

# Integration of Local Arts and Crafts in Teaching

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In the Philippine educational system, Contemporary Philippine Arts from the Regions (CPAR) is a core subject in the Senior High School curriculum. The subject highlights the diversity of contemporary artistic practices rooted in the region where the school operates. Its primary aim is to cultivate students' appreciation of multiple artistic disciplines while developing their capacity to analyze works through elements and principles of art. CPAR likewise fosters an integrative approach to arts education, equipping learners with creative competencies and providing tools that may contribute to their future academic or professional trajectories (Department of Education, 2019).

Despite its pedagogical value, the teaching of CPAR presents notable challenges, particularly in localizing and indigenizing content. Teachers are expected to exercise creativity in sourcing reliable and culturally relevant references, drawing from both indigenous traditions and contemporary practices (Lukaka, 2023; Li & Qi, 2025; Samaniego et al., 2024; Mhlauli & Fikelepi-Twani, 2024; Dai et al., 2019). A practical entry point involves conducting an inventory and mapping of cultural, historical, and artistic resources within the locality. As Mak et al. (2014) emphasize,

cultural mapping provides a structured framework that develops students' collaboration and leadership skills. Beyond strengthening students' appreciation of their cultural roots, such mapping enables teachers to monitor engagement and participation. However, balancing these activities with other academic and administrative responsibilities remains a persistent constraint for many educators.

In parallel with these efforts, technological tools increasingly shape the teaching of culture and the arts. Digital platforms, particularly video-based resources available through social media, provide accessible means of instruction. While such tools are practical, they cannot replace the depth of direct cultural engagement. Firsthand exposure to heritage, crafts, and artistic practices enables students to construct deeper connections with their communities. Kokko and Dillon (2010), for instance, integrated group projects and reflective essays to capture learners' experiences with local crafts, illustrating how experiential and interactive approaches foster cultural appreciation.

Empirical evidence consistently underscores the value of experiential learning in cultural and arts education. Engaging with concepts in authentic contexts not only enhances understanding but also strengthens the learner's sense of cultural identity. Dell'Agnese (2022), for example, proposed an instructional framework integrating three complementary strategies: historical contextualization through scholarly readings, artistic appreciation through museum visits and artist interactions, and artistic creation through student-produced works. Similarly, Razali et al. (2018) emphasized the benefits of excursions in creative design education, where students observed contemporary architectural practices as part of their coursework. Music and dance education also employ this principle, enabling students to observe live performances before replicating the

observed techniques in their own practice (Boucher & Moisey, 2019; Payne & Costas, 2020).

At a broader level, sustained partnerships between cultural institutions and the education sector are increasingly recognized as critical for enriching student learning. Escala et al. (2024) argue that such collaborations expand access to authentic cultural resources, foster community engagement, and create synergies between theoretical instruction and real-world artistic practice. These partnerships thus represent an essential pathway for advancing arts education in ways that are both contextually relevant and globally aligned.

## **Historical and Legal Foundations of Contemporary Philippine Arts**

Contemporary art in the Philippines traces its origins to developments in the early twentieth century, shaped by the economic, political, and social transformations brought about by American colonialism and the introduction of new technologies. These changes catalyzed innovative artistic practices, facilitating the evolution of traditional art forms into modern and experimental styles. With the advent of the Information Age, contemporary art expanded further, as digital technologies enabled the emergence of diverse forms, cross-disciplinary approaches, and heightened interactivity in both artistic production and audience engagement (Samdanis, 2016). Consequently, contemporary art has become a dynamic field that continually challenges conventional boundaries, fostering inclusivity and diversity in artistic expression.

Within this evolving landscape, art may be broadly categorized into fine art, popular art, and craft. By medium, it encompasses visual arts,

architecture, music, dance, theater, photography, cinema, broadcast art, digital art, and installation, while traditional forms such as sculpture, literature, and printmaking remain vital to the discipline. This breadth illustrates the inherently dynamic and integrative nature of contemporary art, where innovation is driven by experimentation and cross-cultural dialogue.

The institutionalization of Contemporary Philippine Arts from the Regions (CPAR) in the Senior High School curriculum reflects a deliberate alignment with Sections 14–17, Article XIV of the 1987 Philippine Constitution. These provisions affirm the State’s obligation to preserve, enrich, and ensure the dynamic development of Filipino culture, anchored in the principles of cultural pluralism and freedom of expression. They further mandate the conservation, promotion, and dissemination of the nation’s cultural heritage and artistic wealth, which form part of the cultural patrimony to be protected and regulated by the State.

As a core subject, CPAR seeks to decentralize arts education, countering the longstanding dominance of the Western canon in Philippine cultural discourse. It prioritizes local and regional cultural expressions, emphasizing that art and culture are best understood when examined within their immediate social and historical contexts. By doing so, CPAR situates learners’ engagement with the arts within their own communities and regions, moving beyond the Manila-centric traditions often advanced by institutions such as the Cultural Center of the Philippines, major media networks, and established academic structures. This localization not only diversifies the sources of cultural knowledge but also validates the creative practices of communities that have historically remained on the periphery of national arts education.

The program’s objectives are further reinforced by Republic Act No.

10066, the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009, which strengthens the mandate of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and its affiliated cultural agencies to safeguard both tangible and intangible heritage. By integrating CPAR into the curriculum, the education sector operationalizes constitutional and legislative commitments, ensuring that arts instruction simultaneously preserves cultural heritage and promotes inclusivity. In doing so, CPAR advances a culturally responsive framework for arts education that fosters critical awareness, regional identity, and national cohesion among Filipino learners.

### **Integration and Utilization of Local Arts and Crafts in Teaching Contemporary Philippine Arts from The Regions: A Case Study**

This study investigated the integration and pedagogical use of local arts and crafts in the teaching of Contemporary Philippine Arts from the Regions (CPAR) at the Senior High School level. Specifically, it examined the instructional practices, challenges, and strategies employed by teachers to determine how indigenous and community-based art forms are preserved, promoted, and contextualized within the classroom. Building on these insights, the study further sought to develop a Local Arts and Crafts Curriculum Enhancement Program aimed at supporting teachers in systematically incorporating community-based artistic practices into CPAR instruction, thereby fostering both cultural preservation and more contextually relevant arts education.

#### *Methodology*

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically a descriptive narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry regards participants' stories

as the primary source of data, offering insights into their lived experiences, perspectives, and practices. The research was conducted in Pandan, Antique, Philippines, a coastal municipality in the province of Antique. A total enumeration of Senior High School teachers handling Contemporary Philippine Arts from the Regions (CPAR) in the DepEd District of Pandan was utilized. Seven teachers who were available during the data collection period were invited to participate in interviews. The inclusion criteria required that participants were currently teaching CPAR and were willing to take part in the study. To maintain confidentiality, each participant was assigned a code rather than being identified by name.

Data were gathered through a researcher-developed interview guide, which covered the respondents' profiles, the integration of local arts and crafts in CPAR, and the issues, concerns, and best practices related to teaching and administration. To ensure the clarity, appropriateness, and sensitivity of the questions, the guide was validated by a panel of experts.

Formal communications were first sent to the Schools District Supervisor to secure approval for the conduct of the study, followed by permission from the principals of secondary schools. Once approval was granted, data collection commenced. Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the process, including obtaining informed consent, guaranteeing confidentiality, and ensuring that participants could freely express their views. They were also informed of the possibility of follow-up interviews to validate findings and confirm that their experiences were accurately represented.

All interviews were transcribed and translated before being subjected to thematic analysis. The analysis focused on identifying recurring patterns across responses, which were then organized into researcher-generated themes that reflected the participants' collective

experiences and perspectives.

### *Findings*

Local arts and crafts integrated into teaching Contemporary Philippine Arts from the Regions (CPAR) are primarily those created from natural and readily available materials. These include frame and decorative arts for walls and ceilings, as well as utilitarian products such as mats, placemats, bags, hats, and fruit baskets. Installation art is also incorporated into instruction. Teachers explained that these art forms are integrated mainly because of their commonality and availability in the locality, their potential to promote local products, and the motivation they provide to students through hands-on learning.

Conversely, certain forms of local arts and crafts are not integrated into CPAR instruction. These include large-scale installation works such as sculptures and architectural structures, along with traditional crafts made from wood, coconut shells, and nito. Their exclusion is largely due to the scarcity and high cost of materials, the limited time available for students to accomplish such tasks, and the risky or hazardous processes involved in their production.

In terms of utilization, local artworks and handicrafts commonly used in CPAR classes include those made from locally sourced materials such as mats, bags, and wall or ceiling decorations. Decorative items crafted from shells, stones, and driftwood often collected from coastal areas are likewise utilized. These materials serve multiple purposes: they promote local products, maximize available natural resources, and foster cultural awareness while transferring knowledge and skills to students. On the other hand, arts and crafts made from wood, clay, and metal including glass or stone sculptures, as well as formal artworks by individual artists are

generally not utilized. Their non-utilization stems from the scarcity of resources, lack of appropriate technology, absence of skilled craftsmen, and safety concerns during production.

The study also highlighted several issues and challenges in integrating local arts and crafts into CPAR instruction. These include students' limited skills, lack of available materials, and safety concerns. Teachers addressed these challenges through strategies such as the use of video tutorials, encouraging parental and peer support, and providing direct guidance during classroom activities. Similarly, challenges in the utilization of local arts and crafts included the difficulty of obtaining materials, teachers' limited art skills, and the absence of necessary tools and equipment. These were addressed through strategies such as demonstrations and guided tutorials from local craftsmen, the use of video lessons, parental assistance, and the optimization of available resources in terms of time and cost.

Best practices in teaching CPAR were also identified. In instruction, teachers emphasized the importance of art application and skills development, ensuring that students gained hands-on experience in creating crafts. Participation in seminars was encouraged to enhance teachers' knowledge and competencies, while mentoring activities allowed teachers to provide more effective guidance in handling diverse art forms. On the administrative side, best practices included capacity-building and skills enhancement programs such as seminars on difficult competencies, training workshops on handicrafts, and the contextualization, localization, and indigenization of the curriculum to align with community culture and available resources.

To address the identified issues and challenges, a Local Arts and Crafts Curriculum Enhancement Program was proposed. The program

emphasizes continuous training for both teachers and students, alongside structured engagement with experts. While expert collaboration is already practiced informally, the program recommends institutionalizing this practice as a regular component of CPAR instruction. Stakeholders are envisioned to play complementary roles: teachers as facilitators of learning, students as recipients of skills and knowledge, administrators as providers of institutional support, and the community as patrons and partners in sustaining the integration of local arts and crafts in education.

### *Recommendations*

CPAR teachers play a crucial role in preserving and promoting local culture through education. One effective starting point is conducting a thorough cultural inventory of local arts and crafts within the community, identifying traditional practices, materials, and techniques that can be meaningfully integrated into the CPAR curriculum. Organizing exposure trips to local art studios, craft workshops, and cultural institutions also enriches instruction, as these experiences provide students with direct engagement in different art forms and hands-on opportunities to create their own artworks under the mentorship of local experts.

Learners, on the other hand, should take an active role in familiarizing themselves with the local arts and crafts in their community and contributing to their promotion. They need to recognize that these art forms are not merely school requirements but vital expressions of culture and identity something to be valued and taken pride in.

School heads are equally significant in this endeavor. They can support teachers by developing effective documentation and assessment strategies for local arts and crafts projects, such as rubrics that assess not only artistic quality but also cultural integration and community relevance.

Furthermore, school heads can implement initiatives that highlight student achievements in CPAR through art exhibitions, awards, and recognition programs. Such efforts foster a positive and supportive artistic environment within the school, encouraging deeper learner engagement with local culture.

At the administrative level, the Department of Education (DepEd) should provide sustained professional development opportunities for CPAR teachers. Training programs, seminars, and workshops focusing on local art forms and traditional crafts can strengthen teachers' capacity to integrate these effectively into instruction. Considering the challenges identified by teachers, an enhancement program is imperative—one that prioritizes continuous training for both teachers and students, while establishing structured engagements with local experts to ensure effective knowledge transfer and skill development.

Lastly, local artists and craftsmen serve as valuable partners in enriching CPAR instruction. Through workshops and training sessions, they can deepen teachers' understanding of art integration strategies. By sharing practical techniques, cultural insights, and accessible resources, they contribute to making art integration both authentic and sustainable within the classroom.

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