Objectives

To demonstrate the significance of pottery and pot-making in Filipino culture and to enable students to compare pottery making in the Philippines with other Southeast Asian countries. The activity thereby instills awareness of how pottery in the Philippines differs from that elsewhere in the region - in order to inspire appreciation for cultural diversity.

Activities

1. Warm-up question and answer session

Ask the students a number of questions to get them interested in the subject matter. For example:

- Are pots made in the town you are from?
- What are the pots made of?
- How are they made?
- Are they the same as the pots made in other towns or in other countries?
- Why do you think they put designs and other symbols on the finished pots?
- What meanings do you think these designs have?

Starting with what the students already know will help the students connect with the new information being provided to them.

2. Inspiration through music

Students listen to or sing a traditional Mannamili song about pot-making and the people who make pots. This will give students enthusiasm for the topic and motivate them to learn about pottery. The teacher/facilitator should ask the students how they have interpreted the meaning of the traditional song.
Mannamili Song

Philippines Version

I. Taga away kami
Nga agdamdamili
Naragsak ti biagmi
Awan dukdukot mi
No pay aduda’t
Manglalais kadakami
Naragsak kam la
Nga agdamdamili

II. Tay nakilnet nga daga
Pitpitem nga umuna
Danggayan mi’t kankanta
Takiagmi napipigsa
Rigat bannog mi
Di mi ijingina
Gapu ta adda
Ni manong ditoy denna

III. Banga, dalikan sukogen
Pitpitem, palinisem
Tapno maay-ayo
Magargari tay amin
Dagiti gumatang
Sabali nga lugar
Ket intay maragpat
Biag nga narang-ay

English Version

I. We are from the barrio
Potter of pots
We live a happy life
We don’t get affected
Or become troubled
Even if we’re belittled
We are always happy
And contented making pots

II. This sticky soil
While flattening it first
We accompany it with songs
With strong hands
Difficulties and hardships
We don’t mind
Because my beloved
Is here with me

III. Pots, clay, stoves
Mould it, flatten it
Smoothen it
So the customers
Will become attracted to buy it
And so the potter
Will also have
A better life to live

3. Illustration and Explanation

Show the students pictures of various types of completed pots with different designs (pots from Vigan and comparative pots from elsewhere) and pictures of people engaged in pot-making. Explain what materials are used in pot making, what pots are used for and were used for in the past, and talk about the differences between pots made in the Philippines and those made overseas. Looking at the pictures and learning about the pots will inspire students to want to make pots themselves.

4. Demonstration

Students watch a demonstration of pot-makers making pots (if students are able to visit a pot-making site) or the teacher will demonstrate how to make a pot.
5. Pot Making
Students follow the steps below, guided by the teacher.

Steps in Pot Making

1. Look at examples of pots and decide on a design and how it will be decorated.
2. Shape the wet clay into different forms.
3. Place the ready forms into a very hot open fire or oven. (klin).
4. Decorate the pots using traditional designs as models.
5. Display and compare the completed pots.

Materials required
- information about pottery and pot-making (both in the Philippines and in Southeast-Asia)
- pictures of pottery, pots and pictures of pot-making;
- clay (putik);
- water;
- paint and other materials for decorating the pots.

Synthesis
To consolidate what the students have learned, at the end of the class ask the students the following questions and discuss the answers as a group.

- What are the materials needed in pot making?
- What were pots used for in Vigan in the past? What are they used for nowadays?
- Compare pots from Vigan with pots from other towns in the Philippines
  - what is different about pots from Vigan, what is the same?
- Compare pots from other Southeast Asian countries with pots from the Philippines
  - what is different, how are they the same?
- Why should we preserve these pots and these designs? Why should pot-making continue?
All of the steps in the process of pottery production are done using skills that are passed down from generation to generation and are perfected through long years of practice without benefit of written manuals or established quality control procedures.

Clay type
The type of clay used affects the colour and consistency of the pieces produced. The clay used in Vigan is found in the surrounding area and the pieces produced using it have a deep dark brown, almost burnt sheen.

Working the clay
Making a clay pot begins with kneading the wet clay with your hands until the clay is of the right consistency. Every morning the clay is prepared and is kept in a mound in the shade, covered by sack-cloth until it is needed.

The potter's wheel
After working the clay the next step is the clay-modelling process - using the potter's wheel. The potter carefully positions a lump of clay on the centre of the potter's wheel and starts turning the wheel.

The wheel is large and very heavy. In olden times, the wheel was made of wood, today it is made of concrete. The potter pushes the wheel with his foot, steadily increasing the wheel speed. When enough speed is reached, the potter works the clay lump shaping it with his hands. He uses one hand to mould the exterior while the other hand works the interior.

The kiln
Kiln baking (firing) comes next. The kiln is very big, over ten metres long, and is made of bricks. The kiln fire is fed with wood from the Cacawate tree, which grows locally. There is no temperature control in the kiln. Firing the pottery takes about three days, but the only way to be sure of when to stop feeding firewood into the kiln and to open it up, is by experience. Determining the length of time needed for firing is a very critical decision. If the kiln is opened too early, the pieces, not sufficiently fired, will crumble. If the kiln is opened too late the pieces will be overcooked and get brittle or even break.

For further information see the following internet sites
- www.unesco.org/whc
- www.42explore.com/pottery.htm
- www.asia.si.edu/collections/southeastAsianHome.htm (Browse SE-Asian art)
- http://isis.csuhayward.edu/cesmith/virtmus/Philippines/Crafts/Ceramics.htm
- www.imagesphilippines.com
- www.ayalamuseum.com

World Heritage in Young Southeast Asian Hands
Second Sub-Regional Workshop: Introducing the Arts for Teaching on the Historic Environment
Heritage Education art Activity Sheets

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