

# Moral Education in Physical Education and Health Courses in Middle Schools under the New Curriculum Standards

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**Abstract:** The newly revised curriculum standards are guided by core competencies and explicitly state that moral education should be the fundamental task of teaching in all subjects, promoting the integration of moral education from specialized courses to the entire curriculum and the entire teaching process. This paper focuses on the functional positioning of physical education and health courses in the moral education system and systematically analyzes the practical basis and value of integrating moral education into physical education classes. Based on the review of the shift in the curriculum's educational orientation, it mainly explores the implementation paths and optimization strategies of moral education in physical education and health courses from the aspects of teaching goal construction, teaching process design, classroom organization methods, and evaluation mechanism optimization, aiming to provide feasible practical references for the transformation of middle school physical education from a “skill-oriented” to an “education-oriented” approach.

**Keywords:** New curriculum standards; Physical education and health; Moral education

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## 1. Introduction

Under the background of the continuous deepening of educational reform in the new era, the function of basic education courses is undergoing a systematic transformation from a “knowledge transmission-oriented” approach to a “comprehensive education-oriented” one. The newly revised curriculum standards, with core literacy as the guiding principle, explicitly propose that moral education and fostering students’ all-round development should be the fundamental task of teaching in all subjects, promoting the integration of moral education into the overall curriculum and the entire teaching process. Against this macro policy framework, the educational positioning and teaching value of physical education and health courses in middle schools are facing a re-examination and deep reconstruction. Physical education courses are no longer merely responsible for enhancing physical fitness and imparting sports skills, but are now entrusted with the important mission of cultivating students’ sound

personality, rule awareness, and sense of social responsibility in real-life situations <sup>[1]</sup>. Physical education and health courses use physical activities as the main carrier, and the teaching process highly relies on practical participation, situational experience, and interpersonal interaction. Students inevitably experience cooperation and competition, compliance and conflict, success and failure, etc., during sports activities. This highly contextualized learning process provides a unique advantage for the natural generation of moral education content, making the physical education classroom an important field for implementing moral education goals.

## **2. The shift in the educational positioning of middle school physical education and health courses under the new curriculum standards**

### **2.1. The fundamental shift from “physical fitness and skill-oriented” to “moral education and fostering students’ all-round development”**

Traditional physical education teaching has long focused on improving physical fitness and mastering sports skills as its core pursuits, with the course value more reflected in the improvement of physical fitness and the cultivation of competitive abilities, while paying relatively less attention to students’ values, behavioral norms, and social responsibility awareness. The new curriculum standards clearly establish “moral education and fostering students’ all-round development” as the fundamental task of course implementation, requiring physical education courses to simultaneously undertake the educational responsibilities of value guidance and personality shaping while promoting physical development. This shift means that the physical education classroom is no longer merely a training ground but an important educational space for students to form rule awareness, cooperative spirit, and a sense of fairness.

### **2.2. The structural shift from “teaching of sports techniques” to “comprehensive cultivation of core literacy”**

The new curriculum standards propose to reconstruct the curriculum goal system based on core literacy, and the educational positioning of middle school physical education and health courses has also shifted from single technical instruction to comprehensive literacy cultivation. Physical education core literacy not only includes the development of sports abilities but also encompasses the formation of healthy behaviors, the shaping of sports ethics, and the improvement of social adaptability. Under this framework, sports techniques are no longer the ultimate goal of teaching but an important carrier for achieving educational goals. During the process of learning technical movements, students need to understand rules, regulate emotions, assume roles, and make cooperative decisions. These processes themselves constitute important contents of values education and behavioral norms training <sup>[2]</sup>.

## **3. Optimization strategies for moral education in middle school physical education and health courses under the new curriculum standards**

### **3.1. Value reconstruction of the teaching goal system**

Under the background of the new curriculum standards, if middle school physical education and health courses are to effectively undertake the function of moral education, the reconstruction of the teaching goal system is the primary prerequisite. If the teaching goals of physical education merely remain at the level of physical fitness indicators or technical achievements, then moral education content is likely to become an accessory and superficial. The core requirements proposed by the curriculum standards for physical education and health

courses emphasize that students should form correct value judgments, stable behavioral norms, and positive life attitudes during their participation in sports. Such requirements determine that the teaching goals of physical education should shift from a single skill orientation to a multi-dimensional educational orientation. When teachers carry out teaching design work, in addition to setting skill goals, they also need to set clear moral education goals and ensure that these goals have an internal logical connection with the course content. The moral education dimension in teaching objectives should not be presented in an abstract form but should specifically point to students' behavioral patterns, attitude choices, and sense of responsibility in sports contexts. By adopting the approach of setting objectives upfront, moral education in physical education classes no longer relies on occasional reminders or post-event summaries but becomes an intrinsic driving force in the teaching process, allowing students to naturally undergo value guidance and character shaping while completing sports tasks.

### **3.2. Contextualized design of the teaching process**

The effectiveness of moral education in physical education and health courses largely depends on the organizational form of the teaching process. The new curriculum standards emphasize the central position of students, promoting a shift from one-way directive teaching in physical education classes to a learning process centered on experience and participation. Under this guiding principle, the teaching process needs to be designed contextually, enabling students to develop a deep understanding of rules, responsibility, and cooperation through real sports experiences. Physical education classes inherently have a high degree of contextuality, and activities such as sports competitions, cooperative exercises, and role division all contain rich moral education resources. With the teacher's conscious planning of the teaching process, moral education content can be naturally integrated into sports tasks, allowing students to undergo the process of value judgment and behavior selection while completing learning tasks. The contextualized design of the teaching process is not merely about adding competition segments but requires teachers to systematically construct activity rules, grouping methods, and evaluation criteria around moral education goals <sup>[3]</sup>. By setting sports tasks that require cooperation, teachers can guide students to understand the significance of collective goals in practice. Through designing reasonable competition mechanisms, teachers can help students correctly view the relationship between victory and defeat, fostering a sense of fair competition. The new curriculum standards advocate paying attention to students' emotional experiences and behavioral responses during the learning process, which requires teachers to intervene, guide, and provide feedback in a timely manner during teaching, ensuring that moral education continues throughout the sports process. In this way, moral education in physical education classes is no longer achieved through preaching but through internalization in contextual experiences.

### **3.3. Optimization of classroom organization and teacher-student interaction mechanism**

Whether moral education in middle school physical education and health courses can be effectively implemented is closely related to the classroom organization form and the teacher-student interaction mechanism. Classroom organization plays a decisive role in teaching efficiency and also unconsciously shapes students' behavioral patterns and value orientations. The new curriculum standards emphasize student development as the center, and physical education classes should shift from the single organizational model of "teacher-led, student-passive execution" to a teaching form centered on guidance, negotiation, and interaction. In this transformation process, the role of physical education teachers in the classroom gradually changes from "commander" to "value guide" and "behavior model." By regulating the classroom rhythm, activity methods, and interaction forms, teachers

can continuously strengthen the moral education orientation in the sports teaching process, allowing students to form stable behavioral habits in a standardized and orderly classroom atmosphere.

The way of rule construction will be the first aspect to reflect the impact of classroom organization on moral education penetration. If teachers merely use imperative language to emphasize classroom discipline, students will generally be at the level of passive compliance, and it will be difficult for them to form internal recognition. The new curriculum standards advocate the use of negotiated rule construction to lead students to participate in the formulation and implementation of classroom norms, transforming rule awareness from external constraints to voluntary compliance. In addition, the way teachers interact with students will directly affect the effectiveness of moral education <sup>[4]</sup>. The fair attitude, respect for students, and emotional management demonstrated by physical education teachers during the teaching process will be subconsciously imitated and absorbed by students. By promptly affirming students' positive behaviors and guiding them to reflect on inappropriate performances, teachers can continuously reinforce positive value orientation during the interaction process, ensuring that moral education occurs throughout the class rather than being concentrated at a specific teaching point.

### **3.4. Systematic optimization of the evaluation mechanism**

The evaluation mechanism in physical education and health courses not only serves to provide feedback on learning outcomes but also subtly guides students' behavioral orientation and value choices. The new curriculum standards explicitly propose the establishment of a development-oriented evaluation system as the core of the course evaluation framework. This concept provides an important institutional guarantee for the deepening of moral education in physical education classes. The traditional evaluation system in physical education has long focused on athletic performance and technical proficiency, which may lead students to concentrate on the results rather than the attitudes and behaviors during the learning process. As a result, moral education goals are often not explicitly presented in such an evaluation framework, thereby affecting their actual implementation. The optimization of the evaluation mechanism requires systematic adjustments from multiple dimensions, including evaluation content, methods, and subjects, to truly integrate moral education factors into the evaluation system of physical education courses <sup>[5]</sup>.

Developmental evaluation emphasizes continuous attention to the learning process of students, which is highly consistent with the generation mechanism of moral education goals in physical education. When evaluating students, physical education teachers should incorporate moral elements such as rule awareness, cooperative attitude, responsibility fulfillment, and self-management ability into the evaluation scope. Through process documentation and periodic feedback, students can be guided to recognize that good behavior is an essential part of learning outcomes. Moreover, the introduction of multiple evaluation subjects also enhances the authenticity and effectiveness of moral education evaluation. The combination of teacher evaluation, peer assessment, and self-evaluation can encourage students to deepen their understanding and acceptance of moral requirements through reflection on the behaviors of others and themselves. In this process, the evaluation mechanism is no longer a final judgment but an important driving force for students' continuous improvement.

## **4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the reform of physical education and health courses in middle schools under the new curriculum standards is not only an adjustment of teaching content and methods but also a systematic upgrade of the

educational philosophy of the courses. The physical practice, rule experience, and emotional interaction carried out in physical education classes make them unique and irreplaceable in the school's moral education system. Through the overall optimization of course objectives, teaching processes, classroom operation mechanisms, and evaluation systems, physical education and health courses can continuously release moral education effectiveness in daily teaching, enabling value guidance and skill learning to occur simultaneously in the same teaching context.

## Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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