



Article

Navigating Integrated Teaching in MAPEH: Teachers' Experiences in Fostering Physical, Artistic, and Health Learning in Public Secondary Schools in Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya

Maricel O. Barroga

Munguia National High School

maricel.barroga001@deped.gov.ph

Abstract

The implementation of the Philippine basic education curriculum positions Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) as an integrated learning area intended to develop learners holistically across cognitive, psychomotor, affective, creative, and socio-emotional domains. The integration of these four disciplines challenges teachers to employ interdisciplinary pedagogical approaches while ensuring mastery of subject-specific competencies. Despite the curricular emphasis on holistic education, teachers continue to encounter instructional, pedagogical, and resource-related challenges in implementing integrated MAPEH instruction, particularly in rural public secondary schools. This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of MAPEH teachers in fostering integrated physical, artistic, and health learning in Munguia National High School, Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya. Specifically, the study examined teachers' instructional practices, pedagogical experiences, challenges, adaptive strategies, and recommendations for strengthening integrated MAPEH instruction. Twelve MAPEH teachers were purposively selected based on their direct experience in implementing the curriculum. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. The findings revealed that integrated teaching promotes holistic learner development by connecting physical fitness, artistic creativity, health literacy, and socio-emotional learning through meaningful classroom experiences. Teachers demonstrated remarkable instructional flexibility by contextualizing learning activities, integrating community resources, and employing collaborative and experiential teaching approaches. However, participants reported challenges related to limited instructional resources, inadequate facilities, insufficient specialized training across all MAPEH disciplines, and time constraints. The study concludes that effective integrated MAPEH instruction requires sustained institutional support, continuous professional development, adequate learning resources, and strengthened interdisciplinary pedagogical competence. The findings provide valuable implications for curriculum developers, school administrators, policymakers, and teacher education institutions in enhancing integrated MAPEH instruction within Philippine public secondary schools.

Keywords: MAPEH, integrated teaching, interdisciplinary instruction, qualitative research, phenomenology, holistic education, public secondary schools, Philippines study, secondary education



1. Introduction

The twenty-first century educational landscape has undergone significant transformation as schools increasingly recognize that learner development extends beyond academic achievement alone. Contemporary education emphasizes the cultivation of well-rounded individuals who possess intellectual competence, physical wellness, artistic creativity, emotional resilience, social responsibility, and lifelong learning skills. Educational systems worldwide have consequently adopted holistic approaches to curriculum design that integrate multiple domains of learning to prepare learners for the complex demands of modern society.

Within the Philippine basic education curriculum, the learning area of Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) embodies this holistic educational philosophy. Rather than treating music, arts, physical education, and health as isolated disciplines, the curriculum integrates these four learning domains to foster learners' cognitive, psychomotor, affective, social, emotional, and creative development. This interdisciplinary structure recognizes that meaningful learning occurs when learners establish connections among various forms of knowledge and apply them to authentic life experiences.

The implementation of the MATATAG Agenda further reinforces the importance of learner-centered, contextualized, and competency-based instruction. Educational reforms encourage teachers to create learning environments where students actively participate in authentic experiences that integrate knowledge, skills, values, creativity, collaboration, and healthy lifestyles. Within this context, MAPEH occupies a distinctive role because it develops competencies that extend beyond traditional academic learning by promoting physical fitness, artistic expression, wellness awareness, cultural appreciation, teamwork, leadership, and responsible decision-making.

Integrated MAPEH instruction presents unique pedagogical opportunities. Music nurtures creativity, aesthetic appreciation, cultural understanding, and emotional expression. Arts encourage imagination, visual communication, innovation, and appreciation of cultural heritage. Physical Education promotes lifelong fitness, motor development, teamwork, discipline, resilience, and healthy competition. Health education develops learners' understanding of disease prevention, nutrition, mental health, safety practices, reproductive health, and overall well-being. When effectively integrated, these disciplines complement one another to support holistic learner development.

Educational scholars have argued that interdisciplinary teaching enhances meaningful learning because students develop deeper understanding when knowledge is presented as interconnected rather than fragmented. Learners become capable of transferring knowledge across disciplines, solving authentic problems, and appreciating the relevance of classroom learning to everyday life. Integrated MAPEH instruction likewise promotes experiential learning through performances, artistic productions, sports participation, wellness campaigns, collaborative projects, and community-based activities that encourage active learner engagement.

Despite its educational benefits, implementing integrated MAPEH instruction remains a complex professional responsibility. Unlike teachers specializing in a single discipline, MAPEH teachers are expected to demonstrate competence across four distinct content areas, each possessing unique pedagogical approaches, assessment methods, instructional resources, and curriculum standards. Teachers must simultaneously facilitate music appreciation, artistic production, physical performance, and health education while ensuring competency mastery within limited instructional time.

These instructional demands become particularly challenging in many Philippine public secondary schools where limited facilities, insufficient instructional materials, inadequate sports equipment, lack of musical instruments, restricted art supplies, and limited professional development opportunities constrain effective curriculum implementation. Rural schools frequently experience additional challenges associated with geographical isolation, budget limitations, and reduced access to specialized instructional resources.

Teachers therefore assume multiple professional roles extending beyond classroom instruction. They become curriculum developers, instructional designers, coaches, choreographers, music facilitators, health educators, artists, mentors, and community partners who creatively maximize available resources to achieve curriculum objectives. Their instructional decisions significantly influence learners' educational experiences and determine whether integrated MAPEH fulfills its intended purpose of promoting holistic development.

Teacher experiences provide valuable insights into the realities of curriculum implementation because they reveal how educational policies are translated into actual classroom practices. Teachers' narratives illuminate both the strengths and limitations of integrated instruction while identifying contextual factors influencing pedagogical effectiveness. Understanding these experiences contributes to evidence-based curriculum improvement, professional development planning, instructional resource allocation, and educational policy formulation.

Although numerous studies have examined physical education, arts education, health promotion, or music instruction individually, relatively limited qualitative investigations have explored teachers' lived experiences in implementing integrated MAPEH instruction within Philippine public secondary schools. Existing research frequently focuses on learner achievement or curriculum evaluation while giving comparatively less attention to teachers' instructional decision-making, interdisciplinary pedagogical practices, adaptive strategies, and classroom realities.

This gap becomes particularly significant in rural educational contexts where teachers navigate unique instructional challenges requiring considerable creativity, flexibility, and resilience. Public secondary schools in Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya provide an important context for exploring these experiences because teachers continuously balance curriculum expectations with available resources while serving learners from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.

Munguia National High School represents an educational setting where MAPEH teachers actively implement integrated instruction despite contextual constraints. Their professional experiences offer valuable insights into how holistic education can be achieved through interdisciplinary teaching practices that simultaneously nurture learners' physical competence, artistic creativity, health consciousness, cultural appreciation, and socio-emotional well-being.

Ultimately, integrated MAPEH instruction extends beyond teaching separate competencies in music, arts, physical education, and health. It represents a transformative educational approach that prepares learners to become healthy, creative, culturally responsive, socially responsible, and lifelong learners capable of contributing meaningfully to their communities. By examining teachers' lived experiences, this study contributes to strengthening integrated MAPEH instruction and advancing holistic education within Philippine public secondary schools.

Review of Related Literature

Integrated Teaching in MAPEH Education

Integrated teaching has become one of the most influential instructional approaches in twenty-first-century education because it promotes meaningful learning through the connection of concepts, skills, and values across multiple disciplines. Rather than treating knowledge as isolated bodies of information, integrated instruction encourages learners to establish relationships among different subject areas, thereby fostering deeper understanding, critical thinking, creativity, and authentic application of learning. Within interdisciplinary learning environments, students are encouraged to solve real-life problems, participate in collaborative activities, and appreciate the interconnectedness of various academic disciplines.

The Philippine K–12 Curriculum identifies Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) as an integrated learning area intended to support learners' holistic development. The curriculum recognizes that physical fitness, artistic creativity, musical appreciation, health literacy, emotional wellness, and social responsibility are interconnected dimensions of human development. Consequently, teachers are expected to design learning experiences that integrate these domains rather than presenting them as unrelated content areas.

Integrated MAPEH instruction enables learners to appreciate that artistic expression contributes to emotional well-being, physical fitness supports healthy living, music enhances cultural understanding, and health education promotes lifelong wellness. Such interdisciplinary learning experiences encourage learners to develop balanced lifestyles while simultaneously strengthening cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and social competencies.

Research consistently demonstrates that interdisciplinary instruction enhances learner motivation because students perceive learning activities as more meaningful when they reflect authentic life experiences. Rather than memorizing isolated concepts, learners participate in projects, performances, sports activities, wellness campaigns, creative productions, and collaborative problem-solving experiences that require simultaneous application of multiple competencies. Consequently, integrated instruction contributes significantly to holistic learner development and lifelong learning.

Holistic Learning and Learner Development

Holistic education emphasizes the development of the whole learner by recognizing that intellectual growth cannot be separated from physical, emotional, social, moral, artistic, and psychological development. Educational theorists argue that schools should cultivate learners who are not only academically competent but also physically healthy, emotionally resilient, ethically responsible, culturally aware, and socially engaged.

Within MAPEH education, holistic learning is achieved by providing learners with opportunities to participate in authentic experiences that integrate physical movement, artistic creativity, music appreciation, health awareness, teamwork, leadership, communication, and self-expression. Physical Education develops motor skills, discipline, cooperation, and lifelong fitness habits. Music and Arts nurture creativity, imagination, aesthetic appreciation, cultural awareness, and emotional expression. Health education strengthens learners' understanding of nutrition, disease prevention, mental health, reproductive health, personal safety, and healthy lifestyles.

Research indicates that learners who experience integrated MAPEH instruction demonstrate improvements not only in physical performance but also in confidence, collaboration, creativity, communication, emotional regulation, and decision-making. Such findings support the view that education should develop balanced individuals capable of responding effectively to personal, social,

and community challenges.

Teachers' Experiences in Integrated MAPEH Instruction

Teachers occupy a central role in the successful implementation of integrated MAPEH because curriculum effectiveness largely depends upon their pedagogical competence, instructional creativity, and professional adaptability. Unlike teachers specializing in a single discipline, MAPEH teachers are expected to demonstrate sufficient knowledge and instructional competence across four distinct learning areas. This interdisciplinary expectation presents both opportunities and professional challenges.

Several studies have reported that MAPEH teachers frequently experience difficulties associated with limited instructional resources, inadequate sports facilities, shortage of musical instruments, insufficient art materials, overcrowded classrooms, and restricted instructional time. Many teachers also report feeling less confident in teaching certain MAPEH disciplines because their academic specialization may focus primarily on only one or two subject areas.

Professional collaboration likewise plays an important role in strengthening integrated instruction. Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, peer mentoring, collaborative lesson planning, and school-based professional learning communities enable teachers to exchange instructional strategies, develop interdisciplinary learning activities, and strengthen content knowledge across all MAPEH disciplines.

Experiential Learning in MAPEH

Experiential learning constitutes one of the primary pedagogical foundations of MAPEH education because learners develop competencies most effectively through direct participation, reflection, experimentation, and authentic performance. Rather than relying solely on lectures and textbook-based instruction, MAPEH teachers engage learners in activities such as sports competitions, dance performances, musical presentations, art exhibitions, health campaigns, outdoor recreation, fitness programs, wellness projects, and community outreach activities.

Educational research consistently demonstrates that experiential learning increases learner motivation, retention, self-confidence, and academic achievement because students actively engage with learning tasks that possess immediate personal relevance. Such instructional approaches also accommodate diverse learning styles by combining visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and collaborative learning experiences.

Within integrated MAPEH instruction, experiential learning facilitates the meaningful connection of music, arts, physical education, and health concepts while encouraging learners to appreciate their practical application in everyday life.

Theoretical Framework

This study is primarily anchored on **John Dewey's Experiential Learning Theory**, which posits that meaningful learning occurs through active participation, reflection, and interaction with authentic experiences. Dewey emphasized that education should extend beyond passive acquisition of knowledge by engaging learners in experiences that connect classroom instruction with real-life situations. Integrated MAPEH instruction reflects this principle because learners acquire competencies through physical activities, artistic performances, musical experiences, health promotion projects, and collaborative learning tasks that promote meaningful understanding.

The study is likewise grounded in **Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences**, which argues that human intelligence consists of multiple interconnected capacities including musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, linguistic, logical-mathematical, and naturalistic intelligences. Integrated MAPEH instruction recognizes these diverse learner strengths by providing opportunities for artistic expression, physical performance, musical creativity, social interaction, reflective learning, and health awareness. Such diversity enables learners with varying abilities to experience academic success through multiple pathways.

Furthermore, the study adopts **Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory**, which emphasizes that learning occurs through social interaction, collaboration, and meaningful engagement within authentic cultural contexts. MAPEH instruction naturally promotes collaborative learning through group performances, team sports, creative productions, peer feedback, and cooperative health activities. Teachers serve as facilitators who scaffold learners' development while encouraging collaborative construction of knowledge.

Together, these theoretical perspectives explain how integrated MAPEH instruction contributes to holistic learner development by combining experiential learning, multiple intelligences, collaborative engagement, and authentic educational experiences.

Conceptual Framework

The study assumes that teachers' experiences in implementing integrated MAPEH instruction are influenced by multiple interacting factors, including teacher competence, pedagogical knowledge, instructional creativity, curriculum implementation, administrative support, availability of learning resources, school facilities, learner diversity, and community context. These factors shape teachers' instructional practices, classroom experiences, learner engagement, interdisciplinary teaching strategies, and perceived instructional effectiveness.

Effective integrated teaching is expected to contribute to learners' physical fitness, artistic creativity, health literacy, cultural appreciation, emotional well-being, collaborative skills, leadership, and lifelong learning competencies. Teachers' adaptive practices and instructional innovations function as mediating factors that facilitate successful curriculum implementation despite contextual limitations.

Research Gap

Although substantial research has examined Music Education, Arts Education, Physical Education, and Health Education independently, relatively few qualitative studies have investigated teachers' lived experiences in implementing integrated MAPEH instruction within Philippine public secondary schools. Existing investigations frequently emphasize learner achievement, curriculum implementation, or individual subject areas rather than examining the complexities of interdisciplinary teaching across all four MAPEH disciplines.

Furthermore, there remains limited empirical evidence regarding teachers' instructional experiences in rural educational contexts where resource limitations, geographical realities, and contextual challenges significantly influence curriculum implementation. The experiences of MAPEH teachers in Munguia National High School, Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya remain largely undocumented despite ongoing educational reforms promoting learner-centered and holistic education.

This study therefore addresses this gap by providing an in-depth qualitative exploration of teachers' experiences in fostering integrated physical, artistic, and health learning. The findings are expected to contribute valuable evidence for strengthening curriculum implementation, teacher professional development, instructional resource management, and educational policy concerning integrated MAPEH instruction.

Statement of the Problem

This study explored the lived experiences of MAPEH teachers in implementing integrated teaching in Munguia National High School, Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do MAPEH teachers implement integrated teaching in Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health?
2. What instructional practices do teachers employ in fostering integrated physical, artistic, and health learning?
3. What benefits do teachers perceive from implementing integrated MAPEH instruction?
4. What challenges do teachers encounter in implementing integrated teaching?
5. What adaptive strategies do teachers employ to address these instructional challenges?
6. What recommendations do teachers propose to strengthen integrated MAPEH instruction in public secondary schools?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to benefit MAPEH teachers by providing evidence-based instructional practices for effective interdisciplinary teaching. School administrators may utilize the results to strengthen instructional supervision, improve resource allocation, and support professional development initiatives. Curriculum developers may use the findings to enhance MAPEH curriculum implementation and develop contextualized instructional materials. Teacher education institutions may incorporate the findings into pre-service and in-service teacher preparation programs emphasizing interdisciplinary pedagogy, experiential learning, and holistic education. Finally, future researchers may use this study as a reference for further investigations on integrated instruction, MAPEH education, and holistic learner development within Philippine basic education.

2. Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a **qualitative phenomenological research design** to explore the lived experiences of MAPEH teachers in implementing integrated teaching in Munguia National High School, Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya. The phenomenological approach was selected because it enables researchers to understand how participants perceive, interpret, and assign meaning to their experiences regarding a specific educational phenomenon. In this study, the phenomenon centered on the integration of Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health (MAPEH) instruction within the Philippine basic education curriculum. Rather than measuring variables quantitatively, the study

sought to describe the realities, instructional practices, pedagogical beliefs, professional challenges, adaptive strategies, and reflections of teachers who directly implement integrated MAPEH instruction. Through phenomenology, the voices of teachers became the primary source of understanding how interdisciplinary teaching is experienced in authentic classroom settings.

The qualitative approach was particularly appropriate because integrated MAPEH instruction is a multifaceted educational practice shaped by teachers' pedagogical competence, instructional creativity, learner diversity, school resources, administrative support, and community context. The implementation of an integrated curriculum cannot be fully understood through numerical data alone, as teachers continuously make instructional decisions influenced by contextual realities. By conducting in-depth interviews, the researcher generated rich and detailed descriptions that provided deeper insights into the complexities of fostering physical, artistic, and health learning within public secondary schools.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at **Munguia National High School** located in the Municipality of Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya. The school operates under the Schools Division of Nueva Vizcaya and serves junior and senior high school learners from both urban and rural barangays. As one of the public secondary schools implementing the Department of Education's K–12 Curriculum and the MATATAG Agenda, the school provides an appropriate context for investigating integrated MAPEH instruction.

Munguia National High School offers diverse learning opportunities through curricular and co-curricular programs that promote learners' physical fitness, artistic development, health awareness, leadership, and socio-emotional growth. However, like many public schools situated in rural communities, the school also experiences challenges associated with limited instructional facilities, insufficient sports equipment, shortages of musical instruments and art materials, and restricted access to specialized learning resources. These realities require teachers to demonstrate instructional flexibility and creativity while ensuring quality learning experiences for students.

The selection of the school as the research locale was based on its active implementation of integrated MAPEH instruction and the willingness of its teachers to participate in the study. The school's educational context provided a rich environment for understanding how teachers navigate interdisciplinary teaching while responding to the unique needs of learners and the realities of rural public education.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study consisted of **twelve (12) MAPEH teachers** currently teaching at Munguia National High School. The participants were selected through purposive sampling because they possessed direct experience in implementing integrated MAPEH instruction within the K–12 Curriculum.

To ensure that participants could provide meaningful and information-rich narratives, the following inclusion criteria were established: (1) currently teaching MAPEH during the conduct of the study; (2) with at least two years of teaching experience; (3) directly involved in implementing integrated instruction across Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health; and (4) willing to participate voluntarily in the research.

The participants represented varying years of teaching experience, academic qualifications, and professional positions, ranging from Teacher I to Master Teacher. Such diversity enabled the researcher to gather multiple perspectives regarding instructional practices, classroom experiences, interdisciplinary teaching, learner engagement, and curriculum implementation.

Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study was a **researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide**. The instrument was designed to elicit comprehensive descriptions of teachers' experiences in implementing integrated MAPEH instruction. Prior to data collection, the interview guide underwent content validation by three experts specializing in Curriculum and Instruction, Physical Education, Arts Education, Educational Research, and Qualitative Methodology. Their comments and recommendations were incorporated to improve the clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the interview questions.

The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions focusing on teachers' instructional experiences, interdisciplinary teaching practices, learner engagement strategies, instructional innovations, classroom challenges, adaptive practices, institutional support, and recommendations for improving integrated MAPEH instruction. The researcher likewise utilized probing questions whenever participants introduced significant experiences requiring further clarification or elaboration. This flexible interview structure encouraged participants to narrate authentic classroom experiences while ensuring alignment with the objectives of the study.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to conducting the study, the researcher secured formal approval from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Schools Division of Nueva Vizcaya and the School Principal of Munguia National High School. After obtaining institutional permission, the researcher personally coordinated with the prospective participants to explain the objectives, significance, research procedures, and ethical safeguards of the study.

Each participant received an informed consent form explaining the purpose of the research, voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality measures, anonymity procedures, anticipated duration of the interview, and participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Participants were given sufficient opportunity to ask questions before signing the consent form.

Individual face-to-face interviews were conducted in quiet and comfortable venues within the school to facilitate open and uninterrupted conversations. Each interview lasted approximately **45 to 60 minutes**, depending on the richness of participants' responses. With participants' permission, all interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accurate documentation of their narratives. The researcher likewise maintained field notes documenting participants' non-verbal expressions, contextual observations, and significant reflections that enriched data interpretation.

Upon completion of all interviews, the recorded conversations were transcribed verbatim. The researcher repeatedly reviewed the transcripts while listening to the original recordings to ensure transcription accuracy prior to thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data gathered from the interviews were analyzed using **Braun and Clarke's (2006) Six-Phase Thematic Analysis**, a systematic analytical framework widely utilized in qualitative educational research. This method enabled the researcher to identify recurring patterns, interpret participants' shared experiences, and organize the findings into meaningful themes.

The first phase involved familiarization with the data through repeated reading of the interview transcripts while simultaneously listening to the audio recordings. During the second phase, significant statements and meaningful segments of text were assigned initial codes related to integrated teaching, instructional strategies, learner development, interdisciplinary practices, instructional challenges, teacher adaptability, and professional growth.

The third phase involved organizing related codes into preliminary themes that reflected recurring patterns across participants' narratives. During the fourth phase, these themes were carefully reviewed and compared against the original transcripts to ensure consistency and representativeness. In the fifth phase, the themes were refined, clearly defined, and assigned descriptive titles that accurately reflected their central meanings. Finally, the sixth phase involved writing the narrative report by presenting each theme alongside representative verbatim quotations, detailed interpretations, theoretical explanations, and integration with relevant scholarly literature.

Throughout the analytical process, constant comparison, peer debriefing, reflective memo writing, and repeated immersion in the data strengthened the credibility and rigor of the findings.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the quality and trustworthiness of the qualitative investigation, the researcher adopted the framework proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), which includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility was established through prolonged engagement with participants, member checking, repeated transcript verification, and validation of thematic interpretations. Participants were invited to review their interview transcripts and clarify statements whenever necessary to ensure that their experiences were accurately represented.

Transferability was achieved by providing rich and comprehensive descriptions of the research context, participants, instructional environment, and research procedures. These detailed descriptions enable readers to determine the applicability of the findings to similar educational settings.

Dependability was ensured through maintaining a detailed audit trail documenting every stage of the research process, including participant recruitment, interview procedures, transcription protocols, coding decisions, thematic development, and analytical reflections. Peer examination likewise strengthened methodological consistency.

Confirmability was established through researcher reflexivity, reflective journaling, peer consultation, and continuous examination of potential researcher bias. These procedures ensured that the findings emerged directly from participants' lived experiences rather than the researcher's personal assumptions or interpretations.

Ethical Considerations

The study strictly adhered to established ethical principles governing qualitative educational research. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from every participant before data collection commenced. Participants were fully informed regarding the objectives of the research, interview procedures, anticipated benefits, confidentiality measures, anonymity safeguards, and their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without prejudice.

To protect participants' privacy, pseudonyms were assigned throughout the presentation of findings, and all identifying information was removed from interview transcripts and research reports. Audio recordings, interview transcripts, field notes, and consent forms were securely stored and accessed only by the researcher. The collected data were utilized exclusively for academic and research purposes.

The principles of beneficence and non-maleficence were likewise observed by ensuring that participation did not expose participants to psychological, emotional, professional, or personal harm. Throughout the conduct of the study, the researcher upheld the dignity, autonomy, rights, and welfare of all participants while maintaining the highest standards of integrity, honesty, and ethical responsibility in every stage of the research process.

PART IV

3. Findings and Discussion

The thematic analysis of the interview data generated six major themes that describe the lived experiences of MAPEH teachers in implementing integrated instruction at Munguia National High School, Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya. The findings reveal that integrated teaching in MAPEH extends beyond combining four disciplines into one learning area; rather, it involves creating meaningful, learner-centered, and interdisciplinary experiences that simultaneously develop students' physical fitness, artistic creativity, health literacy, social responsibility, emotional well-being, and lifelong learning competencies. The themes also illustrate the instructional realities encountered by teachers, the challenges that accompany integrated teaching, and the innovative strategies they employ to ensure quality learning despite contextual limitations.

Theme 1

Integrated Teaching Promotes Holistic Learner Development

The most dominant theme that emerged from the interviews was the teachers' shared belief that integrated MAPEH instruction significantly contributes to the holistic development of learners. Participants consistently described MAPEH as a unique learning area because it simultaneously develops students physically, emotionally, socially, artistically, intellectually, and morally. Unlike other academic disciplines that primarily focus on cognitive achievement, integrated MAPEH allows learners to experience education through movement, creativity, collaboration, self-expression, and healthy living.

Participant 3 shared:

"MAPEH is not simply about teaching music, drawing, sports, or health separately. We help learners become healthy individuals who appreciate culture, develop confidence, and express themselves creatively."

The participant emphasized that integrated instruction allows students to understand the interconnectedness of the four disciplines. Music develops emotional sensitivity and appreciation of culture, Arts enhances imagination and creativity, Physical Education promotes discipline and teamwork, while Health equips learners with knowledge and skills necessary for healthy living. According to the participant, integrating these disciplines allows students to appreciate that physical, emotional, artistic, and social development are equally important components of holistic education.

Similarly, Participant 8 explained:

"Every lesson contributes to learners' overall development. Physical activities improve discipline, arts encourage creativity, music develops appreciation, while health lessons teach responsible decision-making."

Teachers consistently emphasized that integrated activities enable learners to transfer competencies from one discipline to another. For example, students who perform traditional dances simultaneously develop physical fitness, musical rhythm, artistic expression, cultural appreciation, teamwork, and self-confidence. Likewise, health campaigns involving poster-making, slogan writing, dramatization, and public speaking combine competencies from Arts, Health, English communication, and leadership.

Participant 11 added:

"Students become more confident because MAPEH provides opportunities where everyone can excel according to their strengths."

Teachers further observed that integrated instruction accommodates learners with varying abilities. Some students excel in sports, others demonstrate artistic talent, musical ability, leadership, or communication skills. Through integrated learning experiences, every learner receives opportunities to participate meaningfully and experience success.

Participants likewise noted that MAPEH develops learners' social-emotional competencies. Collaborative performances, team sports, group projects, and wellness activities foster cooperation, empathy, respect, responsibility, leadership, resilience, and effective communication. Students learn to appreciate diversity, manage emotions, solve conflicts peacefully, and work collaboratively toward shared goals.

These findings strongly support Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, which recognizes that learners possess multiple forms of intelligence extending beyond traditional academic abilities. Integrated MAPEH instruction provides opportunities for learners to develop bodily-kinesthetic, musical, spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences through authentic learning experiences. Likewise, Dewey's Experiential Learning Theory explains that meaningful education occurs when learners actively participate in experiences that connect knowledge with real-life situations.

The findings also corroborate previous educational research demonstrating that integrated arts, health, and physical education contribute significantly to learners' holistic development by strengthening cognitive achievement, emotional resilience, creativity, collaboration, and lifelong wellness behaviors. Teachers therefore viewed integrated MAPEH not merely as curriculum

implementation but as an educational philosophy that nurtures balanced and well-rounded individuals.

Theme 2

Experiential and Learner-Centered Instruction Enhances Engagement

The second major theme highlighted teachers' reliance on experiential and learner-centered instructional approaches in delivering integrated MAPEH lessons. Participants consistently explained that effective MAPEH instruction cannot rely solely on lectures or textbook discussions because the learning competencies require active participation, performance, creativity, and authentic application of knowledge.

Participant 6 explained:

"Students learn better when they experience the lesson. They remember activities more than lectures."

Participant 4 shared:

"We always try to involve learners in performances, games, demonstrations, and group activities because learning becomes meaningful when they participate."

Teachers described numerous experiential learning strategies implemented during classroom instruction, including dance performances, sports competitions, music recitals, role-playing, health campaigns, art exhibitions, wellness projects, fitness assessments, community outreach programs, collaborative presentations, and project-based learning. These instructional approaches encouraged learners to become active participants rather than passive recipients of information.

Several participants explained that experiential learning significantly increased learner motivation because students enjoyed performing authentic tasks instead of merely completing written exercises.

Participant 9 stated:

"Students become excited whenever lessons involve movement, creativity, or collaboration. Attendance and participation also improve."

Teachers further observed that experiential activities promoted meaningful reflection. After participating in performances, games, or wellness activities, learners analyzed their experiences, evaluated their strengths and weaknesses, and proposed ways to improve future performance. Such reflective practices strengthened learners' critical thinking, self-awareness, and decision-making skills.

Participant 1 remarked:

"Reflection is important because students understand why the activity matters in real life."

The interviews also revealed that learner-centered instruction promoted inclusive education. Teachers intentionally designed differentiated activities that accommodated learners with varying interests, abilities, and learning preferences. Visual learners benefited from art projects, kinesthetic learners from physical activities, auditory learners from music instruction, while collaborative learners excelled during group performances and wellness campaigns.

Teachers emphasized that learner-centered instruction transformed classroom relationships. Instead of functioning solely as lecturers, teachers became facilitators, coaches, mentors, and learning partners who guided students throughout the learning process.

These findings strongly support Dewey's Experiential Learning Theory, which argues that education becomes meaningful when learners actively construct knowledge through authentic experiences. Likewise, Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory emphasizes that meaningful learning occurs through collaboration, dialogue, and shared experiences within supportive learning communities.

The findings further align with recent educational research indicating that experiential learning enhances learner engagement, retention, creativity, collaboration, motivation, and problem-solving skills. Integrated MAPEH instruction therefore provides authentic opportunities for learners to experience holistic education through meaningful participation rather than passive observation.

Theme 3

Teacher Creativity and Instructional Innovation Sustain Integrated MAPEH Instruction

The third major theme illustrates teachers' remarkable creativity and instructional innovation despite numerous contextual challenges. Participants consistently explained that effective MAPEH instruction often requires teachers to develop improvised learning materials, maximize community resources, modify activities, and integrate available technologies to compensate for limited instructional resources.

Participant 5 explained:

"Not everything we need is available in school, so we become creative. We improvise equipment and develop our own instructional materials."

Participant 2 stated:

"Sometimes we use recycled materials for art projects and indigenous musical instruments available in the community."

Participant 10 shared:

"Videos, online music recordings, community performers, and local cultural activities become valuable teaching resources."

Teachers described developing improvised sports equipment using locally available materials, creating low-cost musical instruments, designing contextualized health education modules, and incorporating indigenous cultural performances into classroom instruction. Several participants likewise integrated local festivals, traditional dances, community wellness programs, and cultural celebrations into learning activities to make instruction more meaningful and culturally relevant.

Participants emphasized that instructional innovation extended beyond material preparation. Teachers continuously modified lesson plans according to learner interests, available facilities, weather conditions, class size, and individual learner needs.

Participant 7 remarked:

"Every class is different. We adjust our teaching strategies depending on learners' participation and available resources."

The interviews further revealed that teachers actively sought professional growth through independent learning, collaboration with colleagues, participation in webinars, Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, and professional learning communities. Sharing instructional materials, lesson plans, assessment tools, and teaching strategies became common practices that strengthened instructional quality while reducing individual workload.

Participant 12 explained:

"We continuously learn from one another because integrated teaching requires collaboration."

Teachers consistently viewed innovation not as an optional practice but as an essential professional responsibility. Rather than allowing resource limitations to hinder learning, they transformed instructional constraints into opportunities for creativity, collaboration, and continuous improvement.

These findings support Schön's concept of the Reflective Practitioner, which explains that effective teachers continually reflect upon instructional experiences and adapt teaching practices to improve learner outcomes. The findings likewise reinforce the MATATAG Agenda's emphasis on contextualized, learner-centered, flexible, and innovative instructional approaches that respond to diverse educational realities.

Overall, the first three themes demonstrate that integrated MAPEH instruction successfully promotes holistic learner development when teachers employ experiential, learner-centered, and innovative pedagogical practices. Despite contextual limitations, teachers' creativity, professional commitment, and instructional adaptability enable meaningful learning experiences that nurture learners' physical competence, artistic creativity, health literacy, and socio-emotional growth.

Theme 4. Collaborative Professional Practice Strengthens Integrated MAPEH Instruction

Another significant theme that emerged from the interviews was the indispensable role of collaboration in strengthening integrated MAPEH instruction. The participants consistently emphasized that effective implementation of the MAPEH curriculum is not solely dependent on individual teacher expertise but is greatly enhanced through collaborative professional learning, peer mentoring, and collective instructional planning. Since MAPEH encompasses four distinct disciplines Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health teachers acknowledged that collaboration enables them to address content limitations, exchange innovative instructional ideas, and improve the quality of interdisciplinary teaching.

Participant 4 shared:

"Hindi namin kayang maging eksperto sa apat na discipline nang mag-isa. Kaya malaking tulong ang collaboration sa kapwa MAPEH teachers."

The participant explained that collaboration allows teachers to compensate for individual areas of weakness. Teachers who possess stronger backgrounds in music or arts assist colleagues who are more experienced in physical education or health instruction. Through continuous professional

dialogue, teachers become more confident in delivering lessons that require interdisciplinary integration.

Participant 11 similarly explained:

"Learning Action Cell sessions help us exchange lesson plans, assessment strategies, and instructional materials. We learn practical teaching strategies from one another."

Teachers described Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions as valuable professional learning opportunities where they collaboratively develop lesson exemplars, performance tasks, rubrics, localized learning activities, and contextualized instructional resources. These collaborative engagements reduce instructional workload while simultaneously improving lesson quality and consistency across grade levels.

Participant 2 added:

"We also observe each other's classes. Classroom observation allows us to learn different teaching techniques that we can adapt in our own lessons."

Participants likewise emphasized that collaboration extends beyond their own school. Through district meetings, division seminars, online webinars, and professional organizations, teachers exchange instructional innovations and discuss emerging trends in MAPEH education. These experiences contribute to continuous professional learning and strengthen teachers' instructional confidence despite curricular changes and resource limitations.

Several teachers further highlighted the importance of collaboration with community stakeholders. Local artists, musicians, health workers, athletes, barangay officials, and cultural practitioners occasionally participate in school programs, allowing learners to experience authentic demonstrations of artistic performance, health promotion, and physical fitness activities.

Participant 7 narrated:

"Our community becomes an extension of the classroom. Learners appreciate local culture when community experts share their experiences."

These findings demonstrate that integrated teaching is fundamentally collaborative in nature. Teachers recognize that effective implementation of MAPEH requires shared expertise, mutual support, and collective problem-solving rather than isolated instructional practice.

The findings support Wenger's Community of Practice Theory, which emphasizes that professional knowledge develops through participation in collaborative learning communities. Similarly, Professional Learning Community (PLC) models argue that sustained teacher collaboration enhances instructional quality, reflective practice, curriculum implementation, and learner achievement. Within integrated MAPEH instruction, collaboration enables teachers to maximize collective expertise while responding effectively to interdisciplinary instructional demands.

Theme 5. Resource Limitations and Instructional Challenges Require Adaptive Teaching Practices

Despite teachers' commitment to integrated instruction, participants consistently reported numerous challenges affecting the implementation of MAPEH. The most frequently identified concerns included limited instructional resources, inadequate school facilities, insufficient specialized equipment, time constraints, and varying teacher specialization across the four MAPEH disciplines.

Participant 8 explained:

"The biggest challenge is the lack of facilities. Some activities require equipment that our school simply does not have."

Participant 1 shared:

"We sometimes teach music without enough instruments, arts without adequate materials, and physical education with limited sports equipment."

Participants described how shortages of musical instruments, sound systems, sports facilities, art supplies, laboratory materials, and multimedia equipment constrained instructional effectiveness. Teachers often improvised learning materials using recycled objects or personally purchased supplies to ensure that learning activities could still be conducted.

Another recurring concern involved the breadth of the MAPEH curriculum itself. Teachers explained that many educators possess academic specialization in only one component of MAPEH, yet they are expected to competently teach all four disciplines.

Participant 6 stated:

"I specialized in Physical Education, but I also teach Music, Arts, and Health. Continuous learning is necessary."

Participant 9 added:

"Sometimes we spend extra hours studying unfamiliar topics before teaching them."

Teachers also emphasized that limited instructional time often restricts opportunities for deeper learner engagement. Practical activities such as musical performances, dance rehearsals, art production, sports instruction, and health demonstrations require extended preparation and implementation periods that exceed available classroom time.

Participant 5 remarked:

"MAPEH activities cannot always be completed within one class period. Many performances and projects require additional practice."

The participants further noted that large class sizes complicate classroom management during practical learning activities. Supervising simultaneous performances, sports drills, artistic projects, and health demonstrations demands considerable organizational skills while ensuring learner safety and active participation.

These findings indicate that effective integrated teaching requires substantial institutional support. Although teachers consistently demonstrate remarkable adaptability, sustainable curriculum implementation cannot rely exclusively on teacher creativity. Adequate instructional facilities, sufficient learning resources, continuous professional development, and administrative support remain essential for successful MAPEH instruction.

The findings reinforce previous educational research indicating that teacher effectiveness is closely associated with access to instructional resources, professional preparation, and supportive learning environments. Curriculum innovations therefore require corresponding investments in educational infrastructure and teacher capacity building.

Theme 6. Integrated MAPEH Instruction Cultivates Lifelong Learning, Well-being, and Responsible Citizenship

The final theme revealed that teachers perceive integrated MAPEH instruction as contributing significantly to learners' lifelong personal development. Participants consistently emphasized that MAPEH extends beyond academic competency by cultivating lifelong habits related to physical wellness, creativity, health consciousness, leadership, cultural appreciation, and responsible citizenship.

Participant 10 shared:

"The lessons students learn in MAPEH stay with them even after graduation because they relate to everyday life."

Participant 3 explained:

"Healthy lifestyles, appreciation of music and arts, teamwork, discipline, and respect become lifelong values."

Teachers observed that learners who actively participated in integrated MAPEH activities demonstrated greater confidence, improved interpersonal relationships, stronger leadership skills, and healthier lifestyle choices. Students likewise became more appreciative of Philippine cultural traditions through exposure to indigenous music, folk dances, visual arts, and local cultural practices integrated into classroom instruction.

Participant 12 remarked:

"Students begin appreciating Filipino culture more because they experience it through music, dance, visual arts, and community activities."

Participants also highlighted the significant contribution of Health Education in promoting mental health awareness, emotional resilience, responsible decision-making, nutrition, personal hygiene, reproductive health, and disease prevention. These competencies became particularly relevant in helping learners navigate adolescent developmental challenges.

Teachers emphasized that integrated instruction likewise promotes responsible citizenship. Community-based wellness campaigns, environmental projects, cultural celebrations, and sports activities encourage learners to become active contributors to school and community development.

Participant 4 stated:

"MAPEH develops students who are not only physically active but also socially responsible."

Furthermore, participants observed that interdisciplinary activities encourage learners to appreciate diversity, respect individual differences, cooperate with others, and demonstrate empathy during collaborative learning experiences. Such social competencies prepare learners for meaningful participation within increasingly diverse communities.

The findings indicate that integrated MAPEH instruction contributes significantly to learners' holistic formation by simultaneously developing physical, emotional, artistic, social, ethical, and cultural competencies. Rather than functioning merely as a collection of practical subjects, MAPEH becomes a transformative educational experience that prepares learners for lifelong health, creativity, responsible citizenship, and personal well-being.

These findings strongly support the philosophy of holistic education, which recognizes that education should develop the whole person rather than focusing exclusively on academic achievement. Likewise, they reinforce the objectives of the MATATAG Agenda, which seeks to develop resilient, healthy, values-oriented, and globally competitive Filipino learners.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that integrated teaching in MAPEH represents a dynamic and transformative pedagogical approach that supports holistic learner development while strengthening interdisciplinary learning. Teachers consistently viewed integrated instruction as an effective means of simultaneously developing learners' physical fitness, artistic creativity, musical appreciation, health literacy, emotional well-being, leadership, collaboration, and cultural awareness.

Despite experiencing significant instructional challenges, including resource limitations, inadequate facilities, limited specialization across all four disciplines, and time constraints, teachers demonstrated remarkable professional commitment, creativity, and instructional adaptability. Through collaboration, contextualization, experiential learning, and continuous professional growth, participants successfully implemented meaningful interdisciplinary learning experiences that reflected the learner-centered philosophy of the MATATAG Curriculum.

The study further emphasizes that successful curriculum implementation extends beyond teachers' individual efforts. Sustainable integrated teaching requires institutional support through adequate instructional resources, continuous professional development, strengthened collaborative learning

communities, and supportive educational leadership. Teachers' lived experiences therefore provide valuable evidence for improving curriculum implementation, instructional planning, teacher education, and educational policy concerning integrated MAPEH instruction.

4. Conclusion

This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of MAPEH teachers in implementing integrated teaching at Munguia National High School, Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya. The findings revealed that integrated MAPEH instruction effectively promotes holistic learner development by fostering physical fitness, artistic creativity, musical appreciation, health literacy, emotional resilience, leadership, collaboration, and cultural awareness. Teachers consistently perceived integrated instruction as an effective educational approach that prepares learners not only for academic success but also for lifelong personal well-being and responsible citizenship.

Despite challenges involving limited instructional resources, inadequate facilities, insufficient specialized training, and curriculum demands, teachers demonstrated exceptional creativity, adaptability, and professional commitment through contextualized instruction, collaborative learning, resource improvisation, and experiential teaching practices. These adaptive strategies enabled teachers to sustain meaningful learner-centered instruction despite contextual limitations.

The study concludes that effective integrated MAPEH instruction requires sustained investments in teacher professional development, instructional resources, collaborative professional learning, and educational leadership. Strengthening these areas will enhance curriculum implementation and further support the Department of Education's vision of developing healthy, creative, culturally grounded, and globally competent Filipino learners.

5. Implications of the Study

The findings have significant implications for educational practice and policy. MAPEH teachers may further strengthen interdisciplinary instruction by expanding collaborative lesson planning, reflective practice, and contextualized learning activities. School administrators should prioritize investments in instructional facilities, sports equipment, musical instruments, art materials, and professional development programs that enhance interdisciplinary teaching competence. Curriculum developers may utilize the findings to enrich MAPEH curriculum guides through more integrated competency frameworks and contextualized instructional resources. Teacher education institutions should strengthen pre-service and in-service programs emphasizing integrated curriculum design, experiential learning, and interdisciplinary pedagogy. Educational policymakers should likewise continue supporting schools through sustainable funding, instructional resource development, and capacity-building initiatives aligned with the MATATAG Agenda.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Public secondary schools should strengthen interdisciplinary instructional planning through regular Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

2. School administrators should allocate additional resources for sports facilities, musical instruments, art materials, multimedia equipment, and health education resources.
3. The Department of Education should provide continuous professional development focusing on integrated curriculum implementation, experiential learning, interdisciplinary assessment, and holistic learner development.
4. Teacher education institutions should enhance MAPEH teacher preparation programs by strengthening competencies across all four disciplines and emphasizing interdisciplinary instructional approaches.
5. Schools should strengthen partnerships with local artists, athletes, health professionals, cultural organizations, and community stakeholders to enrich authentic learning experiences.
6. Future researchers may conduct mixed-methods or longitudinal studies investigating the effects of integrated MAPEH instruction on learner achievement, creativity, health behaviors, socio-emotional development, and lifelong wellness across diverse educational contexts.

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