

# Research on the High Quality Development of General Education Courses in Physical Education Majors in Universities

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**Abstract:** In order to strengthen and deepen the research on general education courses in physical education majors in universities, this article uses literature review and logical analysis methods to explore the current situation, existing problems, and research significance of general education courses in China. The research results indicate that: 1. General education courses in physical education majors in Chinese universities attach great importance to the infiltration of cultural qualities in professional education, and the focus of general education courses is on the supplementation and correction of professional education knowledge; 2. The main problems in the general education curriculum of physical education in China are the lack of rationality in the proportion of curriculum design and the lack of scientific structure in curriculum organization. 3. Conducting research on general education in physical education in universities is beneficial for optimizing the curriculum design and promoting the high-quality development of physical education courses, and is of great significance for learners to achieve more comprehensive, harmonious, and sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Universities; Physical Education; General Education; Course;

## 1. Introduction

The concept of "general education" originated from Aristotle's "free" education in ancient Greece, and is a highly respected educational concept in modern universities. The term general education (GE for short) was officially introduced in the early 19th century. The concept of general education originated from free education or liberal education in ancient Greece. Through the efforts of many educators in England and America, free education gradually developed into general education, with the aim of cultivating a complete person (also

known as the whole person) with broad knowledge and social responsibility. Although general education has attracted widespread attention from educators in the industry, the definition and description of the connotation of general education are inconsistent. Due to its rich connotation, Chinese scholar Ms. Li Manli has summarized the concept of general education from three aspects: nature, content, and purpose. She believes that general education, in contrast to professional and vocational education, is the educational philosophy of the entire university, a shared education for college students, and a university philosophy. From this, it can be seen that the purpose of general education is to cultivate college students who develop in all aspects of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, and aesthetics, and have practical application in their studies. This is consistent with the original intention of quality education in China, and can also meet the needs of social changes and complement quality education in China.

Compared with general education in ordinary universities, general education in physical education majors has certain characteristics. Whether in terms of training objectives or curriculum structure and implementation, general education in physical education majors not only fails to achieve basic goals, but also requires certain compensatory education. At present, the research on general education in physical education and general education in ordinary universities has attracted the attention of scholars. There is ample research on general education in ordinary universities, and scholars at home and abroad have different definitions and understandings of general education. Most of them have focused on discussing the differences between "general education", "general education", and "quality education". This shows that the concept of general education has caused widespread reactions among educators in mainland China, and there are also some scholars discussing the differences

between general education and professional education in ordinary universities, The purpose is to cultivate a complete person (also known as the whole person) with extensive knowledge and a sense of social responsibility. Although general education has attracted widespread attention from educators in the industry, the definition and description of the connotation of general education are inconsistent. Due to its rich connotation, Chinese scholar Ms. Li Manli has summarized the concept of general education from three aspects: nature, content, and purpose. She believes that general education, in contrast to professional and vocational education, is the educational philosophy of the entire university, a shared education for college students, and a university philosophy. From this, it can be seen that the purpose of general education is to cultivate college students who develop in all aspects of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, and aesthetics, and have practical application in their studies. This is consistent with the original intention of quality education in China, and can also meet the needs of social changes and complement quality education in China.

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comparison between general education in physical education and general education in ordinary universities. It can be seen that the insufficient general education ability of physical education talents has attracted the attention of scholars, and research on improving the curriculum system of general education in physical education is still in the exploratory stage. Therefore, it is particularly meaningful to improve the reform of general education courses in physical education majors.

This study aims to conduct a literature review on general education and general education in physical education majors. Based on the New Curriculum Standards in China and the actual development of physical education in schools, relevant research will be consulted to analyze the shortcomings of general education courses in physical education majors in China. Suggestions and opinions will be put forward to improve the curriculum system of general education in physical education majors, Provide useful references for the reform and development of general education curriculum in physical education majors in Chinese universities and colleges.

## **2. Current Research Status of General Education in Physical Education Majors in Chinese Universities**

### **2.1 Requirements and Objectives of General Education Curriculum for Physical Education Majors in Chinese Universities**

#### **2.1.1 Emphasis on the infiltration of cultural qualities into professional education**

Mainland universities divide undergraduate courses into compulsory courses, restricted courses, and elective courses. Cultural literacy courses are integrated into general education courses, where teachers inspire students and cultivate their humanistic qualities through their words and actions, as well as their own attitudes and responsibilities towards science. In the entire curriculum of general education, mainland universities still have a relatively basic understanding of the theory of general education, and their understanding of the concept of general education courses is still at a relatively shallow level. In the implementation of general education courses, the main elective courses offered are those that intersect humanities and sciences, and in practice, they also tend to integrate cultural qualities into professional

education for teaching. However, the structure of the humanities quality elective courses in most universities is lacking. The proportion of curriculum is uneven, so the general education received by students is still relatively messy and trivial. Integrating cultural literacy education into general education courses aims to enhance students' interest in knowledge in different fields, expand their understanding of different things, and help them adjust their attitudes towards different things.

2.1.2 The focus of the general education curriculum for physical education majors in universities is on supplementing and correcting professional educational knowledge

The content of general education courses for physical education majors in mainland universities is divided into two major sections: general education and general education aimed at physical education. General education is non-utilitarian and non-professional in terms of physical and mental abilities, aiming to cultivate a whole person who meets social needs. It is an education that most college students should receive, and it is the construction of a reasonable knowledge and ability structure for students. The disciplinary nature of general education in physical education is aimed at educating basic knowledge, attitudes, and skills in the field of physical education. As a common foundation for learning in the professional field, general education in physical education is carried out, enabling people in the field of physical education to have common communication and understanding, and also promoting learning in their own profession. It can be seen that the main goal of the general education curriculum for physical education majors in mainland China is to supplement professional disciplines. General education, on the other hand, is aimed at correcting the utilitarian bias in higher education.

## 2.2 Curriculum Design of General Education for Physical Education Majors in Mainland China

### 2.2.1 Professional Compulsory Courses

The general education curriculum in Chinese universities is approved by the National Higher Education Teaching Guidance Committee and the National Education Commission. The compulsory courses of general education courses are divided into general compulsory courses and main courses, divided by course content.

General education courses in mainland China are divided into theoretical courses and technical courses, with theoretical courses accounting for 70% of the total number of courses and a total of 25 credits. In terms of compulsory course arrangement, mainland universities have a higher number of courses and slightly lower credits. The number of theoretical courses is more than that of technical courses, and their credits are approximately 3:5 compared to the credits of technical courses

### 2.2.2 Professional elective courses

Since the reform and opening up, China's general education curriculum has undergone four rounds of reform. The overall trend is an increase in the number of elective courses and class hours, with four increases from 1980 to 1997. The 117 class hours in 1980 increased to 380 class hours in 1986, 410 class hours in 1991, and 770 class hours in 1997, as shown in Table (5-3). From the perspective of the content offered in the courses, they can be divided into three categories, including elective courses in the technical course series, elective courses in the sports humanities science series, and elective courses in the sports human body science series. In terms of the ratio of theoretical courses to technical courses, theoretical courses are also higher than technical courses. In the mainland plan, the proportion of theoretical courses in elective courses is about 78%, with 51 credits. Theoretical course credits account for 15.7% of the total credits of elective courses.

## 3. There are Problems in the General Education Curriculum of Physical Education Majors in China

In recent years, scholars have focused more on exploring the content and concepts of general education courses. As Zhao Xiangzhu (2022) mentioned, there are five types of undergraduate general education goals for physical education majors in sports colleges and universities in China: first, to cultivate philosophical wisdom and critical thinking ability; second, to cultivate global perspective ability; third, to appreciate literature and history and inherit historical culture; fourth, to identify and appreciate beauty; and fifth, to apply modern technology and practical ability. Wang Liyong (2020) proposed through his research on general education in sports majors in China that the concept of general education is a hot topic in the field of

higher education and sports education. However, due to the late start of the concept of general education in the field of sports education, research results in this field are relatively lacking and insufficient compared to other fields and foreign countries in terms of theory and practice, as well as in terms of literature quality and quantity. Therefore, there are also many problems that require learning from schools with rich experience in general education both domestically and internationally. Yu Yu (2022) pointed out that the general education of physical education major has its unique characteristics in terms of training objectives, curriculum implementation, and curriculum structure compared to other general education majors in ordinary universities. Just like other general education courses in other majors, repairing and supplementing in the original curriculum system is not enough to improve the curriculum system. Li Yixiang (2023) conducted a study on the objectives and content system of general education courses in physical education majors in universities. He believes that general education is very necessary in physical education professional education. Currently, the proportion of physical education general education courses in China lacks rationality, and the organizational structure of courses lacks scientificity.

Fang Conghui (2023) believes that we should absorb the experience of sports reform at home and abroad, promote the curriculum reform of sports education majors, not be confined to traditional education models, integrate general education with professional education, and cultivate new types of sports talents who meet the requirements of the new century with comprehensive development. Huang Daqing (2020) believes that "general education" in general education is not just about being omniscient on the surface. If general education is simply understood as providing students with extensive knowledge, it is a misconception in the implementation of general education in physical education majors. This understanding will only increase the learning burden on students and does not play a role in cultivating students through general education. He believes that "general education" is a relative concept. The basic principle is to emphasize the integration between various disciplines. Therefore, in the implementation of general education curriculum, he believes that the

implementation of general education in China's physical education major emphasizes three major principles: the first is the principle of few but excellent, the second is the principle of independence, and the third is the principle of penetration. Li Zhi from Central China Normal University comprehensively explained the differences and similarities between general education and professional education from the historical reform of general education and professional education in universities. Wang Liyong (2021) reviewed and summarized literature in recent years. He believes that China's understanding of general education in physical education is still insufficient, and the breadth of research in related literature is also insufficient. Most of the literature only discusses the theory of general education courses in physical education. Wang Liyong (2021) reviewed and summarized literature in recent years. He believes that China's understanding of general education in physical education is still insufficient, and the breadth of research in relevant literature is also insufficient. Most of the literature only discusses the theory of general education courses in physical education. He believes that education is influenced by multiple factors, and the cultivation of physical education professionals needs to be based on educational concepts, curriculum arrangements, and training objectives. Discuss and examine various aspects such as professional settings, teaching methods, academic evaluation, and student management. At present, literature research on general education in physical education has not been conducted from these complete systems. He believes that there are two drawbacks to current general education: one is to interpret what specific groups of people learn as general education, and the other is to put very trivial and obscure things into the pockets of general education.

In summary, it can be seen that current research has not conducted in-depth research from a historical perspective. Most general education research in China tends to focus on horizontal research, with little vertical research on general education in physical education majors. Moreover, most articles only compare and process existing curriculum settings. The research on physical education teachers is still limited to ideological construction. It only proves the rationality and practicality of the curriculum system from a theoretical perspective,

without verifying this theory in practice. There are still many shortcomings in the general education of physical education majors, and there is still insufficient research on general education in physical education majors. It is necessary to draw on existing practical experience in general education and integrate it into professional education in order to further improve the curriculum system of general education in physical education in Chinese universities.

The significance of conducting research on general education in physical education majors in universities

### **3.1 Beneficial for the Optimization of University Curriculum Design and the High-Quality Development of Physical Education Courses**

With the development of the social economy, the demand for talents in the market is also increasing. In order to cultivate more talents who adapt to society, have a wide range of knowledge, strong hands-on ability, good overall quality, and high comprehensive quality, transforming the traditional education model, and achieving the combination of professional education and general education, it has become one of the trends in the curriculum reform of mainland universities. At present, higher sports talents in China generally face the problem of strong professional abilities and weak comprehensive qualities. Compared with ordinary universities themselves, there is already a problem of insufficient general education ability. In order to cultivate high-quality sports talents, we will draw on the experience of general education at home and abroad, with the aim of understanding the shortcomings of general education in sports colleges, improving China's curriculum system, and promoting new curriculum reform. The earliest region in China to introduce foreign general education into domestic higher education is Hong Kong. After years of efforts, Hong Kong's general education has become increasingly mature in its development, and research on general education is also worth learning from in mainland China. Comparing general education between the two regions not only benefits the improvement of China's general education system, but also enables mainland universities to discover shortcomings in general education practice. To conduct a comparative study of general

education in two regions, and to contribute to the construction of a complete and scientific general education curriculum system in China and the implementation of curriculum reform in university physical education.

### **3.2 Beneficial for Learners to Develop More Comprehensively, Harmoniously, And Sustainably**

The original intention of the educational philosophy of general education is to "educate people". As the cradle of higher sports talents, university sports must focus on the sustainable development of students. Improving the general education curriculum system for physical education majors in universities and combining general education with the concept of quality education is one of the effective ways to achieve sustainable development education for students. The more scientific and reasonable the curriculum arrangement of general education in mainland universities, the more it can fully play the role of general education. Only sports talents trained can better adapt to society and have stronger abilities for sustainable development. This article compares the general education curriculum systems of the two regions, which is the first step in building a comprehensive general education curriculum system and also the first step in cultivating more high-quality talents with strong general education abilities.

### **3.3 Beneficial for Standardizing the Management Mechanism of General Education and Improving the Management Platform of General Education**

The teaching philosophy of general education has been prevalent in the eight major universities in Hong Kong for a long time, and each university generally has a Ministry of General Education or a General Education Management Center, as well as a General Education Committee. The establishment of these independent general education institutions has made the management mechanism of general education in Hong Kong universities more perfect. In response to the relatively loose management of general education in mainland universities, we draw on the relevant experience of the management mechanism of general education in Hong Kong universities. It is beneficial for mainland universities to improve the management system of general education, develop a platform for general education

management in mainland China, promote the planning of general education curriculum system in mainland universities, and solve the problem of lack of systematic and complete content in general education courses in mainland universities.

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