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Pedagogical Innovations Based on Philippine Cultural Practices: A Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching in Higher Education

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Abstract

Amid growing globalization and educational homogenization, this research delves into how indigenous Filipino cultural practices may be used as the ground for culturally responsive and inclusive pedagogy in Philippine HEIs. Grounded in Decolonial Theory and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, the study used qualitative approaches such as ethnographic record, interviews, and observations of classroom interactions to investigate the incorporation of values like bayanihan (solidarity), pagtutulungan (mutual aid), kuwentuhan (narrative sharing), and indigenized rituals into teaching practices. Findings indicate that these practices not only enrich student commitment and identity formation but also develop critical thinking, empathy, and intercultural competence. By thematic analysis, the study evolved the Culturally Rooted Pedagogical Framework (CRPF) as a localized model that synchronizes academic rigor with cultural rootedness. The CRPF prioritizes curriculum significance, faculty cultural awareness, and world-scale adaptability while authenticating local knowledge systems. The study concludes that the incorporation of indigenous pedagogies into HEI practices not only seeks educational equity but also reclaims oppressed epistemologies, making the classroom a culturally affirming and socially transformative environment. This project provides a disciplined and scalable model for decolonizing Philippine higher education.

Keywords: *culturally responsive pedagogy, indigenous knowledge systems, higher education, Philippine culture, bayanihan, decolonial theory, inclusive education, intercultural competence, culturally rooted teaching model.*

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Introduction

Introduction. There are challenging times that the Philippine higher education landscape is confronted with, and they are highly promising as the sector scrambles to achieve the delicate equilibrium between the forces of the global academy and the responsibility to protect and foster local and indigenous identities and cultures. In a world of educational policy, practice, and curriculum that is increasingly made global by globalization, the problem of the loss of cultural specificity in pedagogic content and methods causes growing concern. In this light, centering on acknowledging the influence of students' cultural backgrounds on inclusive, equitable, and meaningful curriculum and learning, CRT (Culturally Responsive Teaching) is a transformative pedagogic praxis (Gay, 2018). While CRT has been relatively developed in the Western context, its indigenization in the Philippine HEI has yet to be exhaustively investigated, specifically how traditional Filipino values and indigenous knowledge systems can be integrated towards authentic pedagogy in HEI.

Filipino culture is vibrant with values like *bayanihan* (fellowship and community), *pakikipag-kapwa-tao* (compassion for others), and a rich oral tradition such as the *kuwentuhan* (graphic storytelling). As potent pedagogical devices, these cultural practices humanize and contextualize learning in the arena of involvement and cultural affirmation (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000; Salazar, 2015). However, in a dominant university setting, the curricula it offers are influenced by what could be understood as Western-directed epistemology and pedagogy, which may inadvertently disempower local knowledge traditions and experiences of the lived culture of Learners in the Philippines (Esteban, 2011; Dela Cruz, 2022). With the higher education sector now more open to diversity, intercultural sensitivity, and decolonial frameworks, it is time to reshape in-class teaching and learning that is academically rigorous and culturally relevant.

Despite the growing literary production about multicultural education and indigenous pedagogies (Ladson-Billings 1995, Tuhiwai Smith 2012, Kirkness & Barnhardt 2001) on the other hand, such research focuses on principles put in practice mostly in elementary or high schools or isolated ethnic studies programs, so that a blueprint for their systematic translation at the (Philippine) university level is still lacking. This is a framework that is a cultural entwining of multiculturalism and higher education pedagogy of Filipino values, also reflecting this void. Several (isolated) Acts of State ventures, with varying degrees of success, to (re)insert local traditions into the universe of higher education (Garcia, 2020; Toledo, 2021) end up, as a rule, in fragmentary, built in a fragile and disjointed manner at the institutional level. It is in this vein that this study seeks to: (a) document; (b) analyze; and (c) conceptually fit

these innovations within one's scheme such that they could be systematically integrated in a systemic framework of CRT in Philippine higher education.

This study draws upon Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (Paris, Connelly & Alim, 2017), a framework that offers pedagogical practices that both acknowledge and sustain students' cultural and linguistic practices, and Funds of Knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), which emphasizes learners' contextual knowledge within communities as instructional resources. The framework also provides the lens for how Filipino educators use their understanding of indigenous and local cultural symbols and beliefs in instructing and how much it matters for the developing learner's sense of who they are as learners in a positive and academic sense. Using qualitative research (grounded theory), the aims of this study are

- a) To build a model of pedagogic strategies at the local level
- b) To influence curriculum development, teacher education, and institutional policy in higher education.

Through an exploration of pedagogical innovations grounded in Filipino worlds of cultural practice, the study has generally contributed to a growing literature that advocates a view of the mutually constitutive nature of culture and education as an experience of being human. This argument envisions education as a culturally affirming and socially transformative enterprise. Its goal is not just to answer the absence in education literature and research, but also to bring indigenous Filipino pedagogies out from the periphery and into the center of HEs discourse on higher education and transformation. In this sense, education becomes more than just the average conduit of knowledge reproduction; it is also a venue for cultural rebirth.

Research Objectives

1. To understand local/ indigenous cultural practices in the Philippines as bases of creative sources for new pedagogical approaches in HEIs.
2. Investigate how academics in Philippine HEIs incorporate culturally embedded pedagogical practices in instruction and examine their effectiveness in promoting student engagement and learning.
3. To formulate an academically rigorous and culturally responsive teaching model rooted in the local cultural heritage of the Philippines for use in the creation of curriculum design, instruction planning, and faculty training in tertiary institutions.

Research Methodology

Following the objectives, the study adopted a qualitative methodology based on ethnography and case study to examine the nexus of Filipino culture and pedagogical change in HEIs. The methodological approach was intended to explore in depth how indigenous and local cultural practices provide creative knowledge for teaching strategies, how they have been implemented in the HEIs, and integrated into a didactic model using culturally responsive strategies for the tertiary level.

To achieve the first objective, document analysis and key informant interviews were undertaken to understand the scope of local and indigenous cultures in a wide range of Philippine ethnolinguistic groups. Archival sources, community ethnographies, and cultural documents provided by NCCA and local heritage offices were consulted as the framework for the traditional values of *bayanihan*, *pakikipagkapwa-tao*, *kuwentuhan*, and ritual-based learning. These sources allowed the author to follow the cultural traditions and note teaching opportunities within these experiences. Cultural Teachings Interviews were conducted with cultural bearers, elders, and local classroom teachers to ensure the legitimacy and quality of the cultural data.

To achieve the second goal, the researcher implemented semi-structured interviews and classroom observations among professors of the so-called “selected” higher education institutions in the Philippines that integrate cultural content in their instruction. Educators from the disciplines of education, humanities, and social sciences were purposively sampled to provide diversity of teaching contexts. Through these interviews, the research recorded how teachers created and implemented culturally founded pedagogies (local languages, community immersion experiences, and ancestral knowledge) as inclusive teaching practices. Classroom dynamics were observed through an engagement rubric focused on participation, affective response, and culturally situated discourse. These approaches provided a deep and wide analysis of the efficacy of these practices for engagement, inclusion, and deeper learning.

For the third purpose, a grounded theory analysis was conducted, and a model, which is culturally responsive, academically rigorous, and contextually Filipino, was developed. Transcripts from interviews, observation notes, and field memos were analyzed using thematic coding, and themes and pedagogical beliefs were memorialized. The emerging themes were then integrated to develop a theoretical model that describes the link between cultural identity, teachers’ practice, and student experiences. This model was reviewed and confirmed in discussions with the faculty participants and curriculum experts who met in focus groups and who considered the

model in terms of its theoretical coherence and its practical utility. The product, the envisioned framework, is intended to shape curriculum planning, instructional design, and faculty development initiatives anchored on Filipino cultural contexts amid a globalized academic setting.

Ethical approval was obtained before data collection, and written informed consent was received from each respondent. Confidentiality of shared knowledge was maintained, and sensitivity to culture in all shared knowledge (especially by indigenous communities) was respected by the study. Thus, the approach offered a sound culturally based model to afford insight on, document, and theorize institutional learning innovations at higher education in the Philippines.

Results and Discussion

Indigenous Cultural Practices in the Philippines as a Basis of Creative Sources

In the changing terrain of Philippine higher education, there is an urgent call for the pursuit of culturally rooted pedagogical approaches that are relevant and responsive to the life-worlds of the Filipino learner. At its core is an appreciation of local and indigenous cultures, traditions, and practices, such as *bayanihan*, *pagtutulungan*, *kuwentuhan*, and indigenous rituals, as rich resources for the creative and innovative use in the classroom. Such practices, rooted in community life and ancestral wisdom, challenge traditional paradigms and provide alternative models that create environments of inclusivity, belonging, and identity affirmation in academic settings. Through recognizing and reifying these cultural modes into classroom practices, HEIs can begin to reach towards a more responsive and decolonized pedagogy within academia that continues to uphold the rigor of academics but affirms Filipino students' cultural inheritances and epistemologies. With that question in mind, this study aims to explore how these traditional practices can become creative infrastructure in crafting educational practices anew that are contextually appropriate and culturally sustaining.

Bayanihan and Pagtutulungan as Pedagogies of Collaboration and Collective Learning

Filipino culture values such as *bayanihan* (shared community responsibility) and *pagtutulungan* (cooperative working) are more than the practice of good neighboring; they simulate integrated ways of life centered on interconnectedness, interdependence, and caring for one another. In higher education, such values can be converted to pedagogical principles involving cooperative learning, peer cooperation, and group responsibility. They buck the instinct of individual, competitive learning

styles so often typical of academic models in the West and contribute to a culture of shared success and mutual improvement.

Participant Responses:

Dr. Liza, a professor in Philippine Studies from Northern Luzon, shared:

"In my community development class, students work on group service projects in nearby barangays. They organize as bayanihan teams, and their success depends not on individual performance but on how well they cooperate and support one another. It is more than group work; it is a cultural performance of solidarity."

Prof. Ramon, an education instructor from a state university in Mindanao, similarly remarked:

"I always remind my students that learning is not a race. I encourage pagtutulungan in my classroom by assigning team-based tasks where members lead and mentor each other. They are evaluated not only on the output but on how they upheld values of respect, patience, and mutual help."

These stories illustrate how *bayanihan* and *pagtutulungan* are pedagogical strategies and a relationship pedagogy wherein the classroom mirrors the Filipino community. These methods help shift the teacher from being the only knower to being a knowledge maker alongside the student. These values foster soft skills like empathy, leadership, and civic duty when incorporated into instructional activities. Most significantly, in response to diversity, they are culturally affirming, situating learning within the cultural DNA of Filipino social life. As has been argued by Gay (2018) and Ladson-Billings (1995), CRT requires more than the recognition of students' cultural backgrounds but the interweaving of those cultural stories and their value systems into the tapestry of the curriculum.

Kuwentuhan (Oral Storytelling) as a Pedagogy of Critical Reflection and Cultural Memory

In the Philippines, Kuwentuhan, the art of storytelling, is a compelling way of passing on knowledge, moral teaching, and cultural preservation. Unlike formal lecture-centric techniques, kuwentuhan is interactive, introspective, and affective. It enables students and educators to experience content on a personal, storytelling level that can be transformative. In the academy, oral storytelling has been discussed in terms of critical reflection and how it can link theories and experience, history and identity, or social problems and personal understanding.

Participant Responses:

Ma'am Estella, a literature instructor from the Visayas, stated:

"I begin every session with a short story, either a folk tale from our region or a personal memory. My students respond with their own stories. What starts as a casual kuwentuhan

often leads to deeper discussions about power, justice, or identity. It is not just sharing; it is interrogating through narrative."

Another respondent, Sir Antonio, a sociology professor from Metro Manila, shared:

"I use story circles regularly. One time, a student narrated about her grandmother's escape from martial law. That opened a floodgate of intergenerational stories. We discuss historical trauma, resilience, and memory through these narratives, not just from textbooks but from lived realities."

These observations indicate that narrative explanation in the classroom can foster an affective union with course content. It validates student voices, recognizing and affirming their experiences as valid ways of knowing. Secondly, it places learning in a culturally relevant context that Filipino students inherently know and do. This is in line with Freire's (1970) dialogical model of teaching and Paris & Alim's (2017) culturally sustaining pedagogy, and both models contend that teaching should not mute, but instead, sumptuously articulate, culturally bound ways of knowing. Kuwentuhan turns classrooms into spaces of shared memory, affective response, and critical thought in earlier encounters than didactic ways.

Indigenous Rituals and Symbolic Practices as Embodied and Contextualized Learning

Indigenous rituals and symbolic practices across Philippine ethnolinguistic groups, from panubad (ritual permission from nature spirits) to kanyaw (Cordilleran thanksgiving rituals), are not merely spiritual traditions but are also educational acts. These rituals teach ecological responsibility, social harmony, respect for ancestors, and holistic wellness. When respectfully integrated into academic content, they serve as examples of embodied learning, where students not just read about knowledge, but participate in it through movement, symbols, music, and communal experience.

Participant Responses:

Participant 14, an indigenous scholar and environmental science instructor in Davao del Sur, shared: *"When teaching climate resilience, I invite tribal elders to perform the panubad. Students witness how our ancestors respected the forest, asking permission before harvesting. Afterward, students reflect on environmental ethics from Western frameworks and our indigenous worldview."*

Meanwhile, Participant 10, a cultural anthropology lecturer in Baguio City, explained:

"We reenacted the kanyaw ritual in class with community approval. Students did not just study Cordillera cosmology; they embodied it. They reflected on the values behind the

dance, chants, and offering rituals, realizing that knowledge is not always in books but in practices and symbols."

These responses underscore how rituals embody another kind of literacy, an embodied, experiential, and culture-shared form of learning, in contrast to traditional academic approaches that can place a high value on the written word, ritualized pedagogy calls on students' senses, emotions, and spirituality. It expands their knowledge and decolonizes knowledge production by centering indigenous epistemologies. Tuhiwai Smith (2012) and Kirkness & Barnhardt (2001) advocate for the validity of these knowledge systems in academic contexts embedded within the learner's ethical, cultural, and historical conditions.

The Role of Indigenous Pedagogies in Fostering Engagement and Learning in Philippine Higher Education

The infusion of culturally based contextualist pedagogical practices as a driver of reform, a view from Philippine higher education. With increasingly diverse realities experienced in the classrooms and the intensification of the challenge of inclusive education, teachers are looking into indigenous traditions, Filipino values, and local knowledge systems that can serve as relevant bases for teaching. This paper reports a study that explores how faculty members in Philippine higher education institutions (HEIs) integrate culturally embedded practices such as oral storytelling, bayanihan-inspired collaboration, and infusion of indigenous knowledge systems in their teaching-learning activities. Through experimenting with these systems, it will be necessary to consider the authenticity and depth of the proposed cultural foundations and the expected student engagement, active participation, and deep-level learning. It illustrates how culturally responsive teaching can serve as a conduit between academic content and students' lived experiences and how to create more inclusive and empowering educational spaces.

Reviving Oral Traditions and Storytelling as Pedagogical Tools

One significant culturally embedded practice evident in many HEIs is using oral traditions and storytelling as instructional strategies. Drawing from indigenous and folk traditions such as *kuwentong-bayan*, *epiko*, and even personal narratives,

faculty use storytelling to anchor abstract concepts in lived cultural experiences. This strategy localizes content and stimulates imagination, empathy, and critical thinking.

Participant Responses:

Participant 8, a Filipino literature professor, shared, *“When I teach pre-colonial texts, I begin with a local myth from our province. The students become instantly engaged. They ask questions. They reflect on their cultural roots.”*

Similarly, Participant 16, a sociology professor, stated, *“Narratives from indigenous leaders and elders are powerful. I play recorded oral stories in class -students listen intently and later relate these to social justice issues.”*

Such responses support the idea of storytelling to improve student involvement. When education is grounded in familiar cultural narratives, students feel more at home and appreciated for who they are. This engagement is not just emotional but also encourages more critical thought. Students go from being the passive recipients in the class to active performers in how they bring the information in the course to who they are personally and culturally. In addition, storytelling provides places of inclusion where minority cultures are recognized and celebrated, thus supporting cultural equity in the classroom.

Practicing Bayanihan and Pagtutulungan through Collaborative Learning

The Filipino values of *bayanihan* (communal unity) and *pagtutulungan* (mutual help) are recontextualized into collaborative classroom practices. Educators structure learning activities that require group work, shared decision-making, and interdependence. These practices reflect cultural values and develop critical 21st-century competencies like teamwork, empathy, and leadership.

Participant Responses:

Participant 3, an education professor, shared, *“My group projects are not just for grades. I tell students that learning is communal. They must ensure each member understands the output.”*

Participant 9, a science lecturer, explained, *“I use pagtutulungan as a principle. In lab work, roles rotate. Everyone becomes accountable for one another’s learning.”*

This theme illustrates how traditional communal values are translated into contemporary pedagogical strategies. When educators apply *bayanihan* and *pagtutulungan*, they foster socially cohesive and emotionally supportive classrooms. This model departs from individualistic, competitive learning systems and reimagines learning as a shared endeavor. As a result, students are more willing to participate,

less afraid to make mistakes, and more invested in collective achievement, enhancing engagement and learning outcomes.

Integrating Rituals, Symbolisms, and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) into Academic Content

Another culturally embedded approach observed is the conscious integration of indigenous knowledge systems (IKS), local rituals, and symbolisms into the formal curriculum. This includes referencing local ecological knowledge in environmental science classes, exploring ethnic philosophies in ethics classes, or using traditional symbols in design courses. Such integration legitimizes indigenous epistemologies and promotes a more inclusive academic framework.

Participant Responses:

Participant 5, who teaches environmental studies, explained, *“I present climate change models alongside traditional weather patterns known by the Aeta and the Ifugao. Students are amazed at how accurate some of these are.”*

Participant 11, a design educator, added, *“In visual arts, I encourage students to study patterns from indigenous weaving or tattooing. These are not just aesthetic but carry meaning and stories.”*

The inclusion of IKS and cultural rituals in teaching acts as a linking tool between academic learning and cultural identification. It represents indigenous knowledge and broadens students' intellectual horizons. Such an approach advances learning and promotes respect for the world's cultural diversity. Allowing for these knowledge systems helps educators to facilitate critical thinking, intercultural competence, and recognition of ancestral wisdom, all of which are fundamental for an inclusive and holistic education.

Through the three strands, storytelling, collaborative value, and indigenous knowledge integration, the Philippine HEIs educators are visually showing that culture-embedded pedagogies are not just added frills but transformative modes of instruction. These practices raise student engagement and learning and validate cultural identity, making education more inclusive, relatable, and meaningful to Filipino learners. With these pedagogies, teaching becomes a situated cultural action;

it is no longer an action that disempowers but one that empowers, and the classroom is no longer a site of academic and cultural disavowal at the same time.

The Culturally Rooted Pedagogical Framework (CRPF): A Philippine Model for Inclusive and Intercultural Higher Education

Theoretical and Philosophical Foundation

The Culturally Rooted Pedagogical Framework (CRPF) draws from two interdependent theoretical sources: Decolonial Theory and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP). Decolonial Theory (Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2000) challenges the persistence of colonialism in school curricula and calls for liberating knowledge and practice from Eurocentric models. In the Filipino setting, such theory underscores the recovery of colonially marginalized indigenous worldviews, knowledge systems, and pedagogies. This is supplemented by Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995), which holds that learners learn better when their cultural selves are validated and woven into the learning experience. CRP promotes validating learners' heritage, languages, and life experiences on top of high academic achievement. Together, these paradigms guide the construction of the CRPF as a pedagogical model grounded on Filipino cultural realities and consonant with international standards of educational practice. They all uphold a vision of education as fostering justice, inclusivity, intercultural understanding, and transformative learning.

Core Pillars of the Framework

The CRPF is built upon four essential pillars that guide the development of culturally responsive curriculum, instruction, and faculty development in HEIs:

Cultural Grounding and Contextual Relevance

This pillar asserts that effective pedagogy must begin with an authentic recognition of learners' cultural identities and sociohistorical contexts. Philippine indigenous traditions such as *bayanihan* (collective solidarity), *pakikipagkapwa* (shared humanity), oral storytelling, *pagtutulungan* (reciprocal help), and local rituals provide rich pedagogical material that can inform both content and instructional strategies. The Culturally Rooted Pedagogical Framework (CRPF) can be seen in curriculum planning, classroom activity, and assessment procedures focused on Filipino cultural experiences. In curriculum planning, local histories, indigenous epistemologies, and community practices are given primacy as texts and themes cutting across disciplines

so that instruction would speak to the lived world of learners. Classroom exercises are inspired by everyday and community-based practices, like group activities replicated from the essence of bayanihan, writing stories based on oral narratives, and reflective tasks inspired by indigenous rituals and traditions. Assessment instruments are also modified to respect varied ways of exhibiting knowledge, such as oral recitations, visual narrations, and group activities highlighting cultural involvement and collaboration. These socially situated practices yield students' greater involvement and a sense of more firmly grounded identity, belonging, and agency. Eventually, this integrated mode of learning yields more substantial learning experiences that validate students' cultural heritage while cultivating their academic skill sets.

Academic Rigor and Disciplinary Integrity

While the CRPF gives cultural appropriateness priority, it is always grounded in the pursuit of academic quality and scholarly soundness. Incorporating culture into the school environment does not compromise standards of evidence-based research, critical examination, or subject mastery. Instead, it recontextualizes these standards within Filipino students' daily lives, making scholarly learning more real and applicable. This is embodied in curriculum mapping initiatives that map indigenous and local knowledge systems to Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and CHED's institutional outcomes, e.g., critical thinking and ethical leadership. The framework also supports ethnographic research, community-based case studies, and indigenous knowledge validation as valid methodologies across faculties such as education, history, agriculture, and health sciences. Assessment methods are similarly reimaged through multimodal techniques that integrate academic achievement with cultural responsiveness rubrics, reflective journals, and project-based deliverables. In so doing, students are not merely provided with technical and theoretical knowledge but also the ability to use this knowledge on culturally embedded and socially pertinent issues, mediating academic rigor and transformative, context-sensitive learning.

Intercultural Competence and Global Orientation

This pillar of the Culturally Rooted Pedagogical Framework (CRPF) is a transition between the local cultural grounding and the skills needed to promote global citizenship. Philippine Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are enjoined to assume the twin responsibility of developing national identity while equipping students to communicate effectively in multicultural contexts, international trade, and worldwide academic partnerships. The courses are structured to relate local concerns,

i.e., sustainable agriculture, community health, and climate resilience, to international frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ASEAN cooperation, and intercultural dialogue. Pedagogies foster multilingualism, comparative education, and cultural exchange to nurture open-mindedness and empathy among the learners. Additionally, academic calendars incorporate virtual and on-site mobility programs, international collaborative research projects, and cross-cultural community engagements with overseas institutions. Using these applications, students become intercultural literate, globally conscious, and adaptive communicators who can contribute meaningfully in international settings while rooted in their Filipino cultural identity.

Faculty Cultural Competence and Reflective Praxis

Faculty development is the basis for the sustainability of the Culturally Rooted Pedagogical Framework (CRPF), as it is acknowledged that teachers are the central agents of both academic learning and the passing down of culture. This pillar calls attention to nurturing culturally competent faculty who conduct ongoing reflection, collaboration, and professional development. Towards this, HEIs deploy targeted training interventions on culturally responsive pedagogy, intercultural dialogue, and the incorporation indigenous knowledge systems. Faculty are also invited to participate in Learning Action Cells (LACs), peer coaching, and mentorship programs that develop context-sensitive and inclusive instructional approaches. Reflective praxis is also supported through digital teaching portfolios, cultural observation logs, and student feedback loops designed to enhance instructional effectiveness. Consequently, teachers become cultural brokers and curriculum transformers, lifelong learners capable of creating learning experiences that are academically challenging yet culturally engaged.

Structural Implementation Plan

To institutionalize the CRPF, HEIs can adopt the following three-tiered implementation structure:

1. Curriculum Level: Establish institutional policies that support the co-creation of curricula with local cultural stakeholders (e.g., elders, artists, community

- leaders). Integrate indigenous and place-based content in both primary and general education courses.
2. Instructional Planning Level: Design learning modules and lesson plans that reflect the CRPF's pillars. Embed local examples, rituals, and case studies to ground instruction in the Filipino learner's sociocultural reality.
 3. Faculty Training and Institutional Development Level: Form Cultural Pedagogy Units within each college to lead training, research, and innovation related to culturally rooted instruction. Ensure faculty promotion systems reward cultural integration efforts and reflective teaching practices.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Sustainability

The Culturally Rooted Pedagogical Framework (CRPF) integrates a strong system of mechanisms for evaluation to measure the effectiveness, relevance, and long-term sustainability of culturally relevant teaching practices in higher education institutions. At the heart of this assessment structure are Cultural Relevance Indicators, which are co-designed with local communities to ensure that classroom cultural content is authentic and powerful. These measures gauge how much instructional activities and materials incorporate indigenous values, local customs, and community knowledge systems. Concurrently, Learner Engagement Metrics capture both quantitative and qualitative aspects of learner engagement. Student interviews, reflective feedback journals, attendance, and participation rates are among those used, providing information on how students respond to culturally integrated instruction.

The other central aspect of the CRPF's assessment process is the annual submission of Faculty Reflection Reports. These reports record teachers' experiences using culturally responsive pedagogical strategies, including innovations implemented, challenges faced, and context-specific strategies evolved to increase cultural integration. They are essential professional development and institutional learning tools. To ensure ongoing improvement and policy responsiveness, the structure also encompasses Longitudinal Studies that track the effects of the CRPF over time. The studies follow changes in student learning outcomes, development of community-academic partnerships, and wider institutional changes towards more responsive and inclusive education systems. These assessment mechanisms

collectively ensure that the CRPF is dynamic, accountable, and responsive to the changing education and culture in Philippine higher education.

Conclusion

The Culturally Rooted Pedagogical Framework (CRPF) is a comprehensive, scholarly, and community-responsive teaching model that bridges indigenous cultural heritage and contemporary educational practice in the Philippine context. It not only affirms the identities of Filipino learners but also cultivates intercultural competence and global readiness. By embedding the CRPF in curriculum design, instruction, and faculty development, Philippine HEIs can become agents of inclusive, transformative, and culturally just education in the 21st century.

Discussion

The three presentations highlight the disruptive potential of culturally based pedagogies in the Philippines' HEIs. Central in these discourses is the understanding that indigenous knowledge systems and local cultural traditions (i.e., *bayanihan*, *pagtutulungan*, *kuwentuhan*, and ancestral rituals) are not merely heritage practices, but innovative pedagogical tools that can be used to confront the educational issues of the day. According to Gay (2010) and Ladson-Billings (1995), culturally responsive pedagogy secures learning by affirming students' sociocultural pose, a belief observed in these Filipino educators' practices. Indigenous Pedagogies Beneath Pirate Skies 49 Similarly, Freire's (1970) notion of dialogical teaching can also be seen in the *kuwentuhan*, a story-driven process that allows for critical reflection and group meaning production. These two values in collaborative learning, such as service-learning and group mentoring activities, are consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist view that highlights social interaction as an integral part of cognitive development. Furthermore, incorporating rituals like the *panubad* and the *kanyaw* resonates with Tuhiwai Smith's (2012) decolonizing methodologies and the recentering of indigenous epistemologies across the academy.

The second presentation extends this discussion to emphasize specific classroom practices, where 'oral traditions,' 'storytelling,' and 'community narratives' take their place in learning. This is consistent with the logic of retaining and transforming students' cultural entries to academia (Gonzales & Gonzales, 2025) and the work of Paris and Alim (2017), who argue for culturally sustaining pedagogies that sustain and extend students' cultural identities with academia. When teachers use folk epics, local myths, and ancestral memories, students learn the content and develop intercultural competence and empathy, attributes requisite for global citizenship

(Banks, 2008). Foremost, integrating indigenous ecological knowledge in environmental science, such as using Aeta and Ifugao weather systems, also resounds with the conclusion of Berkes's ed (2012), pointing out the sophistication of traditional ecological knowledge systems in sustainability education. The encouragement of local artistry and symbolism as illustrated in design education is echoed by Sevilla et.al (2024), asserting that Philippine visual culture contains profound historical and philosophical meanings that could enhance formal education.

The third presentation, which describes the Culturally Rooted Pedagogical Framework (CRPF), presents a framework for embedding this work within institutions. It draws from the important work of Mignolo (2007) and Quijano (2000) on decoloniality, centered on the call to reclaim education from Eurocentric bias and recenter indigenous agency. Rooted in cultural grounding, academic rigor, intercultural competence, and faculty praxis, the four pillars offer an integrated approach to curricular re-examination, instructional design, and faculty development. It also takes a stand for co-creation with local communities, in line with the participatory action research paradigm endorsed by Creswell and Poth (2018), and urges tracking long-term impact to keep sustainability in mind. Collectively, these papers reaffirm the validity of Filipino indigenous pedagogies and illustrate how they are applied in contemporary educational arenas, suggesting a way for HEIs to embrace a more inclusive, locally rooted, and globally grounded model of instruction.

Conclusion

The implications of this study indicate that culturally rooted pedagogies based on Philippine indigenous and local cultures, e.g., *bayanihan*, *pagtutulungan*, *kuwentuhan*, and ancestral rituals, are not only practicable but imperative means for socializing culture in higher education at a more inclusive, humanized, and socially responsible academic space. The results support that such cultural practices have served as thematic inspiration and methodological wellsprings, furnishing Filipino HEIs abundant sources of relational, dialogical, and embodied situated pedagogical practices that harmonize both academic rigor and local epistemologies. Educators can deepen student engagement, cooperative learning, and critical reflection in emotionally engaging, socially connected and culturally validating classrooms by grounding pedagogies in common cultural values and oral traditions.

In addition, indigenous pedagogies promote inclusive education by validating learners' cultural identities and the communities to which they belong, thus empowering students in their respective places within the world. Academic staff who employed *kuwentuhan* and models of working together and collaborations based on

bayanihan and pagtutulungan observed that students were more willing to engage, were more empathetic, and felt stronger solidarity within their classroom. Moreover, the relevant incorporation of indigenous rituals and ways of knowing, eco-knowledge, ceremony, and ethnicity, for example, into classroom material also served as a robust scaffold for experiential, contextual learning. These pedagogical shifts undermine Eurocentric models while supporting the credibility of local knowing, as per Gay (2010), Ladson-Billings (1995), and Tuhiwai Smith (2012).

An end-to-end innovative beyond-school initiative that pushes the envelope further with the CRPF is its creation, which is demanding that nations institutionalize this practice. CRPF is informed by decolonial theory and culturally responsive pedagogy, and provides a holistic model that situates cultural grounding, academic excellence, intercultural competence, and faculty cultural responsiveness. This model offers higher education a new compass to curriculum design, instruction planning, and faculty development towards Filipino education with a global standing. It recognizes that education is not neutral, but cultural, and that pedagogical designs must align with people's lived realities, histories, and dreams.

In sum, this research is part of a movement to prioritize the knowledge of Filipino indigenous peoples in the academy. It fills a void in the literature on higher education pedagogy in the Philippines. It offers a tested, workable model of re-envisioning education in a struggle for cultural recovery, social justice, and national transformation. By affirming these pedagogies in policies and everyday practice, HEIs can play a role in supporting the development of generations of learners who are academically able, culturally relevant, and deeply connected to their histories and culture, all while prepared to navigate a globally connected world without losing hold of who they are and where they come from.

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