

## UPKEEPING CULTURAL TAPESTRY

*by:*

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The richness of the past strengthens today's culture; its influence knows no bounds as it is continuously passed down from one generation to the next. To further imprint such invaluable culture to the future generation, it has become a vital part of the curriculum enclosed within the Music, Arts, Physical Education and Health (MAPEH) subject. Among these cultures are the traditional folk dances, which are also a form of both physical exercise and artistic expression and, more so, hold significant cultural and historical value.

The Philippines has a diverse population, and each region has its own traditions and dances. Philippine folk dances provide a window into the nation's history by exhibiting the influences of indigenous peoples, Spanish colonization, and other civilizations. Students develop greater pride in Filipino identity and a more profound respect for their heritage by studying these dances. In order to retain the nation's cultural history, these traditions must be preserved and passed on to new generations.

The inclusion of traditional dances in the curriculum enhances physical fitness and well-being. These dances demand coordination, balance, and stamina, which keeps children active and healthy. Folk dances give a pleasant and engaging way to increase physical activity and address health-related issues like obesity and stress in an age where sedentary habits and technology are on the rise.

Aside from the health benefits, it also forms strong bonds among students since most folk dances are performed in groups. Learning these dances enhances students' ability to work together, communicate effectively, and build strong peer relationships. Additionally, performing in front of an audience, whether in school or public events, can boost students' self-confidence and self-esteem, contributing to their overall emotional development.

Studying Philippine folk dances can also serve as a bridge between history and culture. It allows students to understand the historical context in which these dances originated and how they evolved over time. For example, dances like the Tinikling reflect the colonial influence of Spanish and African cultures, while the Subli is deeply rooted in Filipino spirituality. This connection between history and culture fosters a more comprehensive understanding of the nation's past and its impact on the present.

These cultural treasures made the Philippines we know today, and embedding these within our students not only preserves our cultural heritage but also promotes physical fitness, fosters social and emotional development, connects history and culture, and encourages cultural diversity and tolerance. These dances reflect the Philippines' rich history and vibrant traditions, and by teaching them to high school students, we ensure that this heritage is passed on to future generations, enriching the nation's cultural tapestry.

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