

Research on the Dilemmas and Cultivation Pathways of Excellent University Sports Teachers

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Abstract: The number of outstanding sports teachers in universities is scarce and growing slowly. The number of excellent sports teachers affects the quality of school physical education. By using methods such as literature review, logical analysis, and interviews, this paper summarizes the experiences and difficulties in the development of outstanding sports teachers in universities, aiming to outline a training path and promote the level of excellent sports teachers to enhance the quality of school physical education teaching.

Keywords: Excellence; Sports teachers; Training path

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1. Introduction

To accelerate the modernization of education, build high-level undergraduate education, improve the quality of talent training, and achieve connotative development in higher education, the Ministry of Education has fully implemented the “Double First-Class” initiative and launched the “Double Ten Thousand Plan” for first-class undergraduate programs and courses. This initiative sets new requirements for contemporary curriculum system construction. This paper analyzes the current development status of excellent sports teachers in universities to identify the root problems for sustainable development ^[1].

2. Current situation of excellent sports teachers in universities

2.1. Concept analysis of excellent sports teachers

Sports teachers are an essential component of university faculty, forming a high-quality teaching team with solid qualifications, exquisite professional skills, and innovative and unique teaching methods. Education is a major national and party strategy. To deepen educational system reform and improve the “Fostering Character and Civic Virtue” implementation mechanism, efforts are made to construct an education system that comprehensively develops morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor capabilities, forming a higher-level talent training system. The Soviet educator Karyagin believed that “teachers are the engineers of

the human soul”^[1]. Teachers play an indispensable role in students’ learning, guiding students to understand, recognize, and use knowledge. Excellent teachers are those among the teaching staff who excel in teaching methods, attitudes, and content delivery, making it easier for students to accept knowledge. Sports teachers, requiring both theoretical knowledge and technical demonstration, are contemporary society’s urgently needed “dual-skilled” talents. Excellent sports teachers are expected to have solid knowledge, rich personal charm, an enthusiastic classroom atmosphere, and harmonious teacher-student relationships^[2].

2.2. Development status of excellent sports teachers in universities

Important discussions on teachers’ values, status, duties, and development provide a strong directional lead for the growth of sports teachers in the new era^[2]. There is still a widespread cognitive bias in today’s society and educational circles regarding sports teachers, which to some extent shows that the professional status, identity, and self-worth of sports teachers are not recognized. This has become an obstacle to the professional advancement path for sports teachers. Due to the reduced attention to sports teachers, excellent sports teachers feel that their professional value is not recognized, and their enthusiasm, initiative, and creativity in teaching are significantly reduced. The growth rate of excellent sports teachers is slow, and the experiences of sports teachers before becoming excellent cannot be directly taught but must be summarized in the form of “routines” for other sports teachers to reference, which also slows the expansion of the excellent sports teacher team. Public institutions have significant advantages over private institutions in terms of resource utilization, platforms, and national support, so the living environment for excellent sports teachers in universities is worse than in public institutions. Private institution sports teachers need to strive for limited teaching resources and opportunities to stand out, which severely impacts the confidence and ambition of university sports teachers, keeping the development of sports in universities lukewarm.

3. Outstanding features of excellent sports teachers

The “profession” in the professional growth of sports teachers refers to the specialized vocation of educating and nurturing talents needed for economic and social development. “Profession” targets students and encompasses educating, caring for, and serving students, requiring professional knowledge, skills, abilities, and ethics^[3]. The labor of sports teachers is social in nature. Sports teachers’ work aims to cultivate talents who are comprehensively developed in morals, intelligence, physique, aesthetics, and labor, training generation after generation of students to become workers with certain scientific and cultural knowledge, basic sports skills, and noble morals, purposefully and systematically enhancing students’ physical quality and sports skills.

3.1. Professional “connotations” of excellent sports teachers

Sports teachers must possess solid teaching skills, provide students with correct demonstration actions to deepen the impression of skill learning and use straightforward language for supplementary explanations, enabling students to consolidate knowledge and skills more quickly and effectively^[3].

3.2. Unique and innovative teaching methods of excellent sports teachers

Innovative teaching methods form the foundation of a good class. Considering the individuality and opinions of contemporary university students, we consider from two perspectives: students and teachers. From the student’s perspective: Firstly, teaching methods should start with interests to motivate students, choosing methods that focus on student development, using flexible organizational forms, emphasizing students’ strengths, and allowing students to experience the joy of sports. Secondly, from their perspective, improve self-cultivation,

strengthen teaching art training, and continually summarize and reflect on their teaching to draw experience. Thirdly, from the perspective of teaching methods, create various practice techniques, and design methods appropriately. Fourthly, from the perspective of teaching conditions and environment, the application of sports teaching methods should follow practicality, using teaching methods as effective means to achieve educational goals. Finally, other perspectives, such as linking theory with practice, de-emphasizing exam-oriented education, and valuing physical education classes are excellent suggestions ^[4].

From the teacher's perspective: Firstly, it is most prominent that teachers should communicate more with students and treat them differently while encouraging them. Secondly, based on students' feelings, teachers are advised to create a relaxed and free classroom environment. Thirdly, from the perspective of teaching methods, introduce more variety, avoid rigidity and dullness, and implement practical skills such as first aid measures and safety tips. Fourthly, in terms of class form and content, teachers should inspire students' emotions and create various games and innovative forms. Finally, regarding teaching conditions and environment, increase practice time, improve facilities and equipment, and consider gender-separated classes ^[5]. With the diversification of university sports courses, teaching methods, and educational concepts that should change with the times, offering a variety of teaching methods to attract students' attention, enliven the classroom atmosphere, and allow thorough absorption of knowledge and skills ^[4].

3.3. High-quality teaching team of excellent sports teachers

A soulful teaching team can create multiple high-quality teachers, where teachers can share their classroom experiences, discuss difficulties encountered in class, and collaboratively solve problems and find ways to avoid such difficulties in the future. Constructing a modern educational and dedicated "dual-skilled" sports teaching team with emerging technology knowledge, research capabilities, and innovative spirit is fundamental for sports colleges in universities.

3.4. Harmonious teacher-student relationships of excellent sports teachers

The various behaviors of excellent sports teachers, as described by students, often relate to teacher-student relationships. A good teacher is a friend and mentor, forming a student-centered, democratic, equal, mutually respectful, and mutually understanding scientific teacher-student relationship through soulful communication, intellectual exchange, emotional impact, and physical interaction ^[6]. Teacher-student relationships are at the core of teaching, with students leading and teachers guiding. Harmonious teacher-student relationships are key to enhancing teaching quality. It affects not only the students' enthusiasm in class but also the teachers' initiative and dedication.

Being a good teacher and friend to students represents the highest achievement in handling teacher-student relationships and is an important manifestation of harmony, requiring teachers to treat students calmly, justly, tolerantly, respectfully, equally, and sincerely, warming students' hearts and becoming their trusted friend ^[6]. Harmonious teacher-student relationships are fundamental, essential for improving students' physical fitness, a prerequisite for teachers to impart their knowledge fully, and a reflection of teachers' personal charisma.

4. Challenges faced by excellent sports teachers in universities

4.1. Background of stigmatization of sports teachers

Stigmatization involves both the process of demeaning and damaging the stigmatized object and the dynamic construction of the stigmatized object through stigmatizing discourse. The term "stigmatization" has impacted the recognition of sports teachers in the educational community, subsequently influencing students' perceptions

of sports teachers. There exist misconceptions such as “math taught by physical education teachers” or “strong limbs but simple minds”. Some even believe that sports teachers lack quality and discipline. This phenomenon has damaged the reputation of the sports teacher community, and the prolonged silence of sports teachers on this matter has led them to gradually neglect their standards, silently enduring the harm brought by stigmatization. Over time, this has dampened sports teachers’ enthusiasm and ambition to enrich and advance their professional knowledge and skills, making it challenging to become excellent sports teachers.

4.2. Emergence of knowledge-based education tendencies

Knowledge-based refers to a method of knowledge selection that particularly values the logic and structure of the discipline itself. “Knowledge-based education” is a way of choosing education that narrows the broad concept of education to equate knowledge transfer with education itself. The emergence of knowledge-based education tendencies implies that our education has become polarized, focusing only on the transmission of knowledge without teaching students the methods or pathways for applying knowledge. This tendency also leads to the loss of competency-based educational capabilities. As knowledge-based education tendencies arise, sports teachers are increasingly influenced by the broader environment, gradually sidelining competency-based educational approaches, which are now referred to in the educational sector as “formalities”. Many sports teachers initially maintained their principles, but over time, they too have blended into the “mainstream”. This has limited sports teachers’ development toward excellence.

4.3. Lack of premium educational resources

University educational resources refer to the sum of human, material, and financial resources, necessary for the smooth conduct of educational activities. In addition to requiring high personal quality, the development of excellent sports teachers also needs platforms for self-display. The importance of quality resources is evident here. Public institutions have significant advantages over private ones in terms of resource utilization, platforms, and national support. The quality of teaching determines the developmental prospects of a school, which is influenced by the intensity and density of educational investments. University sports teachers need to find development and breakthrough opportunities under the constraint of skewed quality educational resources, which consume a part of their energy, preventing them from fully entering a state of improving teaching quality and self-enhancement, greatly limiting the development of sports teachers towards excellence.

4.4. Lack of proactive learning initiative

Zhou Xinjian and others explored three notable primary school sports teachers from the Zhejiang school, summarizing innovation as delving into old knowledge and exploring new knowledge ^[5]. They discussed that excellent sports teachers need to have strong research capabilities and the ability to create teaching materials, considering strong research skills as a crucial trait of all notable teachers. As the saying goes, “Learning is like rowing upstream, not to advance is to drop back”. When teachers do not engage with the latest professional knowledge and skills, they inadvertently fall behind others, gradually losing the possibility of becoming excellent sports teachers.

4.5. “Harmony” in teacher-student relationships

Teacher-student relationships are the core and fundamental interpersonal relationships in educational teaching. Harmonious teacher-student relationships significantly impact the teaching quality and the healthy development of students, manifesting in two aspects: being a mentor and friend, and interactive teaching. Being a good teacher is one of the prerequisites for conducting an excellent class. Sports teachers not only interact physically

and intellectually with students in class but also design engagements that touch their souls and emotions. However, current university sports teachers do not focus on extensive interactions with students. Interactions are limited to demonstration actions and verbal communication, lacking deeper exchanges and impacts, leaving teacher-student relationships confined to classroom interactions and becoming strangers after class.

5. Paths to developing excellent sports teachers in universities

Excellent sports teachers share common traits such as a profound love for students and a persistent pursuit of their profession. They also possess unique traits that distinguish them from other teachers. Some excel in coaching while others in teaching, with each having their distinct characteristics. Becoming an excellent sports teacher involves embracing diversity within unity, blending common characteristics with unique qualities that set them apart. The development of excellent sports teachers requires support and coordination at multiple levels.

5.1. Enhancing resource allocation to stimulate professional enthusiasm

The emergence of excellent sports teachers requires continual self-improvement and increased societal support for universities, including more resources and encouragement for educational institutions. Adequate educational resources ensure teaching conditions are met, allowing sports teachers to fully engage and maintain their enthusiasm. This motivates them to innovate and, in turn, influences students to change their attitudes, gradually improving classroom teaching quality. Clearly improved teaching quality provides feedback that fuels teachers' continued learning and innovation, subtly increasing the chances of becoming excellent sports teachers ^[6].

5.2. Establishing a collaborative sports platform to encourage healthy competition

With the rapid development of sports culture construction in universities, the establishment of sports resources is becoming more mature. Each university competes in developing its sports culture, creating a robust sports atmosphere. However, the development of resource-sharing and platform collaboration between universities has been relatively slow. By jointly building a sports platform and sharing high-quality teaching resources, teachers can consult, learn, and offer constructive suggestions to their colleagues. This encourages healthy competition among teachers. Transparent platform construction, selfless resource sharing, and healthy competition among teachers can promote the prosperity of sports education.

5.3. Emphasizing the development of school sports to increase teachers' influence

The construction of intercollegiate sports platforms signifies a new level of development in school sports, an indispensable part of China's educational system. It progresses alongside moral, intellectual, aesthetic, and labor education. Document No. 7 (2017) issued by the central government emphasizes the importance of strengthening students' physical health and outlines the future direction and immediate goals for school sports in China.

5.4. Building a scientific evaluation and management system to guide tailored teaching

Sports teaching requires a systematic and scientific management system to ensure stable educational operations. Within this framework, sports teachers can be guided appropriately to handle issues efficiently, allowing them to leverage their strengths to guide students. This approach helps manage the avoidance of issues in schools, where some institutions and teachers might lower learning difficulties or reduce teaching content to evade problems. Therefore, a scientific evaluation and management system should be established that incorporates students' perceptions, enabling teachers to tailor their teaching methods effectively. This can improve the quality of sports education in schools and lead to the development of more excellent sports teachers.

6. Conclusion

Under the goal of nurturing well-rounded socialist successors skilled in “morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor”, university sports education faces considerable challenges. Sports teachers in universities encounter numerous obstacles, which also represent significant challenges. However, sports teachers play a crucial role in enhancing students’ physical health and are an indispensable part of students’ growth. Therefore, society should increase support for sports education resources and improve the conditions for university sports teaching. On this foundation, a shared sports platform should be established to enhance sports teachers’ professional knowledge and skills, encouraging them to use their influence effectively. Constructing a scientific and systematic evaluation and management system can enhance the operation of sports teaching, improving the quality of university sports education in China. This will reduce the difficulties sports teachers face in becoming excellent, overall enhancing the quality of school sports teaching.

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