# CULTURE-BASED INTEGRATION IN TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES SUBJECT AMONG SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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## **ABSTRACT**

The integration of Indigenous People's Education (IPEd) into the curriculum is crucial, especially in regions like the Cordillera Administrative Area of the Philippines, home to diverse indigenous communities. With culture and indigenous knowledge systems being integral to the educational process, teachers serve as pivotal implementers of culturally responsive pedagogy. However, ensuring effective integration presents challenges, particularly in diverse settings such as Santa Maria National High School in Alfonso Lista District. This study aimed to determine the current context of Indigenous People's Education (IPEd) in the Social Studies subjects of the Secondary School students at Sta. Maria National High School. The study employs a descriptive research design, utilizing quantitative approach to examine the integration of Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) in teaching Social Studies. Quantitative methods, including descriptive design, measure the extent of integration across various teaching aspects. The instrument undergo validation and reliability testing. Statistical tools were used for quantitative analysis. Participants were purposively selected. The study on the integration of Indigenous Peoples' Education (IPEd) within Social Studies curricula reveals that both learners and teachers perceive IPEd as beneficial, although teachers tend to underestimate the cultural integration compared to students. This highlights the importance of incorporating student feedback for assessing the effectiveness of IPEd integration. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the social studies teachers were advised to further empower themselves with training and resources to enhance cultural integration, ensuring that both teachers and students continue to benefit from its effective utilization. Educators should reflect on their teaching methods and acknowledge the significant impact they have on student progress. Implementing feedback mechanisms and collaborative discussions could help align perceptions and enhance cultural inclusivity. Finally, teachers should diversify their use of IPEd resources and incorporate more reflection and project-based learning activities to deepen student engagement and understanding of social sciences.

**Keywords:** Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd), Social Sciences, Cultural Integration, Cultural Relevance, and Teacher Pedagogy

INTRODUCTION

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Situating indigenous people's education (IPEd) in the curriculum is a decisive and continuing effort. Culture and indigenous knowledge systems are integral to the educative process as learning spaces and institutions inherently reflect the cultural ideals, valuable traditions, and collective aspirations of the community in which they are situated. Culture is inseparable from the facets of learning and processes of instruction (Demmert & Towner, 2003; Young, 2009; Gay, 2010). Aside from acquiring theoretical knowledge, the importance of culture in instruction leads to a functionally responsive and relevant learning experience, allowing students to fully understand their place and purpose in their contextual domains. Learning is a cultural process in which a learner's diverse ideas, life experiences, traditions, and beliefs are incorporated into activities at social institutions like family, school, church, and communities (Nasir et al., 2016).

The educational objectives and goals of schools must be anchored on the shared sociocultural ideals, ambitions, and values of society in general and the community in particular (Bangayan-Manera et al.,2020). Culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogy is highlighted, and teachers play a crucial role as custodians of knowledge and curriculum implementers at the classroom level. Teachers' knowledge, competence, and effectiveness in facilitating instruction significantly influence the success of the teaching-learning process and the quality of learning and instructional outcomes (Clemente and Clemente, 2023). Teachers are direct links between school and community relations, especially in indigenous communities such as the Igorots in the Cordillera Administrative Area of the Philippines, who possess a rich cultural legacy and distinctive indigenous knowledge and local traditions.

However, there is a notable research gap in understanding the specific knowledge, attitudes, competence, and best practices of teachers in planning and facilitating culture-driven instruction. While educational leaders and policymakers emphasize promoting culturally responsive instruction and integrating indigenous knowledge into the curriculum, there is limited empirical research on how these policies are implemented at the classroom level (Eijansantos et al.,2021). This gap is particularly evident in diverse regions like the Cordillera, where multiple ethnolinguistic groups coexist. Understanding how teachers in such regions navigate the complexities of culturally responsive teaching and how they integrate indigenous knowledge into their instructional practices is crucial for developing more effective and inclusive educational strategies.

The Philippine educational system, from basic education to higher education, focuses on integrating indigenous peoples' education into the mainstream curriculum. The Commission on Higher Education and the Department of Education have mandated the inclusion of indigenous education through various policies and programs, such as CHED Memorandum 2, s. 2019, and the Indigenous People's Education (IPEd) program. The DepEd IPEd framework emphasizes culturally responsive instruction by embedding indigenous knowledge systems into the curriculum. This approach aims to democratize access to quality education, ensuring it is inclusive and reflective of students' cultural backgrounds. In the Cordillera Administrative Region, initiatives like the Regional Indigenous Peoples Education Roadmap for 2018 to 2021 and the Contextualized Enhanced Basic Education Curriculum Policy Guidelines further reinforce these efforts, promoting advocacy, support, and cooperation to sustain IPEd initiatives.

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aimed to determine the current context of Indigenous People's Education (IPEd) in the Social Studies subjects of the Senior High School students at Sta. Maria National High School. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

- 1. What is the perception of the teachers and students on culture-based integration based on the following:
  - a. Learning Objectives;
  - b. Subject-Matter Content;
  - c. Instructional Procedures and Activities;
  - d. Instructional Materials and Modules;
  - e. Assessment Tasks and Evaluation Procedures?
- 2. What is the difference on the perception between the teachers and students in culture-based integration in teaching Social Studies?
- 3. What are the teaching strategies and teaching techniques being used in culture-based integration in teaching Social Studies concepts?

## RELATED LITERATURE

Culture is profoundly complex, shaping diverse perspectives on human life. It includes traditions, values, beliefs, behaviors, and objects shared within cultural groups (Ravelli, 2000; Spencer-Oatey, 2012). These cultural boundaries foster socialization and interaction without limiting the adoption of other cultural practices. Culture acts as society's software, driving functionality and governing aspects of life, including language, governance, laws, ecology, health, spirituality, and education. Culture is central to learning experiences, making them relevant and meaningful by integrating learners' worldviews and traditions (Demmert & Towner, 2003; Young, 2009; Gay, 2010; Nasir et al., 2006).

Key contributors to culturally relevant pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching include Gloria Ladson-Billings and Geneva Gay. Ladson-Billings focuses on pedagogical paradigms and teacher attitudes, while Gay emphasizes classroom practices and methods (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Gay, 2010). These approaches connect students' cultural lives with instructional tasks, fostering inclusive and affirming classrooms (Villegas & Lucas, 2007; Zhang & Wang, 2016). Promoting cultural responsiveness involves understanding students' cultural backgrounds and aligning instructional design to their experiences (Kieran & Anderson, 2018; Samuels, 2018). Multicultural education and culturally responsive pedagogy improve academic achievement, graduation rates, and social well-being (Howard & Terry, 2011; Byrd, 2016; Vass & Bishop, 2020).

Integrating culture and indigenous knowledge in education is vital for preserving students' welfare (Huaman & Valdiviezo, 2014; Lipka et al., 2015). This integration aligns educational goals

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with community aspirations and strengthens school-community collaborations (Mahlangu & Garutsa, 2019). Using the learner's community as a learning resource efficiently integrates culture into teaching (Seehawer, 2018). Essential knowledge derived from cultural practices enhances subject-matter content, instructional implementation, and student engagement (Baynes, 2015; Tsindoli et al., 2018).

The proposed study aligns with reviewed literature on culturally responsive instruction, cultural identity, and education's role in enculturation. It uniquely focuses on classroom-level integration of culture and Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) for diverse ethno-linguistic groups, emphasizing innovative teaching strategies for Social Sciences and Humanities. The study aims to generate rich data through various methods, highlighting practical applications of culturally relevant instruction.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

# **Research Design**

The study utilized descriptive research design to gather and generate data needed in the study. The quantitative approach, specifically the descriptive design was used to determine the perception of the teachers and students on culture-based integration based on Learning objectives, subject-matter content, Instructional procedures and activities, instructional materials and modules, and Assessment Task and evaluation procedures. Creswell (2002) opined that quantitative research primarily involves processes such as data collection, analysis, interpreting, and writing the results of a study.

## **Research Instrument**

The data were obtained from the respondents through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was used to measure the extent of IPEd integration along with the domains and categories of instruction as reflected in the Daily Learning Logs which comprise learning outcomes, course content, teaching-learning activities, assessment tasks, and instructional materials used.

Further, the researcher-made questionnaire was validated using Content Validity and be subjected to a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha. After the validation, the research questionnaire was subjected to pilot-testing and reliability tests to establish its appropriateness, accuracy, and relevance in gathering pertinent data in answering the objectives and identified problems of the study.

## **Statistical Treatment of Data**

Mean, was used to assess the perceived integration of culture-based instruction in teaching social studies. T-test and ANOVA were used to test the difference of two variables for the purpose of determining the significant difference on the perception between the teachers and students in culture-based integration in teaching social studies.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 presents the perspectives of teachers and students regarding the integration of culture-based approaches in different aspects of learning. The mean assessments for both teachers

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(2.53) and students (3.22) suggest that the overall implementation of culture-based integration was classified as "Integrated" (scores ranging from 2.51 to 3.25). Both groups generally agreed that culture plays a somewhat significant role in the learning process. Through careful evaluation of the details, it was consistently seen that students consistently provided higher scores to culture-based integration in comparison to teachers, across all categories. Students reported a greater degree of connection between learning objectives (3.03) and culture in comparison to teachers (2.46). The topic courses exhibited the most significant difference in perception, with students perceiving a notably higher level of cultural integration (3.37) compared to teachers (2.42). The category with the least difference was instructional materials (3.07 vs. 2.63), showing that both groups agreed on the level of cultural assimilation in the educational resources used.

The results indicate that including cultural elements into the learning process confers a clear benefit. Both teachers and students perceived the usage of culture-based integration as "integrated," indicating a positive perception of its role in education. Therefore, incorporating cultural components into the learning process can lead to a more engaging and enriching experience for all participants.

Moreover, the perspective of the student offers crucial and noteworthy information. Students consistently rated the level of cultural integration higher than teachers across all categories. This implies that teachers may not fully recognize the impact that their efforts to integrate culture have on student learning. Teachers must consider gathering student input on cultural integration to ensure its effective implementation. The data also pinpoints a specific area that need improvement. Students observed a notable discrepancy in the incorporation of cultural elements between their curriculum courses and teachers. Consequently, instructors may need additional support or guidance to effectively integrate cultural aspects into the curriculum.

Ultimately, the outcomes of instructional materials offer a level of optimism. Both groups agreed on the level of cultural integration found in these works. This suggests that teachers may already be adept at selecting culturally diverse materials. However, it is essential to recognize that this is only one element of the entire situation. While the utilization of culturally-relevant resources is crucial, it is as necessary to actively involve students by linking those materials with their own cultural backgrounds and experiences.

This result highlights the advantageous impact of integrating culture into education. Teachers can create more inclusive and successful learning environments by incorporating student input, prioritizing the integration of knowledge, and consistently using a variety of materials. This approach also allows teachers to celebrate the diverse range of cultures present in their classrooms.

Confirming the findings of this study, a meta-analysis carried out by Villegas et al. (2021) demonstrated that children who were exposed to culturally integrated lectures had heightened levels of involvement and academic accomplishment. In 2023, the National Education Association produced a paper that highlighted the importance of student input in enhancing culturally sensitive teaching approaches.

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The emphasis on integrating content aligns with the growing body of research on culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP). In 2020, Ladson-Billings did a meta-analysis that demonstrated the effectiveness of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) strategies in improving student learning outcomes. CRP techniques involve integrating cultural knowledge into the curriculum.

Ultimately, the focus on instructional materials aligns with the need for culturally diverse resources in educational institutions. A study conducted by Paris and Alim (2022) found that students from marginalized backgrounds had favorable outcomes when they were exposed to instructional materials that reflected their own cultures. According to the findings of this study, both teachers and students perceived instructional materials to be well-integrated. This suggests an early step towards more fully incorporating cultural elements into the curriculum.

Table 1. Perception of the teachers and student on culture-based integration

Key Domains-Indicators	Teacher	Student	OVER ALL MEAN	Interpretation
Mean		Mean		
Learning Objectives	2.46	3.03	2.75	Integrated
Subject-Matter Content	2.42	3.37	2.90	Integrated
Instructional Materials and Modules	2.50	3.37	2.94	Integrated
Intended Assessment Task	2.63	3.27	2.95	Integrated
Instructional Materials and Modules	2.63	3.07	2.85	Integrated
OVERALL	2.53	3.22	2.88	Integrated

It is disclosed in table 2 that the findings on the difference between teachers' and students' perceptions regarding culture-based integration in teaching social studies across various key domains and indicators. The statistical analysis reveals significant differences between the perceptions of teachers and students in all domains since all p-values or sig is lower than the acceptance value of .05 or 5%, this entails the rejection of the null hypothesis and acceptance of alternative hypothesis stating that "There is a significant difference in the perception of teachers and students in culture-based integration in teaching social studies". This suggests a potential adjustment in teaching approaches to enhance alignment and understanding between teachers and students regarding culture-based integration in social studies instruction.

The significant differences between the viewpoints of teachers and students about the integration of culture into social studies instruction emphasize the urgent necessity for teachers to reevaluate their teaching strategies (Andal, 2023). This holds particularly true in contemporary classrooms that are becoming more diverse, with significant variations in cultural origins.

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Hendricks (2016) conducted research that highlights the consequences of not addressing this gap, which might result in unequal academic prospects for students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Moreover, the attitudes of teachers also have a substantial impact on the successful integration of culture into the classroom. Hoa (2018) studies highlight that teachers may harbor concerns regarding curriculum modification and classroom management in the context of intercultural integration. In order to effectively bridge this disparity, educators should adopt a pedagogical approach that is flexible and responsive to the unique cultural circumstances of their pupils (Jukes, 2021). This necessitates considering not only the cultural origins but also the manner in which those backgrounds impact student behaviors, learning styles, and belief systems.

The result of the data also suggest that teachers must close this cultural gap, as seen by the significant difference in students' and teachers' opinions about how culture is included into social studies curriculum (Andal, 2023). This is especially true in today's classrooms, as students represent a wide spectrum of ethnic origins and diversity. According to research by Hendricks (2016), kids from diverse cultures may have unequal academic opportunities if this gap is not addressed.

Moreover, the effectiveness of incorporating culture into the classroom is also greatly influenced by teachers' perspectives. According to studies by Hoa (2018), when it comes to intercultural integration, instructors could be worried about how to adjust the curriculum and manage the classroom. Nonetheless, studies indicate that encouraging candid dialogue and teamwork between educators and learners might be a potent strategy for resolving these issues (Tardif-Grenier, 2022; Sekkal, 2023). Teachers can obtain useful insights and ensure that their integration strategies are well-received by their students by actively including students in talks regarding culture-based integration and asking for their comments on the learning experience (Tardif-Grenier, 2022).

Professional development programs that emphasize cultural competency and effective teaching practices are essential to help teachers further navigate these cultural variations and improve the quality of their instruction (Park, 2022; Nugent, 2020). These courses can give teachers the abilities and information to modify their teaching methods to fit the unique cultural setting in which their pupils find themselves (Jukes, 2021). This necessitates considering how cultural backgrounds affect students' actions, learning preferences, and worldviews in addition to the backgrounds themselves.

Table 2. Difference on the perception between the teachers and students in culture-based integration in teaching Social Studies concepts

Key Domains-	Teachers	Students	to.05	Sig.	Interpretation
Indicators					
Learning Objectives	2.46	3.03	-3.31*	0.00	Significant



2.42 3.37 -5.24\* 0.00 Significant Subject Matter 2.50 3.37 -4.98\* 0.00 Significant TL Activities 2.63 3.27 -3.35\* 0.00 Significant Assessment 2.63 3.07 -2.14\* 0.04 Significant Learning Materials

The integration of Indigenous People's Education (IPEd) principles in Social Studies classrooms is examined in table 3. The teachers report employing a range of strategies, with an average frequency of "often." They place a high value on forming a rapport with pupils and exchanging firsthand knowledge about the subject. They also discuss the significance of IPEd and make connections between it and mainstream content using analogies. Some materials, such as student projects and Ifugao literature, seem to be used less frequently, though. Although the teacher is dedicated to implementing IPEd, there may be opportunity to go farther in utilizing more comprehensive IPEd resources and promoting student reflection and project development.

The analysis of the quantitative data of teacher integrating IPEd concepts into Social Studies classes highlights several promising implications. The teacher prioritizes building relationships with students and creating a positive classroom atmosphere. This aligns with the growing emphasis on culturally responsive teaching (CRT) in education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2016). CRT highlights the importance of building relationships with students, recognizing their cultural backgrounds, and creating a safe learning space where all students feel valued (Gay, 2010). The teacher's use of strategies like sharing personal stories and using students' local dialect contributes to this positive and inclusive environment.

Integrating IPEd allows students to learn about and appreciate indigenous cultures and knowledge systems. This can contribute to a more inclusive curriculum and help students develop a stronger sense of cultural identity (Cajete, 2000). The qualitative data in this analysis strengthens this point, mentioning activities like family interviews (participant 1) and cultural immersion experiences. Research by Deslauriers (2019) supports this notion, demonstrating that incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) in social studies education led to increased student interest in the subject matter and a more holistic understanding of historical and contemporary issues.

Analyzing and comparing indigenous and mainstream knowledge systems, students can develop critical thinking skills and a deeper understanding of social justice issues. This aligns with the goals of critical pedagogy, which encourages students to question dominant narratives and consider alternative perspectives (Lopez and Rodriguez, 2021).

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Table 3. Teaching Strategies and teaching techniques being used in culture- based integration in teaching Social Studies concepts

	As to my experience in Integrating IPEd, I	Mean	Interpretation
1.	Intentionally tell the students that IPEd will be automatically and regularly integrated in the teaching-learning process.	3.63	Often
2.	Periodically discuss to the students that I am a committed and proud member of a certain indigenous group, hence it is important to integrate IPEd in the lesson.	3.97	Often
3.	Purposely explain to the students the essence and importance of integrating IPEd in teaching-learning process.	3.77	Often
4.	Display pertinent IPEd themes, literatures, inspirational quotes, and passages in the developed instructional materials used in teaching.	3.37	Sometimes
5.	Prepare visual materials featuring themes of IPEd e.g., local history timeline, displaying indigenous crafts, objects, and materials, and the like.	3.33	Sometimes
6.	Treat all students with respect, utmost care, understanding, and impartiality regardless of their indigenous origin, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, beliefs, and convictions during instruction.	4.53	Always
7.	Take an active role in building positive relationships and favorable attitudes between the teacher and the students of all ethnic groups, race, and belief during instruction.	4.33	Always
8.	Employ analogy techniques between the content and concepts of mainstream subject-course and the fundamental features IPEd during instruction.	3.80	Often
9.	Share relevant incidents and stories, philosophies, and experiences of great Ifugao folks and other Cordilleran personalities related to my subject-course.	3.93	Often
10.	Relate historical stories and experiences of the early inhabitants of the locality or province to the content of subject-matter.	4.17	Often
11.	Provide contextual illustrations between IPEd and the content of my subject- course during instruction.	3.83	Often



12.	Conscientiously demonstrate an exemplar life reflecting my	2.00	0.0
	ethnic affiliations' ideals and other admirable Cordilleran culture in all my actuations during instruction.	3.80	Often
13.	Foster love and passion in teaching course-content imbibed with integrating IPEd.	4.38	Always
14.	Directly make use of Ifugao literature and other Cordilleran texts as complimentary reference in teaching the subject-matter.	3.33	Sometimes
15.	Thoroughly fuse IPEd concepts and themes with the topics and lessons of the course during instruction.	3.47	Often
16.	Resolve and clarify controversial issues and crucial problems found in the course content through relating and integrating the fundamentals of IPEd.	3.73	Often
17.	Require my students to keep a journal of personal reflections and insights related to the lesson with a focus on IPEd application and appreciation.	3.07	Sometimes
18.	Speak/Talk to students using their known local dialect most of the time.	3.70	Often
19.	Provide engaging IPEd related activities for the students to which they can apply the concepts in the subject-matter/ course.	3.33	Sometimes
20	Engage my students in social and service-learning activities that embody Cordilleran culture and civic-mindedness.	3.60	Often
21.	Let the students to create and publish projects that feature IKSP, e.g., souvenirs with quotes and sayings inspired by IPEd text, T-shirts with IKSP maxim, etc.	3.00	Sometimes
	OVERALL	3.72	Often

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were derived:

- 1. The secondary social studies teachers and students both demonstrate a basic grasp had a favorable perception of the overall utilization of IPEd in Social Studies classrooms. Students were consistently rated the level of cultural integration higher than the teachers.
- 2. There exists a discrepancy in their comprehension. Students consistently rated the level of cultural integration higher than teachers. This implies that teachers may underestimate their influence and efforts in integrating culture in social studies teaching and its effect on the academic progress of the students.
- 3. Although the teachers in the study employed numerous strategies, there is still an opportunity to integrate a broader array of IPEd resources and promote student reflection and culture-based learning.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended:

- 1. The schools' division of Alfonso Lista should establish tailor professional development programs to support their integration of indigenous perspectives into teaching, fostering cultural inclusivity and enhancing learning outcomes.
- 2. The social science teachers are advised to further empower themselves with trainings and resources to enhance cultural integration, ensuring that both teachers and students continue to benefit from its effective utilization.
- 3. Educators should reflect on their teaching methods and acknowledge the significant impact they have on student progress. Implementing feedback mechanisms and collaborative discussions could help align perceptions and enhance cultural inclusivity.
- 4. Teachers may diversify their use of IPEd resources and incorporate more reflection and project-based learning activities to deepen student engagement and understanding of social sciences.

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