

# The Value Orientation, Content Dimensions, and Practical Approaches of Integrating the Cultural Spirit of the Grand Canal into the Ideological and Political Education of Physical Education Courses in Universities

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**Abstract:** As an important part of outstanding traditional Chinese culture, the culture of the Grand Canal not only reflects the wisdom and strength of the nation but also carries a rich cultural spirit. In recent years, the state has attached great importance to the protection and inheritance of the Grand Canal culture. This paper explores how to integrate the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal into the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities, analyzing its value orientation, content dimensions, and practical approaches. By combining theory with practice, it proposes the value of the Grand Canal cultural spirit in physical education courses, including guiding political ideology, shaping moral qualities, and inheriting regional culture. In addition, this paper also explores the innovation of teaching methods and evaluation systems to improve teaching effectiveness and promote the in-depth integration of the Grand Canal cultural spirit into contemporary physical education teaching in universities.

**Keywords:** The cultural spirit of the Grand Canal; Physical education in universities; Ideological and political education in courses; Teaching innovation; Cultural inheritance

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## 1. Introduction

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Party Central Committee has attached great importance to the protection and inheritance of the Grand Canal culture. In 2019, the General Offices of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the “Plan for the Protection, Inheritance, and Utilization of the Grand Canal Culture”, which pointed out that it is necessary to deeply explore and enrich the cultural connotations of the Grand Canal, fully display the culture carried by the Grand Canal relics, and promote the culture condensed in the history of the Grand Canal<sup>[1]</sup>. In recent years, the Party and the state have attached great importance to the construction of ideological and political education in

courses, and have successively issued a series of policy documents, pointing out the direction for the construction of ideological and political education in physical education courses in universities. For example, the “Implementation Outline of the Project for Improving the Quality of Ideological and Political Work in Universities” issued by the Ministry of Education in 2017 pointed out that it is necessary to pay attention to cultivating people with culture, and deeply carry out the education of outstanding traditional Chinese culture<sup>[2]</sup>. The “Guidelines for the Construction of Ideological and Political Education in Courses in Institutions of Higher Education” issued by the Ministry of Education in 2020 pointed out that physical education courses should pay attention to patriotic education and traditional culture education, cultivate students’ beliefs of tenacious struggle and dedication, and stimulate students’ sense of responsibility to improve the physical quality of the whole nation<sup>[3]</sup>.

In recent years, there have been ideological problems among college students, such as a lack of cultural confidence and a blind admiration for foreign things. Therefore, it is urgent to carry forward outstanding traditional Chinese culture, implement the Chinese culture inheritance project, and promote the integration of outstanding traditional Chinese culture into education and teaching. As an important part of outstanding traditional Chinese culture, the Grand Canal culture has a natural connection with the formation of college students’ sports morality and sports spirit in the process of constructing ideological and political education in physical education courses in universities. It is an essential part of the construction system of ideological and political education in physical education courses in universities and a valuable resource for improving physical education courses and teaching, and strengthening students’ ideals, beliefs, and the spirit of struggle. Therefore, this paper combines the Grand Canal culture with the ideological and political education of physical education courses, explores the integration of the ideological essence and contemporary value of the Grand Canal culture into the classroom teaching of physical education in universities, and provides useful references for the research on the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities from three aspects: the value orientation, content dimensions, and practical approaches of integrating the Grand Canal cultural spirit into the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities.

## **2. The value orientation of integrating the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal into the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities**

Culture is the soul of a country and a nation. When culture thrives, the country thrives; when culture is strong, the nation is strong. Without a high level of cultural confidence and the prosperity of culture, there will be no great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation<sup>[4]</sup>. The Grand Canal culture is an important part of outstanding traditional Chinese culture. Integrating it into the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities helps to guide political ideology, shape moral qualities, and inherit regional culture.

### **2.1. It helps to guide political ideology**

Once the ideological defense line is breached, it is difficult to hold other defenses<sup>[5]</sup>. In an information-based society, Western countries attempt to undermine the political ideology of young people in China through the Internet. The dominant value of the Grand Canal is to construct a field of memory for the nation-state<sup>[6]</sup>. Therefore, integrating the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal into the ideological and political education of physical education courses helps college students to adhere to the leadership of the Communist Party of China, enhance their patriotic feelings, and boost their national self-confidence.

Firstly, it helps to strengthen political identity. The Grand Canal is a great project in ancient China,

embodying the wisdom and strength of the Chinese nation. By learning about and understanding the Grand Canal culture, students can deeply comprehend the great spirit and historical heritage of the Chinese nation, thus enhancing their sense of national identity. Integrating the Grand Canal culture into the ideological and political education of physical education courses allows students to experience and practice these values through various activities. In this way, students' sense of social responsibility, collectivism, and moral qualities can be cultivated imperceptibly, achieving the educational goal of fostering virtue and cultivating people.

Secondly, it helps to deepen patriotic feelings. As a great creation of the working people in ancient China, the Grand Canal is a precious treasure of the Chinese nation. Its construction and maintenance reflect the patriotic feelings of the ancient people. The spirit of patriotism is an important part of the Chinese national spirit, and the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal contains profound patriotic and family-country feelings. Integrating it into the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities can help students understand the country's history and culture more profoundly, stimulate their patriotic enthusiasm, and further strengthen their sense of belonging to the country.

## **2.2. It helps to shape moral qualities**

Great spirits are created and accumulated by generations of Chinese people and need to be passed down from generation to generation<sup>[7]</sup>. The cultural spirit of the Grand Canal has also been passed down and carried forward from generation to generation. Integrating it into the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities helps college students to have tenacious qualities and a sense of cooperation, so as to better shoulder the responsibility of seeking development for the country, rejuvenation for the nation, and happiness for the people.

Firstly, it helps to cultivate a sense of responsibility. The construction of the Grand Canal was an arduous project. The working people overcame numerous difficulties, demonstrating the spirit of hard work, continuous progress, and a strong sense of responsibility towards the country and the nation. Integrating these spirits into the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities can inspire students not to give up easily when facing difficulties and challenges. It encourages them to maintain perseverance and develop a sense of responsibility to serve the people, so that they can strive harder to achieve the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Secondly, it helps to foster a sense of cooperation. During the construction of the Grand Canal, the working people united as one and jointly accomplished many challenging tasks. The spirit of unity, cooperation, and courage in the face of difficulties is consistent with the team-cooperation spirit and the spirit of struggle emphasized in physical education courses. Integrating this spirit into the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities enables students to have a better experience, understanding, and recognition of it. As a result, it is conducive to cultivating students' team spirit and cooperation ability.

## **2.3. It helps to inherit regional culture**

Yangzhou City is located at the intersection of the Yangtze River and the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, and the China Grand Canal Museum is also located here. Universities are important positions for cultural inheritance and innovation. Integrating the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal into the ideological and political education of physical education courses can stimulate students' interest in and love for regional culture, rejuvenate the Grand Canal culture in modern society, and realize the creative transformation and innovative

development of traditional culture.

Firstly, it helps to enhance humanistic connotations. As an important water transportation route in ancient China, the Grand Canal carries rich historical and cultural heritages. The cultural spirit of the Grand Canal is a crucial part of the excellent traditional Chinese culture. Integrating this cultural spirit into the ideological and political education of physical education courses allows students to better understand and recognize the history and culture of the Chinese nation during physical exercises. They can feel the inheritance and promotion of the national spirit, which strengthens their national pride and cultural confidence, making them more determined to inherit and carry forward Chinese culture.

Secondly, it helps to foster an innovative mindset. For cultural construction, innovation is the key to keeping up with and leading the times<sup>[8]</sup>. During the construction of the Grand Canal, the working people exerted their wisdom and continuously innovated, overcoming many technical difficulties. The cultural spirit of the Grand Canal contains the qualities of openness and inclusiveness. Integrating it into the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities helps to cultivate students' innovative consciousness. It encourages students to be creative, try new sports events and skills, and respect sports styles from different cultural backgrounds, thus helping students develop a more open, inclusive, and innovative attitude.

### **3. The content dimensions of integrating the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal into the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities**

Outstanding traditional Chinese culture is the crystallization of the wisdom and the essence of Chinese civilization, the root and soul of the Chinese nation, and the foundation for us to stand firm in the global cultural interaction<sup>[9]</sup>. As an outstanding traditional Chinese culture, the Grand Canal culture contains rich educational elements. Integrating it organically into the teaching content of the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities helps to implement the fundamental task of education, which is "cultivating people with moral integrity".

#### **3.1. Integrating the national spirit of patriotic feelings and cultural confidence into the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities**

Sports carry the dream of national prosperity and national rejuvenation. A strong sports sector makes a strong China; when the national fortune thrives, sports thrive<sup>[10]</sup>. By deeply exploring the ideological and political elements contained in the Grand Canal culture in its thousands-year development process and integrating them into the classroom teaching of physical education majors, it can better strengthen ideals and beliefs, deepen patriotic feelings, and enhance cultural confidence.

Patriotism is the deepest and most lasting emotion in the world and the source of a person's moral integrity and the foundation of achieving success<sup>[11]</sup>. Integrating patriotic feelings into physical education teaching enables the spirit of patriotism to play an educational role, allowing college students to develop a stronger and more passionate patriotic feeling in the process of physical education learning. The Grand Canal culture is an outstanding traditional Chinese culture with national characteristics. The construction of sports culture is an important part of socialist cultural construction and plays a significant role in socialist cultural construction and the construction of a strong sports country<sup>[12]</sup>. Therefore, it is of great significance to integrate cultural confidence in sports into the physical education curriculum. In the process of physical



education, attention should be paid to the infiltration of outstanding traditional Chinese culture, and education on traditional sports should be increased to make students love Chinese traditional culture, have a sense of national belonging and cultural confidence, and thus carry forward outstanding traditional Chinese culture.

### **3.2. Integrating the spirit of the times of unity, cooperation, and a sense of responsibility into the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities**

As a world cultural heritage, the Grand Canal contains the rich spirit of the times. Condensing and integrating these spirits into the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities can guide students to master scientific learning and training methods, cultivate students' cooperative thinking and team-cooperation abilities, and enhance their sense of responsibility.

The construction and maintenance of the Grand Canal integrates many experience-based achievements related to various disciplines and coordinates with various large-scale projects for governance. Physical education teaching is a collaborative process, including the cooperation between people and the coordination between people and objects. Integrating unity and cooperation into the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities allows students to learn how to cooperate, communicate, and divide labor with others through participating in team sports events, and cultivate a team-cooperation spirit and a sense of collective honor.

As an important heritage of human civilization, the Grand Canal shoulders important responsibilities for the transportation and communication between the north and the south, the economic development of the areas along the line, and cultural integration. In physical education curriculum teaching, the cultivation of a sense of responsibility is an essential part, including cultivating students' personal, collective, and social responsibilities. It is necessary to guide students to deeply understand the connotations and practical requirements of a sense of responsibility, cultivate college students into dedicated people who firmly stand on the people's side, and form the idea of serving the people and taking on responsibilities and making contributions, so as to better devote themselves to socialist modernization.

### **3.3. Integrating the spirit of “Yangzhou Craftsman” of hard work and the courage to innovate into the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities**

Yangzhou is a famous cultural city with a history of more than 2,500 years. Since ancient times, it has occupied an important position on the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal. More attention needs to be paid to “local knowledge” and “folk wisdom” and incorporate “living” intangible cultural heritages into overall planning<sup>[13]</sup>. The spirit of “Yangzhou Craftsman” is an important part of the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal, the crystallization of the wisdom of the Chinese working people, and a perfect interpretation of the craftsman spirit. This is similar to the spirit of hard-work, openness, inclusiveness, and the courage to innovate in the field of physical education. This integration is conducive to shaping students' good moral qualities.

The conditions for the excavation and construction of the Grand Canal were extremely difficult. It was precisely because the working people had the good quality of hard work that the Grand Canal was completed. Today, the protection, inheritance, and utilization of the Grand Canal culture cannot do without the spirit of struggle. Physical education teaching especially requires the spirit of hard work. The learning of sports technical movements is a process of continuous breakthrough and self-transcendence. In the process of physical education teaching, teachers can teach students the spirit of hard work by setting challenging goals,

emphasizing perseverance, and introducing competitive elements.

It was precisely because the builders of the Grand Canal dared to innovate that they could face complex geographical environments, frequent floods, changing water-control concepts, strategies, management institutions, and operating mechanisms, continuously innovate, and overcome difficulties, shining brightly in the history of the Chinese nation's creation. In physical education teaching, teachers can teach students the courage to innovate by encouraging independent learning and exploration, introducing innovative elements and games, cultivating students' critical thinking, and organizing innovation and creativity competitions.

#### **4. The practical approaches of integrating the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal into the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities**

In the process of integrating the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal into the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities, attention should be paid to the establishment of teaching objectives; integrating teaching resources to stimulate students' interest; innovating teaching methods, creating teaching situations, and fully mobilizing students' enthusiasm; paying attention to students' behavioral processes and learning results, providing feedback and help to students, and adopting multiple evaluations to improve the educational effectiveness of integrating the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal into the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities.

##### **4.1. Clarifying teaching objectives**

The teaching objectives of physical education determine the selection of physical education curriculum content and teaching methods, the organization of physical education curriculum teaching and activities, and provide a basis for the implementation and evaluation of physical education courses. Teachers should understand the connotations of the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal, deeply study the historical background, cultural characteristics of the Grand Canal, and its status and role in Chinese history and culture, and clarify the core values of the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal, such as unity and cooperation, diligence and wisdom, openness and inclusiveness, innovation and progress. Analyze the curriculum requirements and student characteristics. According to the standards and requirements of physical education courses in universities, determine the framework of curriculum objectives. At the same time, consider factors such as students' age characteristics, interests, hobbies, and physical and mental development needs, so that the teaching objectives are more in line with the actual situation of students.

##### **4.2. Integrating teaching resources**

The lack of teaching resources for the ideological and political education of physical education courses is an important factor restricting the realization of teaching objectives. Fully developing teaching resources for the ideological and political education of physical education courses is conducive to stimulating students' learning interest and improving their learning enthusiasm. Integrating the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal into the construction of the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities should not be a rigid application in the teaching process. It is necessary to deeply explore the connotations and values of the Grand Canal culture, establish a relevant module system, organically combine it with the objectives and contents of the ideological and political education of physical education courses in universities, establish a

teaching resource library for the ideological and political education of physical education courses, integrate teaching resources through various means, and achieve the dual goals of cultural inheritance and physical education. It is necessary to add relevant content of the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal to physical education curriculum textbooks. Cooperate with teachers of other disciplines to jointly develop textbooks and teaching aids, provide diversified learning resources, and effectively implement interdisciplinary theme-based learning. Build a resource platform for the integration of the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal and the ideological and political education of physical education courses through the Internet platform to expand students' learning channels and achieve better educational results.

### **4.3. Innovating teaching methods**

Teaching methods serve as the bridge connecting teachers' instruction and students' learning, and they are crucial elements in enhancing the teaching quality of ideological and political education in physical education courses. When integrating the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal into the ideological and political education of university physical education courses, it is necessary to consider both the disciplinary orientation and the student-centered approach, giving full play to the leading role of teachers and the principal position of students. Through the organic combination of multiple teaching methods, the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal can be better integrated into the ideological and political education of university physical education courses, improving teaching effectiveness and students' participation. The following teaching methods can be adopted:

- (1) Situational teaching method: Transform the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal into tangible objects and integrate them into university physical education courses. Create life-oriented scenarios related to the Grand Canal culture. Combine with the content of physical education teaching and conduct classroom teaching through methods such as student discussions, scene-restoration demonstrations, and heuristic teaching. This allows students to experience and understand the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal firsthand. Break the traditional teaching concept that emphasizes offline teaching with online teaching as a supplement. Actively utilize online teaching and other means, taking advantage of the Internet era. Leverage technologies such as multimedia, virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR) to provide students with immersive learning experiences.
- (2) Flipped classroom: The flipped classroom approach helps to improve teaching effectiveness and students' participation. It enables the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal to permeate students' minds subtly, just as salt dissolves in water.
- (3) Practical teaching method: Make use of resources both on and off campus. Establish cooperative relationships with local governments, enterprises, public institutions, and social organizations along the Grand Canal. Jointly carry out social practice activities such as cultural inheritance and sports popularization. Encourage students to engage in teamwork and inquiry-based learning, cultivating their practical abilities and innovative spirits.

### **4.4. Improving teaching evaluation**

The teaching evaluation of ideological and political education in physical education courses is an important component of the construction of ideological and political education in physical education courses. Its main functions include assessing students' physical education learning, checking the achievement of physical education teaching objectives, and promptly identifying problems in the teaching process, so as to take corresponding measures to improve teaching quality. In July 2020, the "Overall Plan for Deepening the

Reform of Education Evaluation in the New Era” issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council pointed out the need to “improve outcome evaluation, strengthen process evaluation, explore value-added evaluation, and improve comprehensive evaluation”<sup>[14]</sup>. Therefore, when integrating the cultural spirit of the Grand Canal into the construction of ideological and political education in university physical education courses, attention should be paid to improving teaching evaluation. A diversified evaluation approach should be adopted, which combines multiple evaluation subjects including student evaluations, peer-expert evaluations, and teacher evaluations, as well as combines process-based evaluation and outcome-based evaluation. The CIPP evaluation model, which consists of context evaluation, input evaluation, process evaluation, and outcome evaluation and is characterized by its process-orientation, feedback-ability, and comprehensive coverage, can be used. Based on this model, a diversified physical education curriculum evaluation system should be developed, with an emphasis on evaluating students’ learning performance in different situations<sup>[15]</sup>.

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