditions in the Philippines popular:

“A mat is a piece of material woven or put together to use as a covering, to kneel or lie on. Mat weaving is a traditional art of many cultures. In the Philippines, mats are used to sleep on or to cover the ground for *palay* to dry under the sun. Traditionally, smooth mats were used for sleeping on while the rough ones were used for grains to dry on. Now mats are made into bags, placemats, and wall hangings.

The making of mats is actually called plaiting which is weaving without a loom. Plaiting is used in the making of containers, fences and mats and a variety of shapes and designs is possible with this technique. Plaiting is practised in many parts of Southern Asia, as plant materials like *pandan* leaves and reed plants like the *sese*d and *ticog* are abundant in the tropics.

Simple tools such as a knife and stones are used for plaiting. The leaves of *pandan* plant, palm trees and grasses such as *ticog* and *sese*d are dried, stripped, boiled and dyed, dried again and bundled.

Plaiting for mats is usually in diagonal directions such that small and large plaids created. The general procedure for mat weaving is to start from the left corner moving on to the bottom and the right corner until all edges and corners are finished. There are two identical wefts—the *destral* and the *sinistral*, which are plaited one under and over the other. New wefts are added as needed to extend the old wefts as they become too short. Patterns are created by adding destral and sinistral wefts at predetermined points.

There are many different types of mats based on the raw material, dyes and design in the Philippines. Undisputedly the most interesting are the mats from Tawi-Tawi, a province in the Sulu archipelago, specifically those by the Badjao, who are boat dwellers, and by the Samal, who occupy the bigger islands in Tawi-Tawi and are engaged in trade and agriculture. The mats woven by the two groups are distinguishable by their design and use of colors. Samal mats have muted colors and are softer to the touch because of the repeated beating in the preparation of the fiber. The glossy effect on the surface is achieved by diluting the dye with some coconut oil. Samal mats have stripes, squares, checkered and zig-zag patterns. Badjao mats are more exuberant in color and have stylized symbols such as crab designs or boat forms, moving water or marine life forms.

Laminas Island in Tawi-Tawi is known to produce mats of excellent craftsmanship, pliability and fine design. After a mat with an intricate design is finished, another undyed plain mat is woven and used to line the back of the more decorative piece. The lining usually extends by two to three inches beyond the border of the main mat.

Most of the mats woven in Mindanao are characterized by linear and geometric designs. The colors used in Tausug mat weaving are bright and designs are intricately woven together in rhythmical geometric patterns. The Maranaos weave rectangular mats and round-shaped mats with spiral design and colors are usually magenta with yellow and green. The T'boli weave mats which are used to line the dais in their houses. Generally uncolored, they are occasionally dyed. One of the most durable are the Tagbanua mats from Palawan because their borders are carefully edged by closely weaving them with smaller rattan strips. A similar tradition is found among the Dyak people of Sarawak in Borneo.

Mats are also woven in Basey, Samar. The raw material is *ticog* grass which grows profusely in the area. Basically, these mats have a border design and a central motif which is usually a stylized rendition of flowers, with colors ranging from monochrome to polychromatic work that may be likened to painting. Using a technique similar to embroidery, the colors are inserted after the basic plain background mat has been fully woven. The

mats can be monogrammed. Some mats feature the Philippine map, Leyte-Samar landmarks such as the San Juanico Bridge, and lately, portraits. Recent designs have appropriated motifs from Mindanao such as the mandala motif in the Yakan fabrics woven in Basilan.

Mats abound in the other regions of the Philippines. The island of Romblon produces delicate mats with lace-like edges made from *buri* palm. They are used during wedding dances to define the space for dancing. In Bolinao, Pangasinan *buri* is used to make double-layered mats with one side using a plaid colored design and the other plain.

Bicol mats are made out of a palm called *karagamoy* which comes in two shades, a natural straw color and a deep brown shade due to its having been soaked in sea water to make it impervious to insects.

Runo reeds are used for mats woven in the Cordilleras. The mats are used to line earthen floors so people can sleep on the ground.

There are as many different types of mats as there are raw materials available in

different regions in the Philippines. There are also as many designs depicted in the mats. The technique of weaving dictates the created forms, which have characteristics based on the limitations of how they are made. Thus, the mats have design motifs referred to as being *technomorphic*, i.e., form bound by technique. Technomorphic designs are those shapes or forms created on account of the nature, characteristics and limitations of the technique used in the visual arts and then specifically focus on the art of mat weaving in order to understand the role of medium and technique in the creation of the art object.” (p. 24-26)

Readings:

Nocheseda, Elmer. “The Art of Pusô: Palm Leaf in the Vocabularios in the Visayas in the Sixteenth to Nineteenth Centuries in the Philippines,” *Philippine Studies* 59: 2 (2011: 251-272). Accessed from <https://www.academia.edu/19757167/>
[The Art of Puso Palm Leaf Art in the Visayas in Vocabularios of the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries](#)

Nocheseda, Elmer. *Rara: Art and Tradition of Mat Weaving in the Philippines*. Habi: Manila, 2016.

VIEWING: “Kulay at Buhay”

Locality: Ungos Matata, Tandabus Island, Tawi-Tawi

Ethnolinguistic group: Sama

Language: Sama

Post-viewing activity

From the pre-viewing activity, ask the students to compare the mats that they have seen in their local markets with the tepo mats made in Tandubas.

Ask the students the following question to broaden their engagement with tepo mat weaving:

1. What if they run out of pandan, the main resource used in the making of a tepo mat? From this thought, try to build a hypothesis on how environmental resources endemic to the locality frame the tradition of mat-making?
2. How did the women learn plaiting mats? This is significant, much in the earlier episodes where the younger generation take to learning a craft not by rigid rules.
3. Ask the students to imagine a “marketing plan” for the women weavers of Tandubas. The marketing

plan should consider the value of human labor expended in the making of a tepo, the cost of raw materials, and possibly the cost of transportation that may possibly expended when the tepo mats are transported out of Tandubas island. Do you think tepo mat weaving will always be a gendered practice? What could alter these traditions?

Further readings

Young-Leslie, Heather. (2007). "...Like A Mat Being Woven". *Pacific Arts*. 3: 5. 115-127. 10.2307/23412061. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260142286>