Students nowadays are fond of singing and listening to foreign songs and music specially the so called “KPOP” or Korean Pop Music without an understanding its meaning and its background. OPM or Original Pilipino Music has become the third choice of most young Filipinos.

A new curriculum of music under the K to 12 Basic Education Program aims to revive the interest of Filipinos in our original music starting with Pre-historic period up to the present. One of its main objectives is to teach not only to inform the students to realize that Philippines is rich in culture even the before we were colonized. These new topics that are focused on our own music could be an eye-opener to the students to realize that there is a need to strengthen our nationalism and patriotism among Filipinos. A step by step basis makes this new system of learning more interesting.

Students will start learning about music of our ancestors up to the contemporary form. It is like beginning in our own before learning about others’ culture and music. The content of the curriculum focused on the music of different ethno-linguistic groups from Cordillera and the rest of the groups in our country. First quarter is about music of Ifugao, Kalinga, liturgical and secular music.

Students were amazed when the new topics in music were introduced. Both students and teachers discovered the unique music of each province. It is very evident that this music is unpopular among young learners as well as the teachers who were teaching music for several years. Both parties were caught unaware that our own music
were recognized by international organization but not recognized by Filipinos for the reason that it is not included in the past curriculum.

The Hudhud chants of Ifugao made the students aware not only about music as well as the culture, beliefs and traditions of people of the highlands. Students and teachers discovered the rich culture that lies in that mountainous region of the country. Another interesting topic is the musical instruments of the Kalinga. These musical instruments were made of bamboo. One name that rises among the Kalinga is BeniSokkong, a great bamboo musical instrument maker. Students had a hard time believing that this is possible to create such wonderful instruments out of bamboo. The wonder of these instruments arouses the interest of the students and motivated them to discover more of our hidden and undiscovered creations. With complete viewing materials, they have learned how to create and play the instruments. They understand the relationship of music and responsibility in preserving our environment. Students became aware of the existing law about proper harvesting of bamboo and other same species. As they discover the music, they also discover the differences among ethno-linguistic groups of Cordillera in terms of music, culture, traditions, beliefs, customary law and others.

After they have studied the highlands, they have learned about the liturgical music influenced by the Spaniards. This one is a sensitive topic but the objective is to make them aware about its history and effect to the lives of the Filipinos. They were familiar with this topic for the reason that this was part of their Araling Panlipunan topics. This part of the lesson focuses on the influences of the Spaniards after they have colonized our country.

Aside from liturgical and music of the highlands, secular music was also introduced to them. It is partly related to liturgical music because of the same root of influence, the Spaniards. Secular music differ from liturgical in terms of function, it is
not used in religious festivities but commonly used as an outlet of social commentaries pertaining to national issues. A form of Filipino music called Kundiman arises in this era. Students became aware of the earlier forms of Filipino music as well as the distinct function of each form of music. They quite familiar with other songs, maybe they have seen the title of the song in their books, they have heard their grandparents singing the song or this music was used in their former school. Polka and Pandanggo were the most acknowledged pieces of music followed by the sound of rondalla, harana and kundiman. Learners demonstrated understanding of its elements, socio-historical background, issues and social functions. Both vocal and instrumental music that bears influences of Spanish culture made the students more interested in discovering more aspects of Philippine music.

As the lesson continues, learners understand the value behind the music of Mindoro, particularly the music of the group collectively known as “Mangyan”. Students distinguished the music of Mindoro as their medium of expressing their feelings one person towards other people, the environment, history and cultural beliefs of the Mangyan. They found out that one group called HanunooMangyan made a significant syllabic script called “SuratMangyan” that contributed to the formation of writing system in the Philippines. Learners now realized that people of Mindoro has strong bind with their environment as evident in their creation of musical instruments like “Kalutang”, (two pieces of wood struck against each other to make a sound ) and other musical instruments found only in Mindoro and other near Provinces.

Another topic that made the students inspired is the “Music of Palawan and Visayas”. They appreciated the beauty of those places and learned how to value the culture and traditions of those places. They recognized the influences of Spaniards in the music of Visayas as evident in their different festivals. The students analyzed the music of Palawan by relating the music to concepts of soundscape, music
representing/suggesting elements of nature, spiritual and human emotional expressions through language. Students applied the “Kulial” and culminated their skills in making musical composition and performance. It is now clear for them that music of Palawan expresses reverence for the spiritual as well as the natural physical world through the epic chants, nature songs and instruments. They understand that contrasting emotions is shown in Palawan love songs. Students realized that music is used not only as an expressive emotive medium but also as an avenue for creativity in the context of a cultural and world viewing among people of Palawan.

As stated in the guidelines, students generally viewed the music of the Visayas as influenced by the Spanish colonial music tradition with its use of the guitar and its vocal/choral and instruments. Learners understand that most folk music from that region was influenced by the Christianity, fusion and mixture had marked the character of the para-liturgical music used in different festivals. This topic made them aware that there were existing ethno-linguistic groups from the Visayas who continuously nurture and practice music dating from the Pre-Spanish period. They viewed the instrumental music in that region possessing a rich diversity in the musical culture reflected by the different ensembles with their respective sounds not only the enthusiastic musical involvement of the people of the Visayas but also their sentiments, way of life and interactions with their environment and other people.

The topics about the Music of Mindanao made the discussion alive and interactive. The learners found out the vocal music of Mindanao as strongly reflected the natural and spiritual life of the cultural communities in the area: Lumad, Christians and Muslims Filipinos. Its various forms reveal the creativity of Filipinos as they vividly expresses their emotions, respond to events and reveal their world view. The “Darangen” epic caught the attention of the learners as well as the “Kulintang Ensemble” consists of different gongs and percussions. They compared the oral epics starting from the Hudhud Chant of
Ifugao, Ambahan of the Mangyans and Darangen of Mindanao. They realize the vital essence of these oral epics to the culture, traditions and lives of Filipino people celebrating these oral traditions. The class viewed the reflection of gong music of Mindanao to the natural and spiritual life of the Lumad and Muslim Filipinos as well as the influence of the Malay trade and Islam in the development of gong and chimes. They have seen the creativity of Filipinos as they express their emotions, their life events and their worldview. The discovery of the boat lutes of Mindanao made the learners understand the influence of Indian culture in the development of the musical instruments. Learners have discovered that Mindanao have their own variations of bamboo instruments. They recognized the creativity of Filipinos as evidently shown in how bamboo is used and adapted to suit the Filipino’s musical life.

In the fourth quarter of the module, the learners described how a specific idea or story is communicated through Philippine Traditional Musical Forms. The topics in this quarter made them go back to a particular time, place, person and event. It is the first time they have heard the other song nominated as the Philippine National Anthem. Learners were totally unfamiliar with the song “Marangalna Dalit ng Katagalugan”, a song composed by Julio Nakpil and commissioned by Andress Bonifacio. Introducing the national anthem to them made them go back to the story behind our national anthem. They have discovered issues and history as well as the evolution of the “Lupang Hinirang”. The most important thing about studying our music, students were able to instill within them a national identity. The lessons about Filipino instrumental music, vocal, choral and solo music inspired these young learners to go down deep and discover the details and information about our own music. One of the most interesting topics for them is the Philippine Popular Music or also known as “OPM”. They recognized that it was the music of the majority, probably because it has more themes that people can relate to. Because of the emergence of innovations such as high-technology instruments and recording equipment, plus the internet, more and more
people are able to access and also, create their own music to express their ideas and address certain issues such as on nationalism and social relevance. Learners became aware of different musical genres such as fusion, hip-hop, folk rock, pop music and many more. In the latter part, they discovered music used in theatre arts since 1600’s and understand the role of music in the presentation, aside from adding flavor, it delivers a spell to the spectator specially in depicting magical forces and creatures.

Basically, the new topics in music made the learners totally interested with our own music. They applied what they have learned in their activities that culminated their learning experiences. Grade 7 topics in music focuses on our own music while the following grade levels have its own level of learning experience and motivation. In their 8th grade, they will study the music of Asia, western music in their 9th Grade, Contemporary music when they reach Grade 10 and Grades 11 and 12 focuses on their specialized field of music. Before they reach their final year in the school, students have already possessed their skills in preserving, protecting, promoting and safeguarding our own heritage strongly binded with our music.

It is very crucial and vital for the Filipino learners to acknowledge the works of the early Filipinos that drew their inspirations from their being Filipino; from our country, our people, our culture, traditions and freely used our own instruments system of notation, Filipino terms and tunes truly depict who we are.

Long live ORIGINAL PILIPINO MUSIC!