

REVIVING TRADITIONAL FILIPINO GAMES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION: A PATH TO CULTURAL PRESERVATION AND HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

by:

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As a Senior High School PE teacher in the Philippines, I've often noticed how children today are more inclined towards modern, high-tech activities. Whether it's playing video games, using social media, or getting involved in global sports, the traditional Filipino games seem to be fading into the background. But as someone who has witnessed the power of these games in my own school and community, I truly believe that it's time to reintroduce them. Not only are these games an important part of our heritage, but they also offer unique benefits for our students' physical, mental, and social development.

Traditional Filipino games like patintero, tumbang preso, luksong tinik, and sipa are not just games; they're windows into our culture. I remember playing *patintero* with my neighbors as a child, running around and laughing, while learning how to strategize and work as a team. These games have been passed down for generations, but with the rise of modern sports and technology, many of these beloved pastimes are being forgotten. We need to bring them back into our schools, especially in Physical Education (PE).

By reviving these games, we can achieve more than just playing for fun. Here's why they're so important:

1. **Cultural Preservation:** These games are part of our heritage, a reflection of who we are as Filipinos. Teaching them in schools will not only help preserve our culture but

also give students a sense of pride in their roots. Imagine how powerful it could be for children to learn that these games were once played by their grandparents, uncles, and aunts!

2. **Physical and Mental Development:** The beauty of these traditional games is that they involve both the body and the mind. Take sipa, for example, a game where you kick a small object into the air using your foot. It helps with coordination, balance, and flexibility. Meanwhile, patintero requires strategy and quick thinking, which sharpens cognitive abilities.

3. **Building Relationships and Teamwork:** Traditional Filipino games are often played in groups, promoting teamwork and social interaction. When students work together to win a game, they develop important interpersonal skills—something that modern, individual sports don't always emphasize.

4. **Inclusivity:** The best part? These games don't require expensive equipment or fancy facilities. They can be played anywhere—on an empty street, in a backyard, or in the school yard. No matter where a child comes from, they can participate in these games and feel included.

In my experience, I've seen firsthand how these traditional games benefit students in more ways than one. Here are just a few:

1. **Physical Fitness:** The physical benefits are undeniable. Games like luksong tinik and tumbang preso get kids moving, running, jumping, and developing their agility. Not only is it great exercise, but it's also fun! Kids are more likely to stay active when they're enjoying themselves.

2. **Mental Growth:** Many traditional games require players to think on their feet, strategize, and make quick decisions. For example, in tumbang preso, players must figure

out how to knock down a can without getting tagged. This stimulates problem-solving skills and improves focus.

3. Character Building: These games are also fantastic for building character. Whether it's learning how to lose gracefully or working together to win, students develop important life skills like resilience, perseverance, and sportsmanship.

4. Stress Relief: We all know how stressful school can get, especially for our young learners. These games are a great way for students to unwind, bond with their peers, and enjoy a sense of accomplishment. Sometimes, a good game of patintero can be the perfect way to reset after a tough day of studying.

So, how do we bring these games back into the classroom? As someone who's tried this approach, here are some steps I recommend:

1. Teacher Training and Awareness: One of the first things we need is to equip teachers with the right knowledge and tools. Workshops and training sessions on the history and rules of these games can be valuable. In addition, teachers should be encouraged to create lesson plans that integrate traditional games with physical fitness objectives.

2. Curriculum Integration: Schools should make traditional Filipino games a part of their regular PE curriculum. We could set aside specific weeks or months each year to focus on these games or even have a traditional games tournament to keep things exciting.

3. Involve the Community: Involving the local community in the process can be a great way to make the revival more authentic. Local elders who grew up playing these games could be invited to share their experiences and teach the children directly. This would also bridge generational gaps and provide valuable cultural insights.

4. Parental Support: Parents are key in reinforcing the importance of traditional games outside of school. Organizing family days where parents and kids can play these games together is a wonderful way to build stronger bonds and promote cultural understanding.

5. Creating Safe Spaces for Play: For these games to thrive, schools need to ensure they have enough safe, open spaces where students can run around and play freely. Even if it's a small playground, having the right environment is crucial for making these games accessible and enjoyable for all students.

Reviving traditional Filipino games in Physical Education is more than just a way to get students moving—it's about preserving our culture, building stronger communities, and fostering personal growth. I've seen how much joy these games bring to students, and it's my hope that we, as educators, can lead the way in bringing them back.

Let's give our children the opportunity to experience the fun, camaraderie, and values that come with these games. After all, through play, we not only develop physically, but we also grow closer to our Filipino roots and to each other. I truly believe that reviving these games can have a lasting positive impact on our schools, our students, and our nation.

References:

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