

THE ROLE OF PHYSICAL FITNESS IN ENHANCING TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS AMONG MAPEH TEACHERS IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Being physically fit is not just a personal goal—it is a professional responsibility, especially for teachers of MAPEH (Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health). Among its four components, Physical Education demands active engagement and movement, making the physical fitness of MAPEH teachers critical for effective instruction, positive student modeling, and long-term health.

According to the World Health Organization (2020), regular physical activity improves cardiovascular health, muscular strength, and mental well-being, which are essential qualities for individuals in physically demanding professions. In the context of MAPEH teaching, this directly translates into better classroom performance. A teacher who is physically fit can demonstrate exercises, facilitate activities, and maintain high energy levels throughout the school day.

Moreover, research by Tsangaridou (2012) in the *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education* emphasizes the importance of modeling physical competence in Physical Education. Students tend to emulate the habits and attitudes of their teachers. When a MAPEH teacher demonstrates fitness, discipline, and enthusiasm, students are more likely to adopt active lifestyles. This is particularly crucial during adolescence, where habits formed can influence a lifetime of health outcomes.

In the Philippine setting, MAPEH teachers also contribute to the national goal of promoting health literacy and physical wellness among learners. The Department of

Education's K to 12 Curriculum Guide for Physical Education (2016) states that PE teachers must not only teach skills but also demonstrate values such as perseverance, teamwork, and a commitment to fitness. Being in good physical condition allows teachers to conduct dynamic classes, supervise sports activities, and ensure the safety of learners during movement-based instruction.

However, the demands of teaching and the lack of time can often lead educators to neglect their own health. A study by Anshel and Kang (2007) showed that while physical educators understand the importance of fitness, stress and workload often prevent them from maintaining regular exercise routines. Therefore, school administrators should support wellness programs that encourage physical activity among staff, such as faculty fitness challenges, after-school workouts, or professional development on teacher wellness.

Additionally, being physically fit helps manage stress and improves mental resilience—both crucial for handling the challenges of the teaching profession. Physical activity has been shown to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression (Sharma et al., 2006), promoting better emotional regulation and classroom management.

In conclusion, the physical fitness of a MAPEH teacher is more than just a personal asset—it is a professional tool. A fit teacher can deliver more effective lessons, inspire students, and model the very principles they teach. As front-liners in the promotion of health and physical education, MAPEH teachers must lead by example, showing that fitness is not only achievable but essential.

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