

EMPOWERING LEARNERS THROUGH MAPEH: STRATEGIES AND INSIGHTS IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION

by:

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What is MAPEH in our curriculum? How significant is this subject for our learners? This subject, which comprises music, arts, physical education, and health, promotes the holistic development of learners by integrating creativity, physical wellness, emotional intelligence, and health literacy. According to the Department of Education (DepEd, 2020), MAPEH enhances not only cognitive growth but also values formation and personal discipline—key traits in developing 21st-century learners.

Despite its value, teaching MAPEH poses several challenges in junior high school settings. A study by Medina and Penetrante (2021) noted that many schools face shortages in equipment, facilities, and teaching materials. Teachers often need to teach all four components, even if they specialize in only one or two. This limits instructional depth and impacts student engagement.

To address these issues, research suggests that experiential learning is effective in MAPEH. Activities such as music performances, school-based health campaigns, sports tournaments, and art exhibits help learners apply knowledge in authentic settings (Kolb, 2015). These activities increase the value and long-term impact of what is being taught.

Technology integration also supports effective MAPEH instruction. Cruz et al. (2020) found that the use of digital platforms—such as music composition apps, fitness trackers, and online art tools—enhanced student engagement and content retention. These tools are especially useful in schools with limited physical resources.

An interdisciplinary approach further enriches learning. The integration of MAPEH with subjects like Araling Panlipunan, English, or Science enriches students' overall learning. For instance, exploring indigenous music and dance alongside history lessons fosters both cultural appreciation and academic relevance (UNESCO, 2019).

Teacher professional development is equally important. Continuous training in content-specific pedagogy, classroom strategies, and localized material development ensures more effective instruction. DepEd's Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) encourage the use of contextualized and relevant learning experiences that reflect students' community and culture (DepEd, 2020).

Additionally, recognizing student talent and encouraging participation in school-wide MAPEH activities promote a positive learning culture. Celebrating creativity and physical wellness through festivals, sports meets, and advocacy campaigns boosts learner confidence and strengthens school-community engagement.

In conclusion, while teaching MAPEH in junior high school presents significant challenges, it also offers valuable opportunities to support holistic learner development. Through experiential learning, use of technology, cross-curricular integration, and ongoing teacher support, MAPEH can fulfill its transformative role in Philippine education.

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