

# Practical Dilemmas and Promotion Strategies of Ideological and Political Education in the Physical Education under the Perspective of Professional Certification

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## Abstract

**This study employs the methods of literature review and logical analysis to investigate issues related to the construction of Ideological and Political Education (IPE) in the Physical Education (PE) from the perspective of teacher education professional certification. It first analyzes the underlying logic, which includes practice promotion under policy guidance, the deep coupling between professional certification and IPE, and the mutual embedding of fitness factors and moral cultivation factors within the PE curriculum itself. It then examines the existing problems in the current construction, such as insufficient motivation for teacher ethics cultivation, a curriculum and teaching approach that emphasizes knowledge over moral character, singular methods in educational practice, and the weakening of reflective practice. Finally, optimization pathways are proposed across four dimensions: constructing a cultivation mechanism that coordinates embodied physical education practice with evaluation; developing a curriculum system that integrates the pursuit of physical education knowledge with the establishment of moral character; designing an educational path where ideological and political skills permeate physical education scenarios; and establishing a long-term mechanism where ideological and political reflection empowers growth. The research aims to provide references for deepening the advancement of IPE in the physical education, thereby aiding in the cultivation of qualified physical education professionals who possess both ideological-political literacy and professional competence.**

## Keywords

**Teacher Education Professional Certification; Physical Education; Ideological and Political Education (IPE) in the Curriculum; Educational Mechanism.**

## 1. Introduction

The Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China proposed to "improve the mechanism for fostering virtue through education, advance the integrated reform and innovation of ideological and political courses across universities, secondary, and primary schools, and refine the system for cultivating well-rounded individuals in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education<sup>[1]</sup>." Under this macro-strategic guidance, the educational work of the physical education, as the cradle for training future secondary and primary school physical education teachers, has been endowed with new contemporary significance: it serves not only as a vehicle for implementing the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education at the higher education stage but also bears the crucial responsibility of supplying future teachers who can effectively undertake and advance the integrated construction of ideological and political courses at the basic education stage. The graduation requirements emphasized by the new-era teacher education professional certification, such as "practicing teacher ethics" and "learning to educate," represent a concrete response to this mission. However, existing research has predominantly focused on how the

physical education implements its own IPE. There remains a relative scarcity of studies that, from the perspective of teacher candidates as future "implementing subjects," explore how they should systematically cultivate their ideological and political educational literacy to become competent in their future roles. In view of this, this study aims to systematically explore the theoretical basis, practical dilemmas, and optimization pathways for the construction of IPE within the physical education, with the goal of providing effective references for professional course teachers.

## **2. The Underlying Logic of the Construction of Ideological and Political Education in the Physical Education from the Perspective of Certification**

### **2.1. The Promotion of Curriculum Ideological and Political Practice under Policy Guidance**

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, national education policies have consistently adhered to "fostering virtue through education" as the fundamental task of education, and the reform of physical education curriculum and teaching has also continuously deepened in close alignment with this core objective<sup>[2]</sup>. Against this backdrop, the reform of Curriculum Ideological and Political Education (CIPE) has gradually progressed from concept to practice. In 2014, Shanghai took the lead in exploring the reform of CIPE in universities, providing early experience for nationwide practice. In 2017, the Ministry of Education issued the "Implementation Outline for the Quality Improvement Project of Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities," which explicitly proposed deepening the reform of classroom teaching with the goal of achieving CIPE, emphasizing the full exploration and utilization of the ideological and political education elements contained in various courses to achieve the organic unity of ideological and political education and knowledge system education<sup>[3]</sup>. In 2020, the "Guidance Outline for the Construction of CIPE in Colleges and Universities" was officially promulgated, further proposing to promote the construction of CIPE in a categorized manner according to the characteristics of different majors, and specifically emphasizing that physical education courses should establish the educational concept of "health first," highlight patriotism and traditional culture education, cultivate students' spirit of tenacious struggle and striving for self-improvement, and stimulate their sense of responsibility to enhance the physical quality of the nation<sup>[4]</sup>. At this point, the construction of CIPE has transitioned from the stage of advocacy-based policy to a stage that equally emphasizes categorized implementation and institutional guarantees. The institutional clarification of the educational function of physical education courses by national policies has become an important support for the construction of CIPE in the physical education.

### **2.2. Deep Integration of Professional Accreditation and Ideological and Political Education in Curriculum**

In the context of the new era, to continuously improve the teacher education system, the nation has launched the Outstanding Teacher Training Program, which establishes comprehensive standards emphasizing both disciplinary expertise and pedagogical competence while cultivating educational passion and the commitment to nurturing students. This initiative drives the transformation of teacher education from basic competence toward professional excellence. The essence of this transformation lies in returning to education's fundamental purpose—fostering human development, with curriculum-based ideological and political education serving as a key driver. As the institutional vehicle for implementing this transformation, teacher education program accreditation shares a profound intrinsic connection with the educational philosophy of curriculum-based ideological and political

education. Their synergy manifests through mutual reinforcement across educational objectives, implementation pathways, and value orientations.

First, alignment in educational objectives: Both aim to cultivate well-rounded socialist builders and successors who excel in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education. They require teacher candidates to master solid professional competencies while developing correct values, achieving consensus on the fundamental question of what kind of individuals to cultivate. Second, shared value orientation: Both are grounded in Marxist theory and guided by Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. They emphasize starting from students' realities, following the laws of holistic human development, and adhering to the fundamental direction of "cultivating talent for the Party and the nation," consistently centering on the core educational mission of fostering virtue through education. Third, synergistic implementation pathways: Professional accreditation provides an operational framework for advancing curriculum-based ideological and political education by setting graduation requirements, defining evaluation standards, and establishing feedback mechanisms. Conversely, curriculum-based ideological and political education translates the ethical practice required by accreditation into concrete educational actions through classroom teaching and experiential activities, thereby infusing the certification system with a profound spiritual core. Thus, while teacher education program accreditation embodies new concepts and responsibilities, and higher education institutions explore new approaches to curriculum-based ideological and political education, both share a highly consistent value pursuit in constructing a high-quality higher education system—particularly in advancing the core mission of improving educational quality.

### **2.3. The Interweaving of Physical Fitness and Mind Cultivation Factors in Curriculum**

From a structural perspective, the educational components of physical education courses can be categorized into two types: physical fitness factors and mind cultivation factors. Physical fitness factors form the material foundation of the curriculum, emphasizing systematic physical training as the core. Through explicit practices such as conditioning, skill acquisition, and physiological enhancement, they help students develop healthy physiques and athletic competence, providing the bodily foundation for higher-level educational goals.

Mind cultivation factors constitute the spiritual core of the curriculum. Leveraging the inherent attributes of sports—competitiveness, cooperation, and adherence to rules—they guide students through embodied experiences involving competition, interpersonal interaction, and role assumption. These processes foster internalization of values such as fairness, perseverance, and teamwork, achieving deep moral, emotional, and behavioral cultivation.

The two factors do not exist independently but interactively reinforce one another—physical fitness supports moral cultivation, while moral cultivation sustains physical motivation. For example, intense physical exertion not only enhances endurance and cardiopulmonary function but also awakens perseverance and grit; likewise, a sense of collective honor developed through teamwork inspires students to actively improve their physical capacity to serve collective goals. This embodied moral education model highlights the unique virtue-through-physicality characteristic of the discipline, transforming abstract moral principles into experiential and actionable activities. It thus provides a tangible pathway for curriculum-based ideological and political education—realizing value internalization through physical practice and establishing a bridge from bodily engagement to moral growth.

### 3. Practical Challenges in Integrating Ideological and Political Education into Physical Education Programs Under the Certification Framework

The Outline of the Plan for Building an Education Powerhouse (2024–2035) emphasizes:

“Implement the project of fostering virtue and cultivating talent in the new era by integrating ideological and political education across disciplinary, instructional, textbook, and management systems, embedding it in moral, cultural, and social practice education to nurture a new generation capable of national rejuvenation<sup>[5]</sup>.” While the overall progress of ideological and political education in physical education programs has been positive, several challenges persist in aligning with the national goal of building an education powerhouse. These challenges include: insufficient integration of teacher ethics cultivation, limited reserves of ideological and political content, fragmented practical implementation of ideological education, and inadequate mechanisms for sustaining professional growth and value reinforcement.

#### 3.1. Challenges in Cultivating Professional Ethics: Misaligned Social Evaluation and Lack of Embodied Education

The cultivation of professional ethics among physical education teacher candidates requires adherence to the moral standards of the teaching profession while developing a genuine emotional commitment to education through long-term practice. Ultimately, these candidates should mature into qualified physical education teachers who embody both professional integrity and educational passion. Achieving this goal depends on activating their subjective initiative to facilitate a deep transformation of professional ethics from “external regulation” to “internal self-discipline.” However, this internalization process faces significant resistance, particularly as social expectations for teacher ethics continue to rise. The cultivation of professional ethics in physical education teacher education is now constrained by a misalignment between social evaluation and educational needs and a lack of embodied moral education.

First, the value misalignment between social evaluation systems and educational objectives has become the primary factor weakening motivation for ethical cultivation. In contemporary society, educational needs have become increasingly diverse and comprehensive. The deep advancement of the fundamental mission of “fostering virtue through education” and the implementation of curriculum-based ideological and political education require physical education teachers not only to be skill instructors but also to serve as moral exemplars and value guides for students. Yet current talent selection mechanisms still reflect an “academic-first” orientation, with evaluation criteria predominantly focused on quantifiable indicators such as academic performance and athletic achievements. As a result, teachers often devote disproportionate attention to students’ physical performance and competitive results, while neglecting the practice of professional ethics and the fulfillment of their moral responsibilities. This disjunction between the normative expectations of society (which emphasize ethical exemplarity) and the operational focus of education (which prioritizes measurable outcomes) weakens teachers’ intrinsic motivation for ethical practice, resulting in insufficient momentum for professional ethics cultivation. Second, the absence of embodied moral education further diminishes the driving force for ethical internalization. As an experiential model of moral formation, embodied education emphasizes the interaction between the body and its environment. Through a holistic integration of “body, context, action, cognition, emotion, cultivation, and openness,” it enhances moral understanding by uniting cognitive and practical dimensions<sup>[6]</sup>. However, current ethics instruction in physical education programs remains confined to a disciplinary, cognition-centered moral paradigm that reduces teacher ethics education to a standardized instructional model following a linear process of “cognitive understanding, concept formation, mechanical training, memory reinforcement.” Like general

professional ethics courses, such moral education is typically confined to pedagogy or psychology modules and presented merely as content transmission. This “disembodied” approach deprives students of opportunities for moral experience through bodily practice, thereby undermining their emotional resonance with ethical values and reducing their willingness to actively internalize moral standards.

### **3.2. Curriculum Shortcomings: Knowledge-Centered Instruction Restricting Ideological and Political Literacy**

From the perspective of curriculum-based ideological and political education, physical education inherently contains abundant moral and ideological elements—such as sportsmanship, athletic culture, and professional ethics—that form a natural foundation for teacher candidates’ ideological and political development. However, in real teaching practice, these rich ideological resources remain underutilized, with the core issue being a pervasive tendency to prioritize knowledge transmission over value formation.

On the surface, this issue arises from the historically diverse professional backgrounds of physical education teachers and the longstanding absence of a unified cognitive framework for curriculum-based ideological and political education. This has resulted in “low value positioning and limited disciplinary awareness,” as many teachers still perceive physical education primarily as skill instruction<sup>[7]</sup>. Consequently, many fail to consciously integrate moral objectives into technical teaching, leading to fragmented and superficial ideological content. At a deeper level, the design of every course inherently involves balancing three dimensions: “knowledge and skills, process and methods, and values and spirit.” This balance reflects the teacher’s understanding of disciplinary attributes and their pedagogical orientation. When the emphasis remains predominantly on knowledge while neglecting the value dimension, course design often lacks systematic attention to educational purposes. This imbalance gradually widens the divide between intellectual development and moral cultivation, weakening the curriculum’s overall educational integrity.

### **3.3. Limitations in Educational Practice: Monotonous Teaching Methods Weaken Pre-service Teachers’ Ideological and Political Education Skills**

The acquisition of ideological and political education skills among physical education pre-service teachers largely derives from observing, imitating, and internalizing instructors’ pedagogical approaches. The ways in which teachers integrate ideological-political elements into instruction and exercise value-guidance techniques directly become reference models for trainees’ future practice.

For physical education teacher candidates, efficient interaction and deep dialogue within the teaching–learning community are crucial pathways to develop such skills; the quality of this interaction hinges on the richness and rigor of teaching methods. Yet in practice, ideological and political education in physical education programs faces a persistent bottleneck of methodological obsolescence. Survey data indicate that lecture-based teaching (78.28%) and case sharing (63.76%) remain the mainstream due to convenience and information capacity, whereas interactive, learner-centered methods—discussion (49.14%), competitive formats (45.37%), and cooperative learning (32.84%)—are underutilized, yielding asymmetrical teacher–student dialogue and insufficient creativity and personalization<sup>[8]</sup>. More notably, a recurrent decoupling between course-based ideological–political aims and disciplinary instruction exacerbates trainees’ skill acquisition. Some instructors abruptly depart from the instructional context during foundational explanations to deliver extended ideological remarks, lacking organic integration or transitional bridges and even inserting materials unrelated to the lesson theme. Such abruptness fosters the misconception that ideological education is merely an add-on. Others adopt a prescriptive tone; with weak affective expression and thin value

guidance, they fail to kindle students' intrinsic motivation for learning and moral pursuit, and they impede heartfelt interaction, emotional resonance, and reciprocal value formation.

#### **4. Advancement Strategies for Ideological and Political Education in Physical Education Teacher Training Programs under Certification Framework**

Advancement under the teacher education certification framework should adopt a core philosophy of student-centeredness, outcomes orientation, and continuous improvement. Focusing on graduation indicators for professional ethics and ideological-political competence, programs should construct a curriculum system aligned with the distinctive features of physical education. This approach precisely answers contemporary requirements for teacher ethics while substantively enhancing trainees' ideological-political capabilities, enabling them to become practitioners of socialist core values, guardians of educational ideals, implementers of professional norms, and caring mentors. Ultimately, it lays a solid foundation for high-quality curriculum-based ideological and political education at the basic education stage.

##### **4.1. Implementing the Requirement of “Practicing Professional Ethics” to Establish a Cultivation Mechanism Integrating Embodied Practice and Evaluation**

Practicing professional ethics is both the premise and telos of teacher-ethics formation<sup>[9]</sup>. For physical education teacher candidates, this process entails long-term character shaping, reinforcement of norms, consolidation of habitual conduct, and experiential internalization through practice. Accreditation emphasizes attainment in ethical praxis; this requires refined social evaluation to provide incentives and constraints, and pedagogical innovation—anchored in embodied moral education—to activate intrinsic motivation and achieve effective transformation from cognition to action.

Although curriculum-based ideological-political integration appears as pedagogical innovation, it in fact addresses pressing social issues. If talent selection assesses athletic literacy and moral quality only superficially, ethics cultivation will lack momentum and remain suspended in practice. Thus, implementation hinges on a synergistic social evaluation system that safeguards the development of ethical praxis. Institutionally, the campus-based foundation should be strengthened: establish a dynamic, multi-dimensional moral assessment tailored to physical education, with regular qualitative appraisals by course instructors and homeroom teachers across practice scenes and classroom performance, vertically accumulated to form coherent moral records. Ensure seamless career-stage linkage: use the on-campus moral portfolio as key evidence for teacher certification and hiring; institute a “one-vote veto” for ethics at critical nodes (title review, awards), aligning pre-service and in-service standards. As a key pathway for ethical internalization, embodied moral education synergizes with these mechanisms. Beginning from students' real physical-psychological development, it treats moral conflicts arising in learning as timely instructional content, prompting reflection on “Who am I? What should I do? What can I do?” and enhancing moral judgment<sup>[10]</sup>. In practice, teachers model high ethics, resilience, vitality, and expertise to craft immersive environments: patient guidance when correcting movement errors; impartiality in resolving on-field conflicts; sharing endurance challenges with students; affectively rich nonverbal cues and passionate instruction; standardized demonstrations and precise corrections as emulable models. Such exemplarity acts as a mirror, guiding students from passive reception to active participation, embedding abstract ethical requirements into muscular memory across drills, teamwork, and conflict mediation, and gradually transforming them into conscious habits.

## 4.2. Focusing on “Learning to Teach” to Build a Curriculum System Integrating Knowledge and Moral Education

Pursuing curricular value and spirit represents a contemporary consensus of curriculum-based education and transcends purely epistemic or methodological views<sup>[11]</sup>. Its spiritual essence lies at the core of teacher education, embodying educational ideals and commitment. As planned instruction and systematized content, curricula are central to talent cultivation—the foundation and pathway for realizing goals and the mission of nurturing students. To overcome knowledge-over-virtue tendencies, adopt an implicit curriculum perspective to break value neutrality, transforming embedded ideological–political resources from implicit content into explicit teaching tasks. This is key to bridging the divide between intellectual and moral formation and provides a clear route for trainees to stock ideological–political elements.

Curricular design should observe general teacher-education principles while highlighting physical education’s specificities through four coordinated modules: general ideological–political education as guiding core, discipline-specific courses as primary vehicle, teacher-education courses as foundational support, and practical courses as necessary reinforcement—forming a comprehensive, multi-tiered structure.

First, the general education module, grounded in national standards and institutional characteristics, should provide value guidance and foundational ideological–political elements: clarify ethics standards; cultivate lofty ideals and firm convictions; integrate exemplary cases of master PE teachers to foster the pursuit of “being a model in learning and conduct.”

Second, the discipline module should leverage PE’s unique educational functions. In theory courses, excavate ideological–political elements in sports history and culture—e.g., patriotic devotion of Olympic athletes; in exercise physiology, the value of willpower cultivation through pushing limits. In technique courses, use team training and competition to develop will and character, and treat competitions as platforms to assess moral quality—rule observance, fair play, unity, cooperation, and tenacity—advancing skills and ethics in tandem.

Third, the teacher-education module should thread ethics throughout instruction. Courses in pedagogy, psychology, and methodology should integrate standards via scenario simulations and analysis of ethical cases, strengthening professional identity; skill-training segments should cultivate the capacity to embed moral aims in lesson design. Fourth, the practical module should offer abundant opportunities to experience and enact ethics—internships, service, and field studies—to deepen professional understanding, strengthen responsibility, and transform stocked ideological–political elements into teachable competence through reflection and experiential growth. This theory–practice model converts ethical cognition into ethical conduct, enabling the leap from “knowing” to “doing,” and making ideological–political resources a robust support for practice.

## 4.3. Anchoring the “Learning to Educate” Requirement: Refining Pathways for Ideological–Political Skills to Infuse PE Settings

The “learning to educate” requirement is a key pillar for achieving cultivation goals and demands cross-course synergy. Under curriculum-based ideological–political education, PE instruction shifts from a single “physical” aim to a dual structure of body and virtue, requiring a transition from monologic lecturing to diversified interaction. To ensure integrity, infusion should span pre-class, in-class, and post-class phases. Pre-class: employ scenario-based induction aligned with students’ developmental needs in PE contexts (e.g., before “Teaching Environment” in Sports Pedagogy, pose: “With limited equipment in rural settings, how to balance effectiveness and safety?”) to deepen understanding of responsibility and adaptability. In-class: use emotional narrative and critical inquiry, selecting representative cases to integrate sportsmanship naturally (e.g., in ball games, the Xin–Wen duo’s mutual encouragement at the

Olympics illustrates that teamwork is shared glory and shared resilience). Pair with prompts—“How to maintain respect when leading? How to uphold perseverance when behind?”—to advance ethical reasoning. Post-class: extend learning beyond the classroom (e.g., in School Physical Education, discuss the “ideal PE teacher,” then assign a “PE Teacher Professionalism Survey” with frontline interviews and case compilation) so that students form stable professional identity through authentic experience.

## 5. Conclusion

Teacher education program accreditation, as a core driver for quality enhancement in higher normal education, provides the normative and practical framework for integrating ideological-political education into physical education curricula. The ideological-political literacy and professional ethics of PE teacher candidates directly affect the realization of the fundamental mission of “fostering virtue through education” and serve as core indicators of graduation attainment. As current practice remains exploratory, future efforts should continue to benchmark accreditation, iteratively refining integration pathways between PE and ideological-political education. In doing so, trainees will develop with ideological-political literacy as the soul and professional competence as the sinew, becoming qualified educators who “educate through sport and cultivate virtue through the body,” thereby laying a solid foundation for the high-quality development of physical education in China.

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