# The Evolution and Examination of the College Physical Education since the Founding of the People's Republic of China 

Hui Lv<br>Department of Arts and Physical Education, Changsha Social Work College<br>Changsha 410004, Hunan, China<br>E-mail: lvhui_6172.com@126.com


#### Abstract

Sports are the important demonstration of life and the driving force of the life evolution. To develop physical education in accordance with the law of life will lead the teaching of physical education to a direct confrontation of life. That is to say, the regulation and control of human motion can achieve the transformation of the structure and function of a life, which ultimately provides the impossibility of a healthy body for the life significance. The college physical education, in order to meet the requirements of cultivating the cross-century talents, will enter a new stage of reform and development with the implementation of "revitalizing China through science and technology" and "national fitness program". To meet the ideological need of "linking the past and carrying forward the cause and forging ahead into the future", this text gives a systematic summary of the college physical education, expounds and examines the model of "skill classroom", "physique classroom" and "health classroom" from the perspective of physical education class model, displaying the future of the 21st century physical education from the angle of life classroom.


Keywords: Physical education classroom, Evolution, Examine, New perspective

## 1. The foreword

It is well-known that the teaching of physical education (PE), as a basic form of organization of college sports, is one of the compulsory curricula provided in the teaching programs. However, during the course of completing the task, with the changes of the time, the constantly updated educational thoughts and ideas aiming at agreeing with the social changes have always affected the direction of its development, and displayed distinct characteristics of the times. In order to constantly sum up the experience and to draw rich nutrition from it, to seek development through reform and inheritance to promote the deeper reform of college physical education, it is necessary to clarify the development of teaching model of Chinese college physical education since 1949. And it will be used to be the foundation for the future. (Han, 1999)

## 2. The evolution of the class model of physical education in the People's Republic of China

2.1 Skill classroom (1949-1966)

In the early period of the People's Republic of China, the Communist Party of China and the Chinese government attached great importance to physical education in schools, which laid an ideological foundation for the development of it. At the same time, using experience of school physical education in the former Soviet Union as reference, they finally set up the socialist physical education in schools, and made it clear that it should play a role in cultivating all-round socialist builders and successors. The college physical education, which initially took learning the teaching experience from the former Soviet Union and implementing the "Labor and Health System" as the main content, had began to fundamentally change the open type or so-called from-first-to-last type of teaching method and led the mass physical activities and training tasks centering the "Labor and Health System" to an gradual growth. (Han, 1999)
Affected by completely absorbing the ideas of the former Soviet Union, in accordance with the physical education theory in special recognition in the book of Theory of Physical Education advanced by Cherri Choeff, an physical expert of the former Soviet Union, physical teaching in Chinese higher schools had inherited the educational system of

1950s of the former Soviet Union and taken cultivating basic knowledge and skills as statutory objective of the guiding ideology. (Lu, 1986). In general, although affected by the trend of Left thought, physical education still developed in a twisting way.

### 2.2 Physique classroom (late in 1970s 70s - 1990s)

Since October, 1977, guided by the spirit of the 3rd Plenary Session of 11th Party Central Committee, all things have been set right and the school physical education have been restored. In 1978, Syllabus of Physical Education in Colleges and Universities was re-enacted. The Ministry of Education and other two ministries jointly issued Notice about Strengthening Physical Education in Schools. The Party's leadership over the work of college physical education had been strengthened and the Party's education policy had been implemented. Attention began to be paid to cultivating the teaching staff. There appeared a group of excellent models in the activities of restoring "Two Classes, Two Exercises and Two Activities" and carrying out National Standard for Physical Exercises. In light of the situation, in 1979, the National Educational Administrations held a experience-sharing session of School physical education in Yangzhou and promulgated the "Provisions of School Physical Education" (Trial Draft), which gave a strong impetus to the development of work of school physical education on the basis of recovery and adjustment, and to some extent raised the status of the sports education in schools. (Han, 1999).
Accepting the historical lesson of the weak physical fitness of students in the period of Cultural Revolution, in the early 1980s, physical education in schools began to enter the reform and opening-up phase. At this time, the new "National Standard of Physical Exercises" began to be implemented and the experiment of reforming the school PE syllabus was carried out. In order to implement the "Provisions of School Physical Education", check and acceptance was specially emphasized in higher schools. According to the requirements of the program of "Implementation of further setting up and perfecting the Health and Physique cards, and investigating the physique and health of students", cards of physique and fitness were set up all over China. In May 1983, Conference in Xi'an was held again to give the research on physical education in schools. It finally arrived at the agreement that the Party's educational policy of all-round development should be seriously carried out. Combined with "National Standard of the Physical Exercises", the enhancement of physique was put apparently in the dominant position while "basic knowledge, basic techniques and basic skills" were stressed and enhancing the students' physique was set up as the guiding ideology. (Qu, 1996).

### 2.3 Health classroom (since 1990s)

With the social stability and sustainable economic development, people's lifestyle and life quality have been changed dramatically. The influences of the environment and community on people's health are getting increasingly prominent. And the physical health of students has been significantly improved. But there still exist some problems that can not be ignored. For instance, qualities of endurance and flexibility are declined or in stagnation. The vital capacity decreased too. The figure of obese children and overweight children grows at a faster rate. Rate of myopia is still high. Psychologically, Chinese students have some weakness in anti-setback capacity, willpower and sense of competition and crisis, the spirit of cooperation, etc. (Xiang, 2005).
In June 1999, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council convened the third National Education Work Conference and issued the "Decision on Deepening Education Reform and Comprehensively Promoting the Quality Education". It stressed that "good physical condition is the premise that teenagers can serve for the motherland and the people and the manifestation of vitality of Chinese nation." Schools were clearly required to establish the guiding ideology of putting health in the most vital position and effectively strengthen the work of school physical education. Adhering to the guiding ideology of "health first", the healthy development of students, the development of students as the center, and stressing the status of the subject are the basic concepts advanced in Sports and Health, a curriculum in China. These concepts highlight the healthy objective of the new curriculum to promote the overall development of the students' physical, psychological abilities, social adaptability, and the moral health. They also emphasize that the new PE curriculum should meet the requirements, and care much about the emotional experience of the students, thus identifying the centrality and the dominant position of the students. (Zhou, 2006).

## 3. Examining the PE class model of the People's Republic of China

### 3.1 Skill classroom

A skill classroom with the teacher as the center has rules of mechanical imitation, classroom discipline, and collective action to control the students while ignores their conditions and opportunities of selecting the study content. Although this type of thought and method of education produces positive influence on standardizing the teaching organization, systematizing the imparting knowledge and skills, it still hinders the development of the personality of a student, neglects the enhancement of physical quality, and to a certain extent limits the efficacy of PE.

### 3.2 Physique classroom

The so-called physique, the quality of the human body, is the integrated and relatively stable characteristics of the
morphological structure of human body, physiological function and psychological quality. The five indivisible factors of the human body morphological structure, physiological function, physical fitness, exercise capacity, psychological status and the ability to adapt to internal and external environments can depend on, affect and control one another. Among them, the body morphology are the material basis, physiological functions, physical and psychological conditions are the comprehensive reflection of physical fitness.
Under the premise of enhancing the physique as the guiding ideology, a lot of PE teachers unilaterally emphasize the biological function of sports while neglecting the students' psychological state.

The efficacy reveals two problems. The psychological and sociological efficacies are ignored. Furthermore, school physical education is a compulsory and mandatory sports activity. As long as the students take part they will be able to get the efficacy. But the long-term efficacy can not be predicted. Analyzing the dialectic relationship between physique and health, and expounding the transference of the guiding ideology of school physical education from Enhancement of Physique to Health First are the emphasis that the work of School Sports should exert the effort on. (Wang, 2006).

### 3.3 Health Classroom

Health or fitness is a relative and dynamic concept. With the changing times and the evolution of the medical model, people have better and sounder understanding about health. The traditional biomedical model believes that the absence of disease is called to be healthy. In 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) in its Charter defined health as that health is a general concept which does not only mean the absence of diseases or weaknesses, but also refers to the good agreement or harmony of the body, psychology and society. Along with the social progress and the medical development, the concept of health has broader scope. It is extended gradually from the pure physical health to mental health, social health and moral health. That is to say, the ideal state of health is not only free from disease, but also full of energy and vitality. It also means to maintain a very good social relationship with others. In general, health means that a person is in a very good condition. In 1990, WHO added in some relevant documents to the definition of health. It says that health should include four aspects, physical health, mental health, good social relations and moral health. The idea of Health First highlights the student-oriented development, embodies the harmony of body-building and health. It gives more concern about the learning interest, learning attitude, emotional experience, initiative thinking and innovative consciousness of students in the process of body building. As far as the teaching objective is concerned, Health First displays the organic unity of the body, psychology, ability and morality during the growth of the students. As to the teaching setup, it highlights the close combination of life, nature, environment and health, which is helpful to set up and perfect the healthy concept of sports and values. (Xiang, 2005).

## 4. A new perspective of the college PE class model-Life Classroom

21 st century is the starting point of another millennium in the history of human beings. At this turning point, mankind is stepping into the information age at an astonishing speed. The advent of the information age has greatly changed people's way of thinking and learning, and resulted in a personalized education. A proposition appears. How to give concerns to the state of life of the students in class? How to cultivate the students' creativity, initiative and flexibility? These questions have been explored in our education reform. (Guan, 2003).

### 4.1 The connotation of the Life Classroom model

Life Classroom means that both teachers and students take the time in classroom as an important component of their own life. In the teaching and learning process, they improve the intelligent capacity. Fundamentally speaking, their life value has been embodied and the soul has been enriched and developed. Classroom becomes the place where teachers and students can learn and explore the knowledge, display their wisdom and develop their abilities, exchange emotions and friendships and nurture the humanity, the pleasant place where they can fully demonstrate and promote their values and significance of life. (Xia, 2005). It is a teaching model of dialogue that concerns about the human nature and life, democracy, equality, communication, cooperation, interaction, interaction, creation among teachers or students or between teachers and students. As a new classroom teaching method, it pays more attention to the learning process of the students, opening their visual field, inspiring their creative potentials, cultivating their cultural taste and aesthetic values, and the healthy personality.

### 4.2 The characteristics of the Life Classroom

4.2.1 Humanities. Life Classroom does not only change the way of learning, but promotes the sound growth of able-bodied personality of every student by changing the way of learning. It gives full respect to the unique sports personality and specific sports life of every student, and provides free space for an individual to get a full growth. Therefore, Life Classroom teaching is filled with rich humanistic spirit.
4.2.2 Openness. The teaching elements that Life Classroom involves, such as teaching objectives, content, methods, process, results and evaluation are an open process.
4.2.3 Cooperation. Life Classroom teaching is a teacher-student or student-student cooperation. It is also the
coordination between teachers and students and teaching materials. In a word, the entire teaching process is a collaborative one.
4.2.4 Practicality. The whole process of Life Classroom teaching is a kind of experience, participation, research and thinking after experiencing and participating. It is the process of practice of first-hand experience for students to make a perceptual study and cognition.
4.2.5 Subjectivity. Life Classroom teaching concerns about the learning emotion and attitudes of students and the development of their personality, respects the individual differences. It pays attention to all the factors of the students in teaching. In detail, the students take part in the entire learning process, develop various strategies of thinking and learning in an active way. They can learn from settling different problems, have the self-regulation of the cognitive activity and gain positive emotional experience from study.

## 5. Concluding remarks

Skill Classroom, Physique Classroom, and Health Classroom have played important roles in the development of school physical education in China in the specific historical conditions. Especially since the 1990s, Health Classroom has always been the mainstream of the PE classroom model in China. However, with the social progress, economic development and people's personalized demands, students have more requirements for the PE classes. They need physical exercises and experience of emotion and attitude in the PE class as well. Thus, with the ideas of cultural management and humanism being put forward, the concept of Life Classroom has come to surface gradually, and drawn great attention.

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