

FILIPINO PHILOSOPHIES: AN APPROACH TO AN IMPROVED CIVIC COMPETENCE THROUGH ARLING PANLIPUNAN

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Abstract

The study investigated the integration of indigenous Filipino philosophies 'Loob' and 'Kapwa' into Araling Panlipunan (AP) to strengthen civic competence among students for SY 2024-2025. Specifically, it examined how integrating these philosophies in the teaching and learning design could address the overemphasis on rote memorization and improve meaningful civic formation-the main thrust of the AP subject. Directly aligned with the Basic Education Research Agenda (BERA) and QBEDP Strategic Directions, the study focuses on Teaching and Learning by systematizing instructional delivery through a framework centered on relational ethics and shared identity. This innovation directly advances the QBEDP goal of pivoting to quality by transforming abstract civic concepts into lived, culturally relevant experiences. Through the lens of critical realism, the study employed a qualitative basic research design. Purposive sampling selected veteran AP teachers as participants. Data were collected through thematic interviews to surface dispositional themes and pedagogical insights. The findings revealed that explicit integration of these philosophies addresses the disconnect between classroom lessons and social responsibility, fostering empathy, critical thinking, and stronger social bonds. Teachers perceived that utilizing pedagogical strategies like role-playing and contextualized questioning provides a powerful mechanism for building responsible citizenship. The study concluded that grounding pedagogy in Filipino identity is essential for achieving the QBEDP objective of expanding access to meaningful civic formation. It is recommended that this framework be scaled across CALABARZON through systematic teacher training and policy support to ensure a community-oriented, high-quality AP education.

Introduction

This study is conducted to explore a new framework in teaching Araling Panlipunan (AP) where 'loob' and 'kapwa' are integrated to foster civic competence. Current studies have shown the importance of forming the civic competence of the students. However, researchers have found that it is not directly a part of AP subjects of grades 7 to 10. Thus, teachers had to exert extra effort to incorporate civic competence in teaching AP despite various obstacles (Seludo & Murillo, 2022). Matienzo (2022) and Reyes (2015) maintain that a return to Filipino philosophies can better national consciousness. Rodriguez (2023) agrees by promoting education that advocates Filipino philosophies.

Based on this gap, this study answered the research question:

How do AP teachers view the role of loob and kapwa in improving students' civic competence and overall AP education?

Consequently, this study also identifies which specific components or activities within the AP lesson plan teachers find most feasible and effective for integrating loob and kapwa to enhance students' learning and civic competence.

The philosophies of 'loob' and 'kapwa' provides an understanding of Filipino social dynamics and they foster values that are relevant to civic competence, as well as collective resilience. Drawing on these philosophies and integrating them in the teaching and learning process on AP, will enhance civic competence among the students. For instance, the students will have a meaningful understanding of supply and demand in economics if they frame that within the context of 'loob' and 'kapwa' such as ethical decision making and social responsibility. Students will be able to explore how even in capitalist countries, producers and consumers must consider the integrity of their choices. 'Kapwa' should frame the discussion on the very definition and objectives of economics.

The different pedagogies should enable a swift integration of these Filipino Philosophies in AP. One can easily consider the reflective approach as the pedagogical strategy to be used for such integration. It would be interesting to prompt students to identify how historical figures like Andres Bonifacio demonstrated integrity (loob) and how did it affect his community. Perhaps, it would be interesting to check as well if the students can identify if there is a collective trait, particularly on 'kapwa', among our historical heroes which shaped nationhood or at least, the Filipino identity.

The results of this study will provide useful insights in the drafting of an action plan on an improved teaching-learning process in AP. These philosophies can sustain community-oriented Filipino society that values harmonious relationships and collective well-being. Understanding local and global history, culture, society, and economics with the aid of these philosophical concepts can enable the students to have a deeper and more meaningful learning that can ultimately lead to an enhanced civic competence among students making the subject more relevant and meaningful.

As a background, the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10533) aims to form students into knowledgeable citizens who are actively involved in public and civic affairs so that they may become capable of contributing to a progressive, just, and humane society. The basic curriculum deems that AP has an important role in making students contributing members of society. Ultimately, the aim of AP is to promote civic competence among students and inculcate in them the values and responsibilities of informed and active citizens of the Philippine society. Thus, AP teachers are expected to integrate civic competence into the lesson. Moreover, the Republic Act No. 10066 or the National Heritage Act of 2009 underscored the incorporation of cultural education in teaching to promote cultural heritage.

Seludo and Murillo (2023) found that Araling Panlipunan teachers are challenged in integrating civic competence into their lessons. In history, for instance, students are taught facts, and they are expected to memorize facts. The Araling Panlipunan classes do not directly integrate civic competence, so teachers are left searching for different ways to integrate it to their classes. The concepts of 'Loob' and 'Kapwa' are essential for comprehending Filipino identity, social relationships, and ethical behavior (Matienzo, 2022).

Reyes (2015) provided an intriguing and detailed discussion of these two notions. Loob is a relational will or inner self that impacts one's conduct toward others. In Filipino philosophy, it is an inner urge to act in a way that is harmonious with others or maintains healthy relationships. It is a person's honesty, empathy, and sense of responsibility to other members of society or

their family. As the moral compass, 'loob' serves as the foundation for several relationship qualities, including 'kadandahang-loob' (beauty of will) and 'utang na loob' (debt of will). On the other side, 'Kapwa' refers to a community's shared identity or connection rather than just a 'fellow person'. Thus, a person's well-being influences the well-being of others, resulting in empathy, solidarity, and social cohesiveness being the norm. 'Pakikisama' and 'bayanihan' demonstrate how 'kapwa' encourages seeing others as extensions of oneself, emphasizing shared responsibility and common identity (Reyes, 2015).

Methods

This study enables an in-depth and contextually rich examination of the Filipino philosophies 'loob' and 'kapwa' as a tool in teaching civic competence among the learners. To do so, it made use of qualitative methodology, particularly thematic analysis with critical realist lens, which facilitated comprehensive insights from participants, encapsulating the depth of their experiences and viewpoints.

The study employed purposive sampling with a target of 6 interviewees (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022) from public schools in different regions with focus on how Araling Panlipunan teachers believe integrating loob and kapwa enhances high school students' learning and civic competence, given these philosophies' role in Filipino cultural identity. Research indicates that a minimum of 6-9 interviews can adequately cover themes and codes, with substantial theme representation often achieved with 6 -10 cases (Young & Casey, 2018). Data saturation, where no new information emerges, is a critical factor. Studies show that 73% of codes can be identified in the first six interviews (Young & Casey, 2018). The inclusion criteria for the target interviewees were (1) currently serving as an AP teacher in junior high school, (2) has been an Araling Panlipunan teacher for at least 5 years, and (3) has an ample knowledge about 'loob' and 'kapwa'.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to enable a structured but flexible data collection. The open-ended interview guide that is aligned with the research framework encouraged in-depth responses for a more comfortable atmosphere for the participants (AlBurno et al., 2022; Donohue & Power, 2014). The research made use of a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions. This allowed the researcher to be more flexible and adaptable in asking questions that brought insights on how the philosophies 'loob' and 'kapwa' can be utilized to impart civic awareness of the students (Ruslin et al., 2022). This also allowed the interviewees to share personal experiences as well as school practices and challenges (Mahat-Shamir, 2021).

The interview proceeded with general questions and conversation that is related to the participants' current work so that rapport was built while staying on topic. The open-ended questions was used to get a more candid and conversational responses (Dunwoodie & Newman, 2022). The transcription of the audio recordings from the interviews was coded, and then subjected to thematic analysis, with modifications to reflect a critical realist perspective (Fyer, 2022; Wiltshire & Ronkainen, 2021). The identities and the affiliations of the respondents were masked.

Descriptive and standardized codes (Fryer, 2022), inferential and dispositional themes was identified across all the transcripts and was

synthesized to surface convergent and divergent concepts to understand the topic of investigation. First, the researcher transcribed the interviews and studied the transcriptions. The researcher then generated codes from a line-by-line review for each transcription and reviewed them to enhance data analysis.

Results and Discussion

The thematic analysis led to the following 8 overarching dispositional themes: Loob and Kapwa strengthen moral and civic understanding; they foster empathy and critical thinking; they foster student engagement; integrate loob and kapwa through contextualized questioning student reflection, role playing, and group activities; explicit integration of loob and kapwa develops student competence; loob and kapwa strengthen social bonds and classroom culture; and need for resources and training to support effective integration.

Table 1
Table of Dispositional and Inferential Themes

Dispositional Themes	Inferential Themes
1. Loob and Kapwa Strengthen Moral and Civic Understanding	• Integration of Filipino values enables students to understand ethics beyond textbook definitions • Teaching becomes more transformative when grounded in shared identity and relational responsibility.
2. Loob and Kapwa foster empathy and critical thinking	• Empathy as a cognitive and emotional foundation in civic education • Mechanical learning (rote memorization) lacks transformative power
3. Loob and Kapwa foster student engagement	• Cultural relevance enhances relatability and classroom engagement. • Learners connect better when moral and civic concepts are rooted in lived Filipino experiences. • Teachers see loob and kapwa as bridges relating historical events to students' realities.
4. Integrate 'loob' and 'kapwa' through contextualized questioning, role playing, group activities, and student reflection	• Reflective questions allow students to articulate values through personal and observed experiences. • Contextualization fosters empathy, perspective-taking, and critical civic awareness. • Collaborative methods bring emotional and ethical understanding • Role-playing encourages perspective-taking, crucial to civic competence
5. Explicit	• Students develop interpersonal respect and civic-

integration of Loob and Kapwa develops students' civic competence	mindedness through value-based discussion. • Understanding <i>loob</i> and <i>kapwa</i> leads to socially responsible behavior.
6. Integrate at lesson introduction, contextualization, and assessment	• Loob and kapwa can shape lesson framing and discussions. • Real-life scenarios and decision-based assessments are effective platforms for integration. • Decision-making topics naturally align with introspection (<i>loob</i>) and community consideration (<i>kapwa</i>).
7. Loob and Kapwa strengthen social bonds and classroom culture	• Classroom harmony improves engagement and peer learning • Affective atmosphere supports deeper social awareness
8. Need for resources and training to support effective integration	• Integration is hindered by lack of structured materials and teacher preparation. • System-wide interventions (e.g., CPD, modules) are needed to make integration sustainable.

Loob and Kapwa Strengthen Moral and Civic Understanding

The integration of loob and kapwa in the teaching and learning processes can deepen the students' understanding of moral and civic values by going beyond abstract definitions toward practical experiences and a meaningful grasp of concepts. They create a culturally grounded framework that promotes loob as a moral compass that is part of the students' personal identity and the identity of the community they belong to. For instance, instead of looking at heroes as names to be memorized, students begin to look further through the lens of loob and kapwa why the heroes felt like they had the moral duty to protect their homeland and a civic awareness that guided their actions. This yields an education that is both transformative and personal.

“Kaya sila yung mga moral compass, ‘loob’ is the foundation of numerous relational virtues... empathy, solidarity, and social cohesion become the norm.” (Int 1, 20-23)

“Imbes na magmemorize lang sila ng mga concepts, magkakaroon sila ng mas malalim na pag-unawa ng mga pangyayari sa kasaysayan.” (Int 2, 13-16)

Loob and Kapwa Foster Empathy and Critical Thinking

Loob and Kapwa can initiate teaching that promotes both emotional sensitivity and critical reflection, which are pivotal to the formation of civic learning. Inviting students to empathize with others when they are being taught concepts on economics, such as supply and demand, and asking them

to question social issues like minimum income, can be done smoothly through loob and kapwa. AP subjects are notorious for rote memorization which does not bring about genuine learning, approaches involving loob and kapwa cultivate deeper thought processes which help students evaluate civic situations with compassion and moral reasoning ultimately improving their emphatic and critical thinking.

“Kung wala yung damdamin, wala yung puso, tapos nag-aaral ka lang ng dates... parang robot lang.” (Int 4, 18-20)

“Teaching the contemporary issues with Grade 10 students can best be done through loob and kapwa, lalo na yung mga issues that can be sensitive such as LGBT plus and human rights.” (Int 3, 30-33)

Loob and Kapwa Foster Student Engagement

Contextual teaching and cultural relevance can naturally increase the engagement of the students as their interest is piqued by something that they can relate to. In this sense, integrating loob and kapwa is meaningful as lessons become more relatable because the students will be able to see the relevance of moral and civic education in their daily lives. Integrating loob and kapwa fills the gap that should put together abstract historical and civic topics to practical, real-world contexts, thereby fostering meaningful engagement.

“mahalaga iyon, siyempre iyon ang magrereflect kase sa actions ng bawat isa and then ano yung impact ng ginawa nating action.” (Int 5, 41-42)

“...dapat ma-feel ng bata na sila ay bahagi ng kasaysayan... hindi sila taga-panood lang.” (Int 6, 50-51)

Integrate Loob and Kapwa through Contextualized Questioning, Role Playing, Group Activities, and Student Reflection

The exploration of loob and kapwa inside the classroom can be more engaging and dynamic through contextualized questioning, collaborative tasks, and role playing. The one thing common among these strategies is their promotion of self-reflection which encourages empathy and cultivates sense of communal responsibility among the students. In teaching about ASEAN to grade 8, for example, the concept of the very rationale why the organization exists can be explained more through contextualized questioning about who our ‘kapwa’ is and why is it a ‘kagandahan loob’ to be responsible for the welfare of our kapwa. Another example is how role-playing can immerse students in different perspectives that could enhance their civic competencies and ethical reasoning. These approaches will enable loob and kapwa to be experienced and lived while the concepts are valued, not just taught.

“dun siya papasok, yung pagpapasya... doon magsisimula na nagagamit ko yung mga konsepto ng loob at kapwa... economics ay tamang pagpapasya.” (Int 3, 41-42)

“...halimbawa pag may role-playing, lumalabas yung damdamin, naiintindihan nila ‘yung pinanggagalingan ng iba.’” (Int 5, 46-48)

Explicit Integration of Loob and Kapwa Develops Students' Civic Competence

Integrating loob and kapwa explicitly in the teaching and learning processes initiates students' internalization of these values which would form

their views on greater social responsibility and respect of others. Civic awareness is achieved by explicitly allowing the students to see the connection between personal values and actions in society. This practice will form the students to become members of society who responds to their civic duties and responsibilities as well as contribute meaningfully to their communities.

“Malaki ang impact nito... pati yung kung paano siya makikipagkapwa, yung decision making, magkakaroon ng respeto sa values ng bawat isa.” (Int 1, 45-48)

“If this is done in all their AP classes, then this will contribute to their growth as persons who are civically engaged and aware, without them even knowing about it.” (Int 6, 53-57)

Integrate at Lesson Introduction, Contextualization, and Assessment

These Filipino philosophies can be meaningfully integrated through the various part of the lesson- from framing the topic to contextualized activities and even assessments. As an introduction to the lesson, contextualized communal themes can spark the interest to the students. They can yield to introspective practices that helps ground the lessons in Filipino values and thus, become relatable. Moreover, assessments based on real-life decisions allow learners to show their civic understanding in day to day terms. The regular integration of these philosophies reinforces their importance and deepens students' civic awareness.

“Sa tingin ko, ang part ng lesson plan na laging applicable ang integration neto ay sa contextualization, mga question, tsaka sa mga performances either as an assessment...” (Int 2, 49-51)

“Contextualization is very important for genuine learning to occur...and its hard to contextualize ha. But I think, contextualization and motivation can be achieved meaningfully through the integration of loob and kapwa.” (Int 5, 57-61)

Loob and Kapwa strengthen social bonds and classroom culture

The consistent integration of these philosophies in AP classrooms will develop in the students deeper respect and connection with their classmates, leading to a more harmonious and supportive classrooms. This positive culture wherein students' emotional and social fabric are strengthened creates a positive classroom culture which could lead to better engagement, cooperation and community life among them. This could also translate to better civic engagement in the students' communities.

“Pag pinapasok mo yung kapwa... mas nagiging magaan ang loob ng bata sa klase.” (Int 3, 61-62)

“I think their civic engagement starts in the classroom. Kung magiging engaged sila sa mga activities sa classroom, they will become engaged din sa mga communities nila. Siyempre mas mapapaigting pa ito kapag laging konsepto ng loob at kapwa ang nagagamit. (Int 2, 72-75)

Need for resources and training to support effective integration

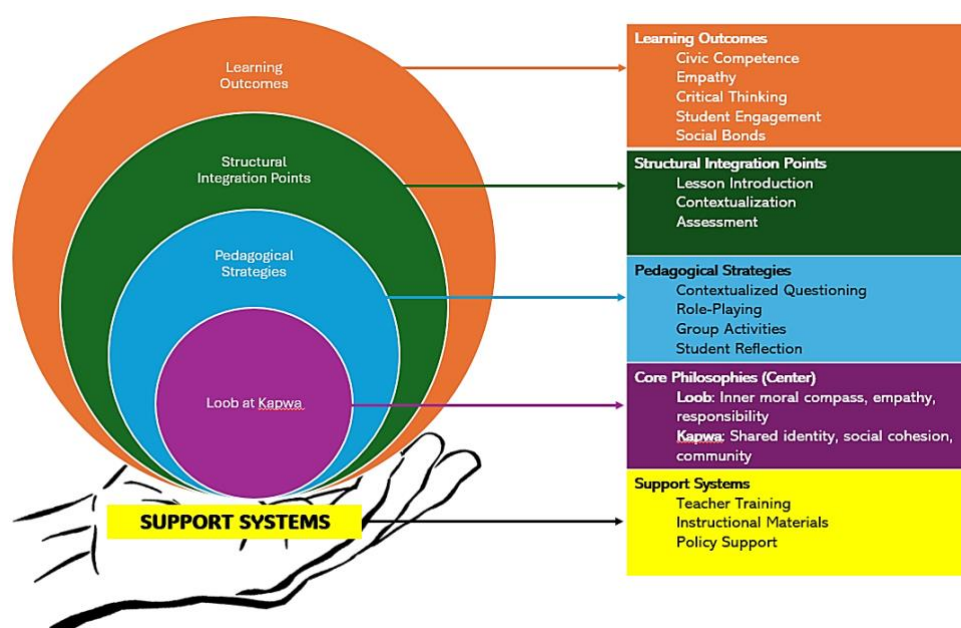
Although loob and kapwa are inherently Filipino, integrating them in AP classes is something that is not common. Some teachers might struggle to integrate them effectively due to limited resources and insufficient training. A structured support project such as training, modules, examples, demonstrations, and other professional development opportunities must be

provided to the teachers. This is necessary to equip teachers with the skills and confidence needed to sustain and deepen this integration practice.

“Napakarami sir... materials na gagamitin... dapat well trained ang guro.” (Int 6, 79-81)

“Maganda kung maiintegrate nga ang loob at kapwa sa curriculum. Dapat ma-train ang mga guro tungkol dito. They should see how helpful this is going to be.” (Int 5, 83-86)

Figure 1. Loob and Kapwa Integration Framework



This framework provides a holistic strategy in integrating Loob and Kapwa to improve the learning process in AP and to foster civic competence among the students. The framework starts with Loob (inner moral compass, empathy, responsibility) and Kapwa (shared identity, social cohesion, community) as they serve as the fundamental core. To practically bring the core of the framework, pedagogical strategies such as but not limited to role-playing, group projects, contextualized questioning, and student reflection can be used. These strategies can be included in lesson introductions, contextualization, and assessments to guarantee the continuous integration of these philosophies in the learning process. The outcomes are civic competence, empathy, critical thinking, student engagement, and strengthened social bonds. The hand holding the framework represents what can support the framework such as necessary teacher preparation, instructional materials, and policy support. This shows that institutional support is needed to work on this significant educational goal.

Discussion

Structural Conditioning

Integrating Loob and Kapwa as important part of teaching AP (Themes 1, 5, and 6) can be seen as structural conditioning within the curriculum that enables educators to teach civic competence among learners. These concepts can be integrated within the curriculum, lesson planning, and assessments, thereby shaping how moral and civic instruction is delivered to

students. The school structure — through its lessons, pedagogical strategies, and assessment approaches — can frame loob and kapwa as practical contextualized guides. Teachers can use them to frame ethical discussions, link historical narratives to contemporary issues, and anchor the formation of civic awareness in Filipino experiences. This promotes civic competence and civic responsibility. The framework of loob and kapwa, therefore, scaffolds civic awareness and engagement through consistent integration.

Social Interaction

Themes 2, 3, and 7 show how classroom interaction facilitates the formation of moral and civic values among students. Interpersonal dialogues, sharing of opinions from different perspectives, and storytelling through reflections, group work, and role-playing allow the integration of loob and kapwa to be smooth. The sharing of experiences and community values will contribute to the students' sense of civic identity which also makes teachers facilitators of civic competence. The AP classes will become communities where students are trained by their first hand experiences of civic involvement and mature relationships.

Social Collaboration

Themes 4 and 8 emphasize student participation in reflective activities, collaborative learning, and assessments. They illustrate social participation as a key in civic formation. Role-playing, contextualized questioning, and group work allow students to experience loob and kapwa in different contexts while engaging with civic problems in a socially constructive manner. These activities are avenues for students to apply loob and kapwa in class activities, reinforcing civic engagement and democratic actions. The positive effect of integrating loob and kapwa in AP classes is very promising so the teachers must be given sufficient training and resources. System-level interventions like professional development for AP teachers must be carried out systematically by policies and practices to enable teachers to sustain the use of loob and kapwa in teaching AP competencies.

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