

TECH-INTEGRATED FITNESS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND MATATAG CURRICULUM

by:

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Integrating technology into fitness and physical education represents a significant advancement in the educational landscape of the Philippines. This progressive approach combines the benefits of traditional physical education with modern technological tools, thereby enhancing student engagement, motivation, and overall fitness levels. The adoption of tech-integrated fitness in schools is driven by the need to address physical inactivity among Filipino youth, promote lifelong healthy habits, and leverage the growing availability of digital resources. This initiative aligns well with the Department of Education's (DepEd) MATATAG Curriculum, which emphasizes quality education and the holistic development of students (DepEd, 2023).

Firstly, incorporating technology into physical education offers innovative ways to engage students who may not be naturally inclined toward physical activity. Traditional physical education classes often fail to capture the interest of all students, particularly those who may not excel in sports. By integrating technology, such as fitness apps, wearable devices, and interactive games, educators can create a more inclusive environment that caters to diverse interests and abilities. For instance, wrist-worn technology is becoming one of the most straightforward strategies to implement in classrooms to help combat the problem of obesity (Nation-Grainger, 2017). These devices can make exercise more appealing and personalized, encouraging more students to participate actively in physical education classes (Steedman, 2023).

Furthermore, enhanced physical education using technology offers valuable information that can be utilized to monitor and enhance student fitness. Fitness trackers

and smartwatches can gather information about health metrics such as the number of steps taken, heart rate, and calories burned. This data can be analyzed to tailor fitness programs to meet student's needs, ensuring each student receives appropriate challenges and support. For example, wrist-worn monitors can provide extensive feedback, creating a connection by providing instant feedback and supporting student competence through competition and self-monitoring (Nation-Grainger, 2017; Steedman, 2023). Keeping track of improvement over time assists students in establishing and reaching individual fitness objectives, promoting a feeling of fulfillment and drive to sustain an active way of life.

In the Philippines, technology has the potential to fill the gap by granting access to a diverse array of fitness content and knowledge, especially in areas where access to high-quality physical education resources may be scarce. Online platforms and apps offer instructional videos, virtual fitness classes, and interactive workouts that can be accessed anytime and anywhere. This flexibility is particularly beneficial in rural areas where resources and qualified physical education teachers may be scarce. By leveraging technology, schools can provide students access to high-quality fitness education, regardless of their geographic location (Steedman, 2023).

Furthermore, integrating technology in physical education aligns with the broader educational goals of the Philippine government. Incorporating information and communication technology (ICT) in the curriculum to enhance educational outcomes is acknowledged by the Department of Education (DepEd). The MATATAG Curriculum, which stands for "MAking the curriculum relevant to produce competent and job-ready, active, and responsible citizens; taking steps to accelerate the delivery of basic education facilities and services; TAKing good care of learners by promoting learner well-being, inclusive education, and a positive learning environment; and Giving support to teachers to teach better, supports initiatives that foster holistic development" (DepEd, 2023). Tech-integrated fitness programs support this initiative by promoting digital literacy alongside physical health. Students learn to use technology responsibly and effectively, acquiring

essential skills in the modern world. This holistic approach to education ensures students are well-prepared for academic and personal success (Steedman, 2023).

Despite the numerous benefits, implementing tech-integrated fitness in physical education also presents challenges that must be addressed. Many schools, especially in disadvantaged areas, still face a significant challenge when accessing technology and the internet. Government and private sector partnerships must provide the necessary infrastructure and resources to overcome this. Additionally, teachers must be adequately trained to integrate technology into their teaching practices effectively. Continuous professional development and support are crucial to ensure educators can utilize technology to its fullest potential (Gawrisch et al., 2020; Steedman, 2023).

Tech-integrated fitness in physical education represents a transformative approach to promoting physical activity and health among Filipino students. By leveraging modern technological tools, educators can create engaging, personalized, and accessible fitness programs that cater to diverse student needs. While challenges remain, strategic investments in infrastructure and teacher training can pave the way for successfully implementing tech-integrated fitness programs. Ultimately, this innovative approach aligns with the broader educational goals of the Philippines and the MATATAG Curriculum, fostering a generation of digitally literate and physically active individuals (Steedman, 2023).

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