

Teaching Subli to the youth of Bauan, Batangas, Philippines

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Abstract. *Schools and other Academic institutions are expected to be at the forefront in the preservation of local traditions by transferring knowledge and valuing of local culture to the next generation. Subli is a centuries-old tradition originating from Bauan, Batangas which is still continued and practiced in the present time. The main objective of the study was to explore practice of teaching Subli to student performers. Interviews with active young manunublis (Subli performers) was conducted. From the collective responses of the participants of the study, it was revealed that incorporation of teaching Subli to students shaped both the knowledge and cultural valuing of the participants. It was recommended that the institution (school) must continue encouraging more of its young students to practice the tradition.*

Keywords: *cultural practice, teaching practice, culture and education*

1. Introduction

It is believed that educational institutions, including educators, count as among the most effective agents of cultural development, change, and even transfer (Giogetti, Campbell, Arslan, 2017). Since teaching is also seen as an act that impacts the knowledge, skill, and attitude of its learners, it can only be completed if there is an effort exerted by the teacher (Agwu, 2005). Here, the learners are the main focus of the entire educational process (Nwani, 2005) wherein he/she acquires understanding, knowledge, and preference (Lin, 2001)

The teaching of local traditions to students also require experience of the target group (Norstrand, 1967) Subli, being, more of a local religious practice and a community's prayer dance, allows certain degree of leeway for students to explore how they could participate in learning and becoming actively involved in the performance of the said tradition (Thanasoulas, 2001). This gives the learners an ability to understand what is being taught to them from the insiders perspective- teachers who actually experienced being part of the performer of subli.

2. Materials and Method

The study was conducted in Bauan, a town of the province of Batangas in the Philippines where Subli is a central part of their culture. The practice is done annually and is practiced consistently involving both the younger and older generation of dancers.

In the conduct of the study, the researchers coordinated with different organizations which specializes or incorporates Subli as part of their organization's activities. Both teachers and students who were members of these organizations became the main population source for the study. From these, participants were then selected based on experience in participating in Subli performances and number of years of involvement in the Subli performances. Only those who voluntarily gave their consent to participate in the study were included. All of the participants signed a consent form wherein the researchers also assured them that their participation will be handled with utmost confidentiality.

Interviews were done with the participants individually to be able to gather a more spontaneous data as well as concrete stories of their experience of teaching (for the teachers) and being taught (for the students) Subli. The interview was transcribed and analyzed. Themes were then drawn during analysis.

3.Results and Discussion

Subli is a practice that contains the historical and cultural essence of a local population. Thus, there is a greater expectation in teaching the tradition, First : the teacher must be knowledgeable of the motivations, objectives, and cultural relevance behind the tradition. Second, they should have the actual experience of participating in the said tradition multiple times. A combination of knowledge and experience is expected in order for one Subli practitioner to be qualified to engage in teaching the tradition to the younger generation.

3.1Teacher's knowledge

A teachers knowledge of Subli would greatly help in setting where their students are coming from and where the teachers are. They will connect the practice to the student's previous knowledge. Also, they can connect their own experiences to that of the students (Single, 1991). This approach helps the establish the relevance of the students' consciousness and promote learning the tradition as a crucial cultural practice rather than simply to have the capacity to 'perform' Subli when the occasion arises. This is reflected in what participant 6 shared :

“Ishinshare ko yung knowledge ko about dito. Nagtuturo ako kapag kinukuha. Kasi sino sino pa bang magtutulungan para mapanatili ang tradisyon kung hindi tayo tayo din naman diba? (I share my knowledge about this (Subli). I teach them whenever I am tasked to do so. We should help each other in preserving the tradition . No one else should do that but us.)”

The extent of knowledge expected of one teaching Subli is rooted more the essence of Subli as a tradition that teachers identify as critical and should be preserved. There is also the emphasis on the interpretation of the teacher of the execution of the movements, and the rhythm and how it fits the whole performance. That interpretation is the content of what they teach their students.

3.2 Teacher’s experience in performing Subli

A teacher’s capacity to link her experiences to that of his/her student’s will inherently be possible only if they’ve experienced being a direct participant in performing what they are teaching. Thus, the teachers being past performers themselves enhance the students’ learning process by seemingly creating a space that both students and teachers can freely participate using the same context. This could be gleaned from what was shared by the participant:

*“Natutunan ko po ang Subli sa pinakauna po namin moderator na si Ma’am *****... sa kanya ko po natutunan saka po dun sa mga lumang ah mananayaw ng Subli ng Bauan Tech na inabutan ko pa po (I learned Subli through our first moderator. I learned it from her and from the older dancers of Subli from Bauan Tech.)*

3.3 Learning Subli through Organizations

Organizations play a vital role in the cultivation and adaptation of certain culture and tradition. With the rise of the new media, youth were somehow affected on how they adapt to the society. It is in this situation that organization can act as a possible partner in teaching the youth (Valeeva and Rybakova, 2014).

Participants revealed that they were once part of an organization, particularly a group of dancers intended for Subli. Since they shared ideas and views about the tradition, it was easier to teach them Subli. According to what Participant 1 shared, the organization helped her know more about the tradition. Both participants 2 and 6 also mentioned that they were once part of an organization which were sent to different competitions or events for performances. Having shared experiences coupled with mentoring and an environment that welcomes what the participants already value encourages active participation in learning the tradition (Holtom, Watkins, J. and Siladi; Hirsh, 2005; Henderson, 2005;).

3.4 Participating in Subli performance as a school requirement

The participants of this group shared to the researchers that they were able to acquire and practice the tradition because it was a school requirement. Additional points for extra-curricular encouraged them to become a performer of the tradition. Majority of the youth participants admitted that they just decided to join because it is a requirement from their school. They said that they started performing Subli during as gradeschoolers. They also mentioned that are equivalent extra-curricular points on their participation on the performance.

Upon the order of municipality, students were required to participate in the annual Sublian festival. Thus, it was easier too convince the students to learn and perform the tradition. Parents supported this mandate which made it even easier for schools to enlist students to join the performances.

3.5 Participating in Subli because of Competitions

Making this tradition a competition helps Subli become a critical and relevant cultural practice to the students. The participants believed that through the conduct of competitions, the tradition was welcomed by students and they became very eager to learn Subli. Schools hold annual competitions of subli performances as shared by a participant, “Ang aming mga studyante ay sumamasali ng contest ng Subli (our students join subli performance competitions).

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

The research revealed the ways through which Subli is taught to youth participants/students was a combination of the community’s efforts (Organizations), the local government’s support, and the students own eagerness to participate in Subli. Organizations aided in teaching the tradition since research participants believed that through organizations, the performance of the tradition could be taught more effectively through linking the experience of teachers to the experience of the students. Also, competitions also amplified the tradition’s relevance to the students, making them eager to learn Subli. Teachers own experiences as participants of Subli further enhanced the learning experience and enriched the knowledge gained by students who participated in the performance of Subli. Also, being part of the performers of subli also emphasized to the students the value of their traditons. Thus, it was recommended that the institution (school) must continue encouraging more of its young students to practice the tradition. However, to avoid extreme modifications and to preserve the original context .

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