

Research on the Path to Improving the Educational Function of Physical Education in Colleges and Universities in the New Era

Zongshan Li

Zhengzhou Normal University, Zhengzhou, China

Abstract: This study focuses on the core issue of improving the educational function of physical education in colleges and universities in the new era. By re-examining the connotation of educational function, combined with policy orientation and digitalization trends, it systematically analyzes the practical obstacles such as disconnection between concepts, extensive teaching process and single evaluation mechanism. On this basis, the study proposes a multi-dimensional collaborative promotion solution, emphasizing that concerted efforts must be made through key measures including strengthening teachers' educational capabilities, innovating teaching models and curriculum systems, building a diversified developmental evaluation system, and creating an integrated educational cultural ecology. The study holds that only through such systematic innovation can college physical education effectively achieve a profound transformation from "cultivating physical fitness" to "cultivating people", making it a solid cornerstone for cultivating new-generation talents with all-round development.

Keywords: College Physical Education; Educational Function; Practical Dilemmas; Collaborative Paths; Fostering Virtue Through Education

1. Introduction

In the new journey of building a modern socialist country in an all-round way, the educational value of physical education has been elevated to an unprecedented strategic height. As a key link in the higher education system, college physical education has gone beyond the traditional functions of skill teaching and physical fitness enhancement, and has increasingly become an important carrier for implementing the fundamental task of "fostering virtue through education" and cultivating

new-generation talents with well-rounded moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor development. However, facing the requirements of building a country strong in education, sports and health in the new era, current college physical education still confronts many practical challenges in educational concepts, teaching models, evaluation mechanisms and collaborative patterns, restricting the full release of its comprehensive educational effectiveness. Therefore, systematically exploring the essential connotation, practical obstacles and improvement paths of the educational function of college physical education in the new era has urgent theoretical value and practical significance for deepening the reform of college physical education and constructing a high-quality education system. This study aims to provide theoretical support and practical references for the profound transformation of college physical education from "educating people through sports" to "integrating five educations" through multi-dimensional analysis[1].

2. Connotation Interpretation and Era Requirements of the Educational Function of College Physical Education in the New Era

2.1 Lagging Cognition and Disconnection between Educational Concepts and Practice

Although the concepts of "health first" and "educating people through sports" have become consensus in policy texts and academic discussions, in the specific field of physical education teaching in some colleges and universities, the cognition of educational concepts remains superficial and has not been truly transformed into the core guiding ideology and practical logic running through the whole teaching process. This lag and disconnection are first reflected in the narrowing of goal-setting. Some teaching managers and teachers still subconsciously take physical fitness standards and skill assessments as the primary or even sole

goal of physical education courses, with teaching plans formulated and implemented around these goals, relatively ignoring the cultivation of students' sports interests, healthy behaviors, team spirit, frustration resistance and other far-reaching personality qualities through sports. Secondly, it is manifested as the absence of "people-oriented" in the teaching process. Classroom design usually follows a unified and preset skill progression path, rarely taking into account students' individual interest differences, physical foundations and psychological states. Teaching activities fail to fully stimulate students' initiative and creativity, making it difficult to realize the key educational link of "enjoying fun". A deeper problem is that some teachers have not completed the role cognition transformation from "skill imparters" to "guides for all-round development", and their own career development and training systems may also lack systematic shaping and incentives for comprehensive educational capabilities. This gap between concepts and practice has left the rich educational potential of physical education unused, reducing its function to physical fitness monitoring and skill registration, thus failing to meet the fundamental requirements of the new era for cultivating compound talents[2].

2.2 Insufficient Scientific and Structured Teaching Process

Although many current college physical education activities present a diversified appearance in course categories, they often lack scientific and rigorous structure and coherent and progressive systematicness in the internal design of the teaching process, which directly restricts the deepening and consolidation of educational effects. A prominent problem is the "fragmentation" and "superficiality" of teaching content arrangement. There is a lack of logical connection based on the development law of students' sports ability between courses of different semesters and different events. Students may repeatedly learn basic movements in different events but fail to gain a complete experience and ability sublimation from entry to proficiency in a certain sport. This phenomenon of "numerous, shallow, biased and disconnected" weakens the inherent attractiveness and sense of achievement of sports learning. In the application of teaching methods, the traditional "teacher demonstration-student imitation-group practice" model still dominates. The teaching

process focuses on the mechanical replication of movement techniques, while insufficiently guiding and developing advanced cognitive and social skills such as strategic thinking, teamwork and problem-solving in sports situations, resulting in weak interactivity and inquiry in the classroom. In addition, the scientific support for the teaching process is also weak. Fine monitoring and feedback mechanisms for students' individual exercise load, skill mastery progress and psychological participation are generally lacking, and teaching adjustments mostly rely on teachers' empirical judgments rather than objective data. Such an unscientific and unstructured teaching process not only affects the effective acquisition of sports skills, but also fails to give full play to the advantages of physical education as a carrier of complex situational education, limiting the generation of students' comprehensive literacy in sports[3].

2.3 Single Evaluation Mechanism and Deviated Incentive Orientation

The evaluation mechanism is the "baton" of teaching activities, and its design directly affects teachers' teaching focus and students' effort direction. The widespread simplification tendency of current college physical education evaluation and the resulting deviated incentive orientation constitute a significant obstacle to the realization of educational functions. Evaluation content highly focuses on quantifiable and easily measurable summative indicators, such as physical fitness or skill results like running speed, jumping distance and shooting percentage, while marginalizing or even completely ignoring process-oriented and developmental literacy such as participation enthusiasm, rule-abiding, mutual assistance spirit, application of health knowledge and cultivation of exercise habits shown by students in sports activities. This evaluation model of "emphasizing results over process and skills over literacy" has spawned a utilitarian learning mentality. Students conduct targeted training to obtain credits or high scores, and their sports behavior may stop once the assessment ends, which runs counter to the long-term educational goal of cultivating students' awareness of "lifelong sports" and healthy lifestyle. From the perspective of teacher evaluation, the assessment of teaching effectiveness is often closely linked to students' skill pass rate or physical fitness test pass rate, rarely including the evaluation of soft

educational achievements such as the improvement of students' sports morality and the stimulation of learning interest, which to a certain extent inhibits teachers' enthusiasm for teaching innovation and in-depth exploration of comprehensive educational methods. Therefore, constructing an evaluation system that can comprehensively reflect the multi-dimensional effects of sports education and positively motivate both teachers and students to focus on long-term development and all-round growth has become a key part of the reform[3].

3. Practical Dilemmas in Realizing the Educational Function of College Physical Education

3.1 Lagging Cognition and Disconnection between Educational Concepts and Practice

The deep-seated reform of college physical education in the new era first encounters a significant gap between conceptual cognition and practical operation. Although "health first" and "educating people through sports" have become clear guidelines for top-level design, this concept has not been fully internalized into operational logic in the specific teaching management and classroom implementation of some colleges and universities. Its lag is prominently manifested in the instrumental narrowing of educational goals. Teaching practice still inertially revolves around quantifiable and easily assessable physical fitness test scores and sports skill standards. The core driving force of curriculum design is to complete established teaching tasks and pass rates, rather than focusing on the cultivation of students' lifelong sports habits, shaping of healthy lifestyles and cultivation of sports character. This cognitive deviation leads to a distinct "teaching-determined learning" feature in the teaching process. Teachers, as absolute authorities, conduct one-way transmission of knowledge and skills, while students passively follow and imitate. Their individual interests, physical differences, psychological experiences and real confusions arising in sports are often ignored. A deeper problem is that some educators have not fully understood the comprehensive value of physical education as a key part of "simultaneous development of five educations", and have not organically integrated physical education into the overall framework of "three-wide education", making the potential of

physical education in moral, intellectual and aesthetic education unable to be released. The disconnection between concepts and practice essentially degrades physical education from a rich educational practice to a mere physical training, hindering its profound transformation from "cultivating physical fitness" to "cultivating people"[4].

3.2 Insufficient Scientific and Structured Teaching Process

The scientific and structured level of the teaching process directly determines the depth and validity of the realization of educational functions. Current college physical education has obvious shortcomings in this regard. First, the curriculum content system presents a scattered state of "extensive but not deep". To meet students' course selection needs, schools often offer numerous sports events, but the teaching of each event often stops at a general introduction of basic techniques, lacking progressive design in accordance with the laws of sports skill formation and cognitive development. The content connection between courses of different semesters is loose or even broken, making it difficult for students to gain a complete learning experience and ability advancement from interest stimulation, skill mastery, tactical understanding to cultural identity in a certain sports field, which weakens the inherent sustainable motivation and in-depth educational value of sports learning. Second, the innovation of teaching methods and organizational forms is insufficient. Many classrooms still continue the traditional linear model of "explanation-demonstration-practice-correction", with single teaching situation design and lack of challenging task-driven, cooperative inquiry and problem-solving links. This teacher-centered teaching aiming at skill replication is difficult to create educational situations that can stimulate students' initiative, creativity and complex social interaction, thus limiting students' opportunities to develop high-order thinking and sound personality in real sports scenarios such as coping with competition pressure, handling team conflicts and formulating tactical strategies[5].

3.3 Single Evaluation Mechanism and Deviated Incentive Orientation

As the terminal feedback and value orientation of teaching activities, the deviation of the

evaluation mechanism seriously restricts the comprehensive realization of educational functions. The current evaluation system generally falls into the stereotype of "skill-oriented" and "result-oriented". Evaluation content highly focuses on indicators that are easy to objectively measure and horizontally compare, such as physical fitness data like running, jumping and throwing or the completion degree of specific technical movements, which constitute the absolute main part of students' physical education scores. On the contrary, there is a lack of systematic and effective observation tools and regular channels for incorporating into evaluation the more developmental and educational dimensions such as students' effort level, progress range, cooperative spirit, rule awareness, sense of responsibility and the cultivation of sports exercise habits shown in the process of sports participation. This single evaluation orientation has triggered many negative incentives in practice: for students, it is easy to spawn a utilitarian learning attitude, practicing for high scores, and sports behavior may terminate once the assessment ends, which runs counter to the goal of "lifelong sports"; for students with weak sports foundations, the fixed standards may continuously dampen their self-confidence and participation enthusiasm, deviating from the fair principle of physical education facing everyone and promoting the development of all students. For teachers, the baton of evaluation also naturally shifts their teaching focus to improving students' pass rates rather than exploring how to promote students' physical and mental development in a more comprehensive way[6].

4. Collaborative Paths to Improve the Educational Function of College Physical Education in the New Era

4.1 Strengthening Teachers' Core Role and Professional Development

As the final implementers of educational practice and shapers of classroom ecology, teachers' conceptual cognition, professional literacy and educational capabilities directly determine the realization level of physical education functions. Therefore, the fundamental path to improving educational functions lies in systematically reshaping the role positioning of physical education teachers and promoting the transformation and upgrading of their

professional development. The primary task is to deepen teachers' philosophical understanding of the educational value of physical education and their ability of pedagogical transformation. Through normalized teacher ethics training, curriculum ideological and political special seminars and interdisciplinary teaching and research exchanges, teachers are guided to transcend the single identity of "coaches", deeply understand the unique role of physical education in shaping sound personality, tempering willpower and cultivating team spirit, and master specific methods of organically integrating values such as patriotism, collectivism and rule awareness into sports skill teaching and competition activities. At the same time, we must conform to the trend of educational digitalization and provide targeted and step-by-step digital skill empowerment training for teachers, enabling them to skillfully use intelligent devices for sports data analysis, build blended learning resources through online platforms, and implement personalized guidance based on data feedback. This aims to transform teachers from traditional knowledge and skill imparters into "learning designers" and "development guides" who can design learning situations, organize inquiry activities and provide growth feedback. The ultimate goal is to cultivate a team of teachers with profound educational feelings, solid sports professional knowledge, keen digital application capabilities and continuous reflective innovation awareness, making them the core engine for activating classroom educational vitality[7].

4.2 Deepening Teaching Model Reform and Curriculum Innovation

The innovation of teaching models is the most direct and effective practical starting point for improving educational functions. College physical education must carry out integrated reform in content, methods and organizational forms. In terms of curriculum content system, it is necessary to break the limitations of traditional event setting and construct an elastic structure of "basic module + expansion module + integration module". The basic module ensures that students master core sports abilities and health knowledge; the expansion module should widely include traditional national sports such as martial arts and shuttlecock, as well as emerging fashion sports popular among students such as outdoor exploration and frisbee, forming a rich

"course supermarket" to respect students' individual choices and stimulate participation interest; the integration module focuses on infiltrating sports history, sports science principles, sports aesthetics appreciation, sports ethics and other contents into teaching to enhance the cultural depth and intellectual level of sports activities. In terms of teaching models, project-based learning, cooperative learning and inquiry-based learning should be vigorously promoted, and complex sports tasks or competition situations requiring teamwork, strategic planning and problem-solving should be designed to enable students to develop comprehensive abilities in real challenges. Meanwhile, deeply integrating information technology, build a blended teaching model of "online theoretical guidance, offline skill refinement, extracurricular club practice or community service application", connect inside and outside the classroom, extend the learning chain, and make sports learning a sustainable experience connecting theory, practice and life.

4.3 Constructing a Diversified Evaluation System and Incentive Mechanism

Reversing the simplification deviation of the current evaluation mechanism and constructing a diversified evaluation system that can comprehensively reflect and motivate students' all-round development is a key lever to guide teaching practice back to the essence of education. The core of this system lies in the transformation of evaluation concepts, from "judging sports results" to "promoting human development". In terms of evaluation content, it is necessary to incorporate those difficult-to-quantify but crucial literacy dimensions and give reasonable weights. This includes students' sustained enthusiasm and effort in participating in sports activities, cooperative spirit and sense of responsibility shown in the team, respect for and abidance by sports rules, knowledge and practice of healthy lifestyles, and the progress range shown throughout the learning cycle. Evaluation methods should combine quantitative and qualitative methods. In addition to objective test data, qualitative evaluation methods such as classroom observation records, learning logs, peer evaluation and project achievement display should be introduced. In terms of technical tools, we can rely on the campus sports and health management platform to collect process data

such as students' daily exercise frequency and exercise load, form personalized physical fitness and behavior portraits, and provide a richer basis for evaluation. The evaluation of teachers also needs to be reformed. Their effectiveness in curriculum design innovation, educational method exploration and students' comprehensive literacy improvement should be taken as important assessment indicators, and linked with incentive mechanisms such as professional title evaluation and performance rewards, so as to stimulate teachers' internal motivation to engage in educational reform[8].

4.4 Creating an Educational Cultural Ecology and Collaborative Pattern

The full release of the educational function of physical education cannot be achieved by a single breakthrough in classroom teaching alone; it depends on an immersive campus cultural ecology and an open and collaborative overall pattern. Colleges and universities need to consciously integrate sports elements into campus cultural construction in an all-round and multi-level way. By holding extensive and diverse school-level and department-level sports competitions and fun sports activities, creating branded cultural activities such as sports culture festivals, sports celebrity lectures and sports film screenings, sports can become an active and positive part of daily campus life, creating a strong atmosphere of "everyone pays attention, everyone participates, everyone enjoys". More importantly, we must adhere to the systematic thinking of "integrating five educations" and actively design and promote the in-depth interaction between physical education and other educational fields. For example, through "sports + ideological and political education" projects, embed patriotism and collectivism education in watching major sports events or team training; through "sports + aesthetic education" projects, guide students to experience the beauty of body rhythm in gymnastics and dance teaching; through "sports + labor education" projects, organize students to participate in sports venue maintenance or competition volunteer services. On campus, it is necessary to establish a regular communication and collaboration mechanism between sports departments and student affairs, Communist Youth League, academic affairs, publicity and other departments to coordinate resources and jointly plan educational activities. Off campus, we should actively link families,

communities and social sports institutions to build a larger ecosystem that supports students' lifelong sports and healthy living, and finally form an internal and external connected and multi-collaborative "big sports" education community.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, improving the educational function of college physical education in the new era is a systematic project involving concept reshaping, model innovation, system reconstruction and cultural reengineering. The study clarifies that its core lies in transcending the traditional physical fitness and skill framework and profoundly grasping the comprehensive and fundamental value of physical education in the overall situation of fostering virtue through education. Effective improvement paths must adhere to multi-pronged and collaborative efforts: at the conceptual level, firmly establish the guiding ideology of "health first" and "all-round development"; at the practical level, systematically solve the current practical dilemmas through key measures such as strengthening teachers' educational capabilities, innovating blended teaching models, constructing a diversified evaluation system and creating an integrated cultural ecology. Only in this way can college physical education truly achieve a profound transformation from "cultivating physical fitness" to "cultivating people", and while tempering students' strong physique, more effectively shape their sound personality, temper their willpower and stimulate their innovative spirit, so as to lay a foundation for cultivating new-generation talents worthy of the important task of national rejuvenation.

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