Improving The Knowledge of Chinese Culture Through Paper Cutting Art Training

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ABSTRACT

The art of cutting paper or China cutting paper is one of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (WBTB) that has been recognized by UNESCO. Culture is the legacy of our ancestors passed down from generation to generation. This paper cutting training was intended to increase students' knowledge of Chinese culture. The method used was to provide training and socialization about Chinese cultural knowledge. The training participants were 80 students from various universities in Pontianak. The response of the participants in this training was excellent. The participants were very enthusiastic about participating in all training activities. Moreover, after they mastered the paper cutting technique and produced their work, they were delighted. They hope that this training activity can be carried out even longer and more varied time in the future.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural knowledge in learning Mandarin is one element of knowledge that must be mastered by students. The cultural activities carried out to increase students' motivation for Chinese cultural arts was training for the art of Chinese paper cutting. The art of cutting paper, commonly known as "Jian Zhi," is China's most famous folk art. The art of cutting paper is a treasure trove of traditional Chinese culture, which has a very long history and is the local people's basic strength (Deng Zhilin, 2008). Regarding the origin of the paper clippings, it can be said that it is difficult to trace. Some say the art of cutting paper comes from ancient religious ceremonies and rituals. In ancient times, ancient people used scissors to form various human and animal figures buried with their bodies or burned in funeral ceremonies. With the hope that the figure represented by the paper cutouts can accompany the person who dies. The art of cutting paper has also developed, where paper cutouts are more widely used as decoration and fine art items (Zhao Zhenxi, 2012).

According to historical records, women during the Tang Dynasty used paper cutouts as headdresses. Some people cut paper in the shape of a butterfly to symbolize the coming of spring. Entering the Song Dynasty in the 12th century, paper cutouts were used as decoration for gift packages. Paper cutouts are also affixed to windows, doors or walls of houses, lamps, lanterns, and so on. During the Song dynasty, craftsmen who practiced paper cutouts appeared as their profession. Hand amateur paper shears do paper cutouts only need scissors and a piece of paper, but those who are professionals need various types of scissors and carving knives.
The paper cutting technique is the simplest craft that is very easy to make with a complex yet beautiful result. This paper cutting technique originally came from China, shortly after discovering paper in around 200 BC. Paper cutting is naturally becoming more popular than the earlier techniques of cutting leather and silver sheets or cutting copper foil. Simple paper cutouts can be cut directly, while complex drawings have to be painted or printed on paper before cutting them. The themes of paper cuttings can take the form of flowers, birds, insects, fish, fairy tale figures, literary works, and Peking Opera actors' makeup. Anyway, everything can be used as a paper cutout theme. Another place for its customs and aesthetics. Likewise, the characteristics of the paper cutouts. Paper cutouts in North China appear rough and sturdy, while paper cutouts in South China are smoother (Ananda Al Givari, M., Subiantoro, B., & Sukarman, 2018).

The paper cutting technique is a type of paper cutting art originating from China. Papercutting techniques require tools and materials such as paper, pencils, cutting tools or cutters, and glue, which have benefits for developing skills in the arts and improving children's concentration skills (Rahman et al., 2019) A., & Mujiyono, 2020).

This training activity is intended to increase students' knowledge of Chinese culture, especially the art of paper cutting. The art of paper cutting is one of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (WBTB) that has been recognized by UNESCO. Besides, this training activity is also useful for students who have artistic talents that can be developed into paper cutting businesses marketed to the public.

METHOD

Community Service Activities were carried out at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Tanjungpura University. The subjects of the service were 80 Mandarin students in Pontianak higher education.

The service method used the following stages:
1. Observation
   The community service team conducted observations to universities in Pontianak with Mandarin courses in their tertiary institutions and invited students to participate in paper cutting art training activities.
2. Socialization
   The service team disseminated Chinese cultural knowledge through the art of paper cutting by providing training to students on the importance of knowledge of Chinese culture.
3. Development
   The service team guided students by directly practicing how to cut Chinese paper techniques.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The community service team first surveyed universities in Pontianak. The service team surveyed to determine if college students in Pontianak were interested in Chinese cultural knowledge about the art of paper cutting. The survey results obtained that many college students in Pontianak were interested in taking part in this paper cutting art training.

Before starting the training activity, the speaker explained the history, origins of the art of cutting paper and explained the techniques or ways of cutting Chinese paper. Before starting training activities, each speaker introduced himself first and then delivered the training material to the participants. Participants who were practicing paper cutting for the first time seemed very enthusiastic, serious and did what the speaker instructed. The tools used to make paper cutting art were red paper, scissors, cutter, glue, board, and pictures that have been prepared by the service team.

At the end of this activity, the speaker allowed the participants to ask some questions so that the training activity looks lively and interesting. The training participants were very enthusiastic to ask about knowledge and techniques that must be considered when cutting paper. At the end of the activity, the Community Service Team selected 20 of the best paper cutting artworks to be displayed again to the training participants.
Fig. 1 The Participant Practicing the Paper Cutting Technique

Fig. 2 The Work of A University Student in Pontianak

Fig. 3 Results of the Training Participants' Work
Participants who took part in this training activity welcomed the Community Service activities held by the lecturers and students of the Mandarin Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Tanjungpura University. They appreciated this activity, considering that this activity is one way to increase knowledge of Chinese culture. They could also master the art of paper cutting and
produced their work to give them their satisfaction. They hope that similar activities could be held again in a longer and more varied time to achieve maximum results in the future.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Through the implementation of community service activities, it can be concluded that this activity can increase students’ knowledge of Chinese culture, namely the art of Chinese paper cutting. This training activity can also open students’ insights that the art of paper cutting has an artistic value that can be an ornament of Chinese cultural nuances. The suggestions that need to be considered are the need to involve more members of the service team to teach the art of Chinese paper cutting and introduce paper cutting techniques with a higher level of difficulty.

REFERENCES


