

Humanistic Care in Physical Education Curriculum Reform: The Combination of Theory and Practice

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Abstract

Physical education reform focuses on student-centered approaches with humanistic care to foster students' holistic physical, mental, personality, and social responsibility development. Progress has been made in policy, content innovation, teaching diversification, and evaluation systems, but challenges like exam pressure and uneven resources persist. Theoretically, humanistic care aligns with physical education, supporting innovative goals and methods. Practically, cases from schools demonstrate teamwork, social practice, and mental health education effectively promoting student growth. Future efforts require systematic exploration in curriculum design, teaching philosophy, teacher training, and resource allocation, enhancing teachers' humanistic qualities and mental health education, optimizing evaluation, and advancing physical education towards comprehensive, inclusive, human-centered goals for student all-round development.

Keywords

Physical education curriculum reform, humanistic care, physical and mental health, teaching innovation.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The reform of physical education courses in our country has gone through several stages, reflecting the continuous evolution of educational philosophies, social needs, and policy directions. At the end of the 20th century, with the introduction of the 'health first' principle, the focus of physical education courses shifted from primarily teaching competitive skills to promoting students' 'all-round development, emphasizing the cultivation of physical health, psychological well-being, and social adaptability. In the 21st century, the state issued policy documents such as the 'Physical Education and Health Curriculum Standards, 'which clearly stated that physical education courses should not only enhance students' physical literacy but also emphasize the integration of humanistic values and personality development[8]. In recent years, with the establishment of the fundamental task of 'moral education and talent cultivation,' the reform of physical education courses has further emphasized the integration of moral education and physical education, proposing to cultivate students' sense of responsibility, teamwork, and social responsibility through sports activities.

2. The Present Situation and Challenge of Physical Education Curriculum Reform

2.1. Challenges in physical education curriculum reform

The reform of physical education courses faces multiple challenges, which hinder the integration of humanistic care. Firstly, the pressure of exam-oriented education is a major obstacle, often marginalizing physical education^[5]. Students and parents focus more on

academic performance, overlooking the educational value of physical education, which results in a low status of physical education within the education system, hindering its ability to promote students' physical and mental health and personality development. Secondly, there is significant disparity in resource allocation between urban and rural areas, regions, and schools, particularly in rural and remote areas, where there is a shortage of physical education teachers and their professional skills need improvement, limiting the implementation of physical education courses.

The current physical education curriculum is monotonous, focusing excessively on competitive skills training while neglecting the development of comprehensive qualities. This results in low student engagement and a lack of appeal. The evaluation system primarily relies on skill assessments, lacking a comprehensive assessment of students' emotional and cooperative abilities. Teaching methods remain teacher-centered, failing to stimulate students' initiative and creativity. Additionally, some teachers lack a humanistic approach, which negatively impacts the teaching environment and hinders curriculum reform.

2.2. Lack of humanistic care

In the current reform of physical education, the lack of humanistic care has become a critical issue that requires urgent attention. While the reform has made progress in content innovation, diversification of teaching methods, and the improvement of evaluation mechanisms, in practice, students' individual needs, mental health, and emotional experiences are often overlooked. The curriculum design overly emphasizes skill training and physical fitness, neglecting the importance of students' subjectivity and personalized development, which results in a lack of warmth in PE classes and makes it difficult to sustain students' interest and participation^[2]. Teachers focus more on completing teaching tasks and improving grades, overlooking the cultivation of students' emotions, values, and social adaptability, which hinders the comprehensive realization of the educational goals of physical education^[3].

In the current evaluation system of physical education, there is an overemphasis on quantitative indicators and competitive achievements, while neglecting students' emotional experiences and social development in sports activities. Some schools still adhere to traditional concepts in resource allocation and course scheduling, failing to adequately consider students' psychological needs and social background differences. This has led to some students feeling alienated from physical education, experiencing psychological pressure, and even facing a crisis of self-identity^[6]. Meanwhile, while the introduction of information and intelligent technologies has improved teaching efficiency, it also risks weakening humanistic care, reducing emotional exchanges between students and teachers, and gradually eroding the humanistic atmosphere in physical education classes^[9].

3. Humanistic Care in Physical Education Curriculum Reform: The Combination of Theory and Practice

3.1. Theoretical framework: the combination of humanistic care and physical education curriculum

The integration of humanistic care into the reform of physical education courses reflects a strong emphasis on students' individual value, emotional experiences, and all-round development. Firstly, humanistic care emphasizes a student-centered approach, focusing on students' physical and mental health^[7], personality growth, and social adaptability. The design of physical education content should move beyond the traditional focus on skill training, emphasizing diversity and personalization. It should cover multiple dimensions, including sports skills, health knowledge, social interaction, and emotional experiences, to promote the harmonious development of students' body and mind^[3]. In setting course objectives, it is

important to focus not only on improving students' physical fitness but also on fostering their self-esteem, confidence, cooperation, and sense of responsibility. Through sports activities, students' initiative and enthusiasm can be stimulated. As shown in Figure 1

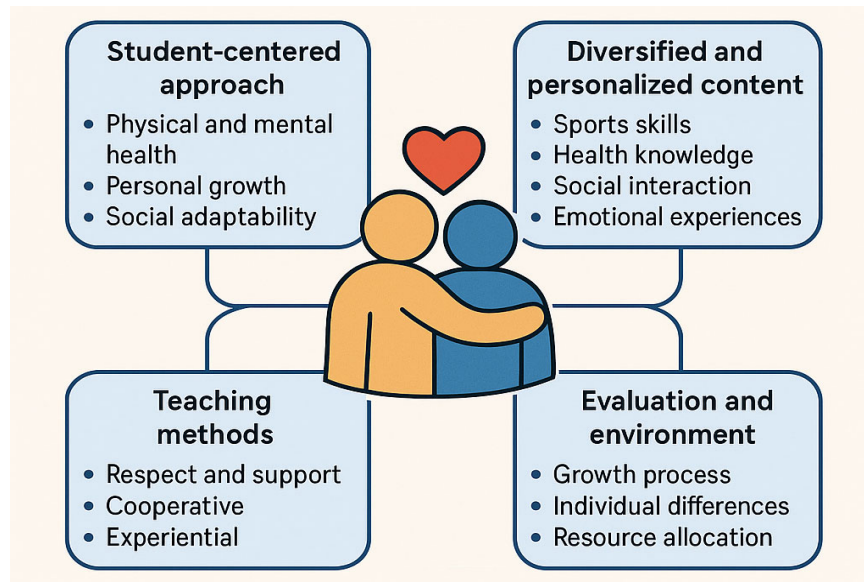


Figure 1. The combination of humanistic care and physical education curriculum

In terms of teaching methods, the concept of humanistic care requires teachers to pay attention to students' emotional needs and psychological states during the teaching process, creating a classroom atmosphere that is respectful, understanding, and supportive. Teachers should employ diverse teaching methods, such as heuristic, cooperative, and experiential approaches, to encourage students to express themselves, experience success and failure, and enhance their sense of belonging and self-identity^[3]. The course evaluation system should also reflect humanistic care, combining process evaluation with multiple evaluations, focusing on students' growth processes and individual differences, and avoiding the pressure and anxiety caused by a single result orientation^[1]. As shown in Figure 2

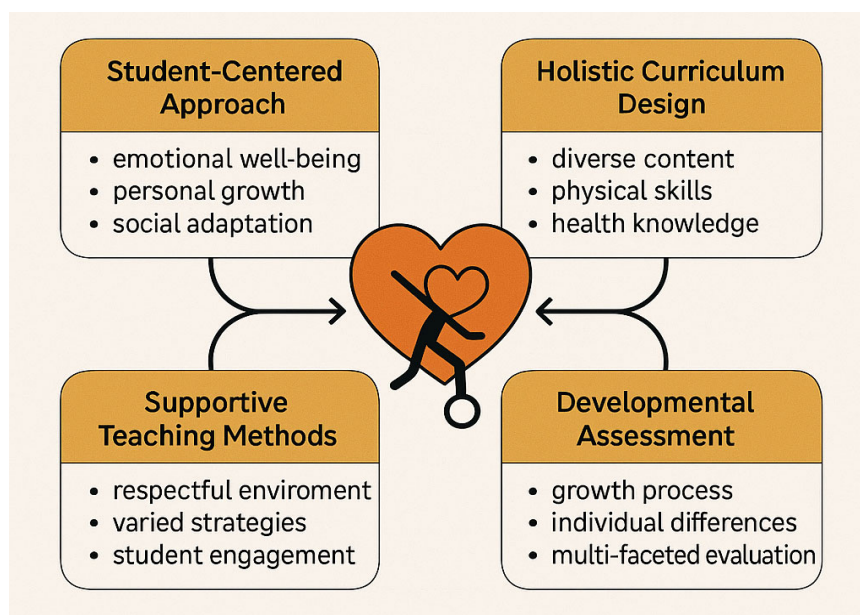


Figure 2. The combination of humanistic care and teaching methods

In the allocation of course resources and environmental construction, humanistic care emphasizes optimizing resource distribution, focusing on providing sports learning opportunities for students from disadvantaged groups and remote areas, and promoting educational equity^[1]. Additionally, physical education courses should focus on cultural heritage and social responsibility, integrating the humanistic spirit of sports into the curriculum. Through activities such as team collaboration and social practice, these courses aim to enhance students' humanistic qualities and sense of social responsibility^[3]. This theoretical framework provides a value orientation and practical approach for the reform of physical education, promoting a more comprehensive, inclusive, and human-centered direction in sports education.

3.2. Case analysis of humanistic care in physical education teaching

In the process of reforming physical education, the practice of humanistic care is not only reflected in the conceptual level but also validated and deepened through specific teaching cases. Mao Zhenming et al. (2021) noted that in the current reform of school physical education in China, 'moral education' and 'four-in-one' have become popular terms, emphasizing that physical education should play a significant role in nurturing students. By innovating course methods and textbook systems, school physical education focuses on cultivating students' 'personality, values, and social responsibility in practical teaching. For example, in a pilot project for physical education reform in primary and secondary schools in a certain area, teachers adopted a student-centered approach, paying attention to individual differences and psychological needs. The results showed a significant improvement in students' self-confidence and teamwork skills, as well as a notable increase in the physical fitness compliance rate^[11].

In 2019, Shu Qi Ren conducted a survey on the reform of physical education courses in Xi 'an's basic education system. By combining questionnaire and interview data, she found that introducing the concept of humanistic care significantly increased students' 'interest and participation in PE classes. Specific measures included integrating mental health education, social interaction training, and self-reflection into the curriculum. Teachers focused on students' emotional experiences and growth needs, promoting their all-round development. The survey results showed that students' satisfaction with PE classes increased by over 20% after the reform, and teachers generally agreed that humanistic care helps build positive teacher-student relationships^[12].

Qin Guo (2022) used Guangdong University of Finance as a case study to develop a curriculum system that integrates sports and health with humanities, emphasizing the humanistic value and spiritual essence of physical education. The data from pre-and post-course comparisons showed a significant improvement in students' understanding of health, culture, and social responsibility through these courses. The curriculum includes modules on the inheritance of sports culture, healthy lifestyles, and the cultivation of humanistic spirit. Through these activities, students gain a deeper appreciation of the social significance and cultural value of sports^[13].

In the reform of football courses at universities, Lu Sen Ouyang and colleagues (2023) found through questionnaire surveys and classroom observations that integrating the concept of humanistic care into football teaching significantly increased students' 'enthusiasm and participation. Teachers, by paying attention to individual differences among students, encouraged self-expression and respect for others, fostering a sense of teamwork and fair competition. Data analysis revealed that after the reform, students' satisfaction with football courses increased by 15%, and their team collaboration skills and confidence were enhanced^[14].

Zhao Hou et al. (2022) conducted a study on the reform of ideological and political education in middle school physical education courses. Using literature analysis and questionnaire surveys, they found that enhancing ideological and political education and humanistic care in physical education can help students develop a stronger sense of social responsibility and collective

honor. Teachers guide students to pay attention to society and care for others by setting up situational teaching and organizing themed class meetings. The survey results show that after the course, students have a stronger sense of identity with their collective and society, as well as a stronger sense of responsibility and cooperation spirit^[15].

These cases demonstrate that integrating the concept of humanistic care with physical education practices not only enhances students' physical fitness but also promotes their mental health, social adaptability, and personality development. By combining data support with theoretical frameworks, the humanistic care practices in physical education curriculum reform have shown positive educational outcomes.

3.3. The path of humanistic care in physical education curriculum reform

In the reform of physical education courses, effectively integrating humanistic care requires a systematic exploration across multiple dimensions, including curriculum design, teaching philosophy, and teacher training. Firstly, the curriculum should emphasize diversity and personalization, moving beyond the limitations of traditional sports content to incorporate elements such as humanistic^[8] qualities, social responsibility, and mental health. For example, by introducing modules on teamwork, social practice, and the humanistic spirit of sports, students can experience respect, care, and personal growth in sports activities, thereby enhancing their humanistic qualities and social adaptability^{[3][6]}. Additionally, the curriculum should cater to the interests and developmental needs of different students by offering a variety of elective courses and local characteristic projects, thus increasing students' sense of participation and belonging ^{[1][2]}. As shown in Figure 3

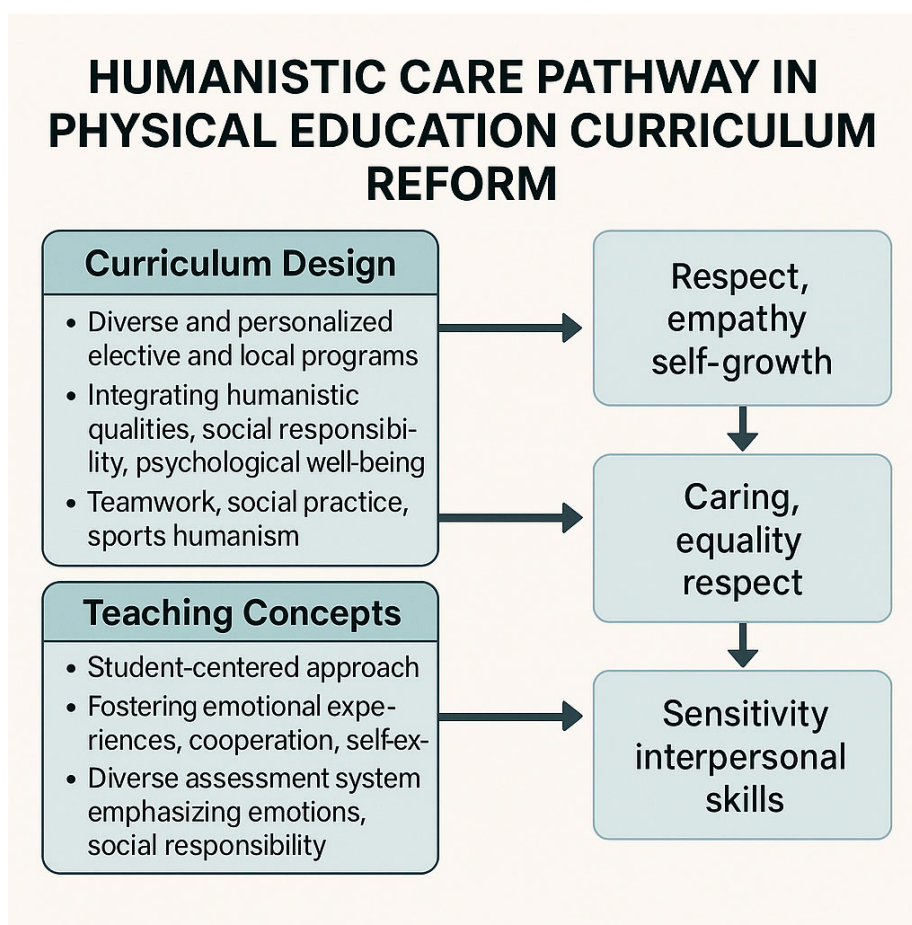


Figure 3. Integration of humanistic care in physical education curriculum reform

In terms of teaching philosophy, it is essential to emphasize a student-centered approach, focusing on students' emotional experiences and overall development. Teachers should foster an atmosphere of care, equality, and respect during the teaching process, encouraging students to express themselves, collaborate, and communicate. They should also pay attention to students' psychological changes and individual differences, helping them build a positive self-identity and healthy values^{[10][6]}. The teaching evaluation system should be diversified, focusing not only on skill acquisition but also on the emotional experiences, interpersonal interactions, and the cultivation of social responsibility in students during physical activities^[1].

Teacher training is crucial for implementing the concept of humanistic care. It is essential to enhance physical education teachers' humanistic literacy and mental health education skills, as well as their sensitivity and ability to address students' emotional needs. By organizing specialized lectures, case studies, and reflective practices, teachers can gain a deeper understanding of the humanistic aspects of physical education and learn caring teaching methods, which will encourage them to actively focus on students' mental health and interpersonal relationships in their daily teaching^{[4][3]}. Additionally, teachers should be encouraged to engage in interdisciplinary exchanges and collaborations, drawing on advanced concepts from psychology, education, and other fields to continuously improve the level of humanistic care in physical education.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

4.1. Main research conclusions

This study examines the theoretical foundation and practical approaches of humanistic care in the reform of physical education curricula, analyzes the current situation, challenges, and deficiencies, proposes a deeply integrated theoretical framework, and illustrates effective practices through case studies. The findings indicate that humanistic care has become a core driver for the high-quality development of physical education, benefiting curriculum goals, content, teaching methods, and evaluation systems. Courses should focus on students' physical, psychological, social, and personality development, emphasizing a student-centered approach, respecting individual differences and emotional experiences, to foster the comprehensive growth of students.

Theoretically, humanistic care guides the value orientation of courses, shifting from a focus on technical skills to a focus on people. In practice, the diversification of content, innovative teaching methods, improved evaluation systems, and enhanced teacher competence provide a solid foundation for implementation. Practical experience shows that paying attention to emotions, respecting individuals, and strengthening teacher-student interaction and cooperation can help stimulate learning enthusiasm and a sense of belonging, promoting social responsibility and self-identity.

On the whole, the integration of humanistic care enriches the connotation of physical education curriculum, improves the function of education, and promotes the synchronous development of students' physical and mental health and social adaptability. The combination of theory and practice is the key driving force to promote the sustainable and healthy development of physical education curriculum.

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