

Research on the Reform Strategies for University General Track and Field Textbooks Guided by the 'Health First' Principle

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of the "Healthy China 2030" initiative and the development of a strong sports nation, university physical education shoulders a crucial mission to enhance national fitness. This study aims to systematically analyze the value and problems of current university general track and field textbooks and to explore pathways for their modern reform. The research posits that existing textbooks play a significant role in standardizing teaching and systematically imparting knowledge, serving as a core vehicle for implementing the "Health First" philosophy, fostering students' lifelong sports awareness, and disseminating sports culture. However, they also reveal three major bottlenecks in practice: in , there is a "technique-oriented" bias that prioritizes competition over health, coupled with an outdated knowledge system; in content system, the rigid, linear structure fails to accommodate individual student differences, leading to a disconnect between theory and practice; in , the static, text-and-image-based presentation lacks modern appeal and interactivity, failing to stimulate student interest. To address this, the study proposes a systematic development path for textbooks. In form guiding philosophy, a paradigm shift from a "technique-oriented" approach to one centered on "student health and development" is essential. In , an open framework that is "modular, stratified, and engaging" should be constructed. In , an "integrated media" digital textbook incorporating modern technology needs to be created. In content system presentation format evaluation system, a diverse, process-oriented approach should be advocated and integrated. The ultimate goal of this "ecological reconstruction" is to transform the track and field textbook from a mere vehicle for knowledge transmission into a dynamic portal that empowers students to cultivate lifelong exercise habits and lead a healthy lifestyle, thereby effectively enhancing the educational outcomes of university physical education in the new era.

Keywords

University Track and Field; General Education Textbook; Curriculum Guidelines; Curriculum Reform; Lifelong Sports.

1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of the comprehensive advancement of the "Healthy China 2030" strategy and the continuous deepening of the construction of a sports power, university physical education has been endowed with an unprecedented historical mission. As a key link in enhancing the physical fitness of youth and implementing the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, the quality of university physical education is directly related to the future national constitution and social vitality. Track and field, as the "mother of all sports," is an indispensable core component of the university physical education curriculum system. The university general track and field textbook, in turn, is the fundamental basis and core vehicle for carrying teaching content, standardizing the teaching process, and achieving educational

objectives. Therefore, a systematic review of the characteristics of current track and field textbooks and a profound analysis of their unique significance in the reform of university physical education are not only the basis for evaluating current teaching quality but also the logical starting point for exploring future textbook optimization paths and enhancing the effectiveness of physical education. This holds significant theoretical and practical guiding value.

2. Characteristics and Significance of China's University General Track and Field Textbooks

2.1. Core Characteristics of Track and Field Textbooks

2.1.1. Normativity and Authority

As textbooks for general education courses for university students nationwide, their compilation strictly follows the relevant guiding principles and syllabi of the Ministry of Education and the General Administration of Sport. For instance, the was co-authored by nearly 40 influential domestic experts and professors^[1]. It provides a unified knowledge benchmark and evaluation reference for track and field teaching activities nationwide, ensuring the standardization of basic teaching content and serving as a foundational pillar for guaranteeing the basic quality of university physical education. Advanced Course in Track and Field Sports.

2.1.2. Scientific Rigor and Systematization

The construction of the textbook's content system is generally supported by theories from disciplines such as sports human science, pedagogy, and sports training theory. It is not a simple enumeration of track and field events but a systematic exposition of a complete knowledge framework, from the cultural origins and basic theories of track and field to the action principles and learning steps of various techniques, and further to physical fitness training methods and health knowledge, reflecting the rigorous logic and scientific connotation of the sports discipline.

2.1.3. Practical Orientation

Unlike purely theoretical textbooks, the ultimate goal of a track and field textbook is to guide students' physical practice. The detailed technical diagrams, training methods, and tips for common errors and corrections in the book directly serve students' acquisition of motor skills and improvement of physical fitness, aiming to effectively translate theoretical knowledge into students' athletic ability and health behaviors.

2.2. The Important Significance of Track and Field Textbooks

In the new historical period, the strategic significance of university general track and field textbooks has become increasingly prominent, with their value mainly reflected in the following three aspects:

First, the textbook translates the macro-policy goal of "enhancing student physical fitness" into a series of scientific, operable knowledge units and exercise plans. By guiding students to master correct exercise methods and understand the relationship between sports and health, the textbook transforms abstract health concepts into tangible physical activities from which students can personally practice and benefit. It is a key tool for shifting from "knowledge transmission" to "health empowerment."

Second, the university stage is a critical period for the formation of students' lifestyles and behavioral habits. An excellent track and field textbook not only teaches students the skills of "running, jumping, and throwing" but, more importantly, "teaches them how to fish" by enabling them to master the principles and methods of independent and scientific fitness. This

lays a solid foundation for them to continue physical exercise as a lifestyle and maintain lifelong exercise habits after leaving campus.

Third, track and field itself embodies the Olympic spirit of "Faster, Higher, Stronger - Together" and the cultural connotation of unremitting struggle and self-transcendence. While imparting techniques, the textbook also conveys positive values and a tenacious character to students by introducing track and field history and the stories of outstanding athletes. This is highly consistent with the fundamental task of "fostering virtue through education" in universities and plays an important cultural education function.

3. Main Problems with Existing University General Track and Field Textbooks

Although university general track and field textbooks play an important role in standardizing teaching and popularizing sports, they face increasingly prominent inherent limitations and deep-seated problems in the face of the diverse health needs of new-era university students and the rapidly changing educational technology environment. These problems not only weaken the educational effectiveness of the textbooks but also become a bottleneck constraining the quality improvement of university physical education, mainly manifesting in three aspects: content, system, and form.

3.1. Content Level: Deviation in Value Orientation and Ossification of the Knowledge System

The content of the textbook is the fundamental basis of teaching activities, yet current track and field textbooks show significant dislocation and lag in content construction.

First, many textbooks still follow the logic of competitive sports in their content arrangement, excessively emphasizing the details of standard technical movements and the achievement of athletic performance, making them resemble a "simplified manual for professional training." This "technique-oriented" paradigm ignores the core demand of the vast majority of students, who are not pursuing competitive success but hope to promote physical and mental health and relieve academic pressure through physical exercise. Consequently, its content is not only too demanding for students with a weak athletic foundation or interest but also fails to evoke emotional resonance and the motivation for sustained participation. Moreover, their content lacks relevant material and methods for cultivating student abilities^[2]. Second, the knowledge system is slow to update and is disconnected from modern sports science.

3.2. System Level: Rigid Structure Lacking Flexibility and Individuality

In the overall structure and organizational logic of the textbooks, there is a common problem of excessive standardization and insufficient personalization.

On the one hand, most current textbooks adopt a unified, linear chapter arrangement, requiring all students to learn the same technical items in a step-by-step manner, often arranged according to the principle of progressing from easy to difficult and from simple to complex^[3]. This model ignores the huge differences among university students in terms of gender, physical foundation, interest preferences, and even health status. It can neither meet the advanced needs of physically capable students nor provide basic options for weaker or special-needs students to "reach for," making the educational ideal of teaching students according to their aptitude difficult to implement in practice. This "one-size-fits-all" linear structure is ill-suited to the great diversity of the student population.

On the other hand, the theoretical knowledge chapters in the textbook, such as those on sports physiology and historical culture, often lack an organic internal connection with the subsequent practical technique chapters. Theoretical knowledge fails to effectively guide practice, and the

practical sessions fail to serve as a scene for testing and deepening theory. A significant "cognitive gap" exists between the two, making it difficult for students to internalize the learned knowledge into a comprehensive ability for scientific exercise.

3.3. Form Level: Monotonous Presentation Format Lacking Modernity and Interactivity

In the era of media convergence, the presentation form of a textbook is a key factor affecting the student learning experience, and this is the weakest link in current track and field textbooks. First, the vast majority of textbooks still use "black text on white paper + static illustrations" as their main presentation method. The layout design is often outdated, which stifles students' learning initiative and creativity with its dullness and monotony^[4]. Static action decomposition diagrams have inherent limitations in conveying the rhythm, timing, and spatial changes of complex technical movements compared to dynamic videos. Second, it is rare to find QR codes in textbooks that link to demonstration videos, 3D models, or extended readings, let alone interactive forms like using AR (Augmented Reality) technology to allow students to view stereoscopic action demonstrations by scanning images with their phones. This disconnect from the information age not only leads to a flat learning experience but also misses the valuable opportunity to transform the textbook from a static knowledge carrier into a portal for online-offline blended learning.

4. Development Paths for University General Track and Field Textbooks

4.1. Updating the Guiding Philosophy: Establishing the Core Concept of "Student Health and Development"

The fundamental prerequisite for solving all problems is a paradigm revolution in guiding philosophy, that is, a strategic shift from a "technique-oriented" to a "health-centered" approach. The new generation of textbooks must unequivocally establish the core principles of "health first, interest guidance, and lifelong sports." This means that the value priority of the textbook should first serve the enhancement of students' physical health, the experience of sports enjoyment, and the cultivation of sustainable exercise habits, rather than the mere mastery of techniques and achievement of standards. This change in philosophy is the "master plan" that will guide all subsequent reforms in content and form, ensuring that the final output of the textbook can truly respond to the core needs of new-era university students.

4.2. Reconstructing the Content System: Building a "Modular, Stratified, and Engaging" Knowledge Framework

Under the new guiding philosophy, the traditional single, linear content structure must be broken down and replaced with a more open, flexible, and attractive content system.

Promote "Modular Design" to enhance selectivity and adaptability. Deconstruct the textbook content into several independent yet organically combinable functional modules. For example, a "compulsory basic module" (covering track and field culture, sports safety, basic physical training) and "elective expansion modules" (such as "Sprints and Explosive Power," "Middle- and Long-Distance Running and Endurance," "Fun Track and Field and Teamwork," "Body Sculpting and Strength Training," etc.) could be established. This model empowers teachers to flexibly organize courses based on teaching conditions and student interests, and also gives students the opportunity to personalize their learning according to their own goals, thus fundamentally solving the "one-size-fits-all" problem.

Implement "Stratified Teaching" to respect individual differences. Within each technical or physical training unit, provide at least three levels of learning objectives and practice plans: "entry-level" (focusing on experience and mastering basic movements), "advanced level"

(focusing on technical improvement and physical enhancement), and "challenge level" (providing more difficult techniques or combination exercises for advanced students). This stratified design ensures the inclusiveness of teaching, allowing all students to experience success within their "zone of proximal development," thereby protecting and stimulating their passion for sports.

Integrate "Engaging Elements" to enhance intrinsic motivation. The textbook should dedicate chapters to introducing a wealth of fun track and field events, physical games that can be turned into competitions, and team-building activities that incorporate track and field elements. By integrating competition, entertainment, and collaboration, tedious technical practice can be transformed into lively and interesting learning challenges, thereby significantly increasing student participation and engagement in the course.

4.3. Innovating the Presentation Format: Creating an "Integrated Media" Digital Textbook

Content innovation requires a modern presentation format as a carrier to adapt to the learning habits of the younger generation. The goal is to create a "living" textbook.

Promote "Visual Transformation" and "Digital Empowerment." Adopt a more modern and dynamic layout design, using a large number of high-quality action sequence photographs and data infographics. The charts and diagrams should be precise, standardized, and more intuitive^[5], while the text should be concise. More critically, embed QR codes next to core technical points, training methods, warm-ups, and stretching sections. Students can scan them with their phones to instantly access high-definition short video resources such as standard action demonstrations, multi-angle slow-motion replays, common error comparisons, and coach explanations. Where conditions permit, the application of AR (Augmented Reality) technology can be explored to achieve interaction between virtual models and real scenes, transforming flat paper content into a three-dimensional, dynamic experience.

Develop "Integrated Supporting Digital Resources." A modern textbook should not be limited to paper. An online learning platform or mobile APP should be developed synchronously as its extension. The platform can provide functions including a video course library, personal training plan creation and check-ins, sports data tracking, online self-tests, and a teacher-student Q&A community. This transforms the textbook from a static knowledge container into a dynamic learning ecosystem portal that connects inside and outside the classroom, teachers and students, and students with a healthy lifestyle.

4.4. Reforming the Evaluation System: Guiding a Diverse, Process-Oriented Learning Evaluation

To ensure the effectiveness of the reform, the textbook itself should become a tool for promoting teaching evaluation reform. It should explicitly introduce and advocate for diverse, process-oriented evaluation concepts and method suggestions. For example, it could provide a "Learning Effect Self-Assessment Scale" at the end of chapters, a "Personal Progress Tracking Form" in the physical training section, and a "Teamwork Peer Evaluation Guide" in team projects. Through these designs, the teaching evaluation can be guided away from the past single "final skill exam determines everything" approach towards a comprehensive, formative evaluation system that focuses on the improvement of students' physical fitness, the proactiveness of their learning attitude, their understanding and application of knowledge, and their teamwork spirit.

5. Conclusion

The development path proposed in this paper is essentially a thorough "ecological reconstruction." It advocates for a core philosophy centered on "student health and

development" to drive a comprehensive transformation of content, system, form, and evaluation. The ultimate goal is to evolve the track and field textbook from a static, knowledge-transmitting "textbook" into a dynamic, habit-forming "health lifestyle empowerment tool." This transformation aims to make the textbook an open, interactive, and deeply personalized learning ecosystem portal, thereby truly activating students' intrinsic motivation for sports participation and embedding the seeds of "lifelong sports" in university education.

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