

Research on the Ways to Improve the Practical Teaching Ability of Early Childhood Physical Education Teachers in Pre-service Training



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Abstract: Early childhood education (ECE) is a critical stage for developing physical fitness, motor skills, and social competence in young children. In recent years, with the growing recognition of the importance of early childhood education, the pre-service training of early childhood physical education teachers has received more attention. Practical teaching ability is a core factor affecting the quality of early childhood physical education teachers' education. To enhance the practical teaching ability of early childhood physical education teachers, this article explores specific strategies and approaches that can be adopted at the pre-service training stage to guide teacher education institutions and policymakers to optimize pre-service training programs and improve the quality and effectiveness of future teachers. The article identifies several key ways to enhance the pre-service training of early childhood physical education teachers: the intensification of theoretical training, the deepening of practical training, the establishment of mechanisms for reflection and evaluation, and the application of technology and innovative methods to enhance teachers' professional knowledge and skills, and also their motivation to teach and their ability to innovate.

Keywords: early childhood; physical education teachers; pre-service training; practical teaching; capacity enhancement

Introduction

Early childhood physical activity has a direct and significant impact on the physical health of young children. Regular physical activity helps to strengthen cardiorespiratory function, improve physical fitness, and promote the healthy development of bones and muscles. By participating in physical activity, young children can improve their coordination and motor skills, as well as learn teamwork, follow rules, and develop leadership skills in games and sports interactions. In addition, physical activity helps to boost young children's self-confidence and self-esteem and to participate more actively in various activities. On the mental and emotional level, physical activity can help young

children manage their emotions effectively and reduce stress and anxiety.

1. The Main Barriers Affecting the Improvement of Early Childhood Physical Education Teachers' Practical Teaching Ability

1.1 Resource constraints

The shortage of funds affects the quality of physical education facilities and equipment that schools can provide. When schools lack appropriate sports equipment, safe places to play sports, or well-maintained sports facilities, teachers have to creatively organize sports activities under limited conditions, which undoubtedly increases the difficulty of teaching. In addition, the lack of resources restricts the diversity and innovativeness of

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the physical education curriculum, preventing the introduction of new sports or the adoption of more modern teaching methods, which is not conducive to stimulating young children's interest in physical activities. As physical education is considered a non-core subject in many schools, it is often given low priority in budget allocation, exacerbating the resource constraints (Gu & Guo, 2022).

1.2 Teacher training and professional development

Teacher training and professional development have a significant impact on the practical teaching ability of early childhood physical education (ECE) teachers, who lack professional training and ongoing educational opportunities and are not adequately equipped with up-to-date knowledge of pedagogical methodologies, sports science theories, or children's psychological development, and whose lack of specialized knowledge not only restricts the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the classroom but also affects the ability to design curricula and activities. In addition, continuous professional development is essential for teachers, but many educational institutions do not provide adequate support and resources. For example, teachers may not have the opportunity to attend seminars, refresher courses, or observe advanced teaching practices, which hinders them from continuously updating their teaching skills and knowledge, and affects their teaching ability and professional growth.

1.3 Education system and policy issues

Educational systems and policies also pose significant barriers to the enhancement of early childhood physical education teachers' practical teaching skills. Educational policies tend to place insufficient emphasis on physical education. In many schools, especially when budgets are tight, physical education is often seen as a secondary subject while core subjects such as math and language dominate, and policy biases result in physical education being at a disadvantage in curriculum planning, resource allocation, and teacher training. At the same time, the education system itself is problematic in that the evaluation and assessment mechanisms for physical

education programs may be oversimplified and lack assessment of students' overall physical development and motor skill acquisition (Lai, 2022). In addition, the education system often fails to encourage teacher innovation and individualized teaching, limiting the ability of teachers to teach according to the specific needs and interests of students, and hindering the improvement of the quality of physical education.

1.4 Socio-cultural factors

Socio-cultural factors have a profound impact on the improvement of early childhood physical education teachers' practical teaching ability. In some social and cultural contexts, physical education is not regarded as an important part of the education system, leading to the fact that physical education courses are often marginalized and their importance is underestimated by parents, schools, and even the education system as a whole. For example, parents may be more inclined to support young children's achievement in cultural programs (e.g., math and English) while ignoring the value of physical activity. Sociocultural preferences influence young children's participation and enthusiasm for physical activity. In addition, the underestimation of the professional status and value of PE teachers prevailing in society further undermines teachers' professional motivation and social identity, and the lack of identity may lead to less enthusiasm for pursuing professional development and improving teaching quality. PE teachers face pressures and challenges from various aspects, all of which seriously affect the enhancement of their competence in practical teaching.

1.5 Personal factors

Teachers who lack sufficient self-drive and confidence in the effectiveness of their teaching may feel overwhelmed by the challenges of teaching. For example, the mastery of new teaching methods and techniques, teaching methods may become obsolete and inefficient if teachers do not possess an active attitude of exploration and learning. In addition, teachers' personal health and fitness status also have an impact on their teaching ability. Physical education teachers need to be in good physical condition to demonstrate and instruct motor skills

and poor personal health or physical fitness will limit performance in teaching.

2. Keys to Improve Practical Teaching Ability in Pre-service Training of Early Childhood Physical Education Teachers

2.1 Reshaping the concept of physical education talents

In the training of early childhood physical education teachers, Ankang College has highlighted the innovation of the concept of talent, which is reflected in the incorporation of the concept of "one teacher, three members" into the core competency training of physical education, which has broadened the professional vision of physical education teachers, and also emphasized the comprehensive cultivation of professional skills, educational methods and scientific research ability in the pre-service training, and the all-around improvement of the competency. helps future teachers play a greater role in early childhood physical education. Ankang College has reconstructed the applied personnel training system of physical education majors, taking the "one teacher, three personnel" ability as the core, and in the teaching plan and curriculum, Ankang College pays more attention to the combination of practical skills and theoretical knowledge and also pays attention to cultivating teachers' innovative thinking and independent problem-solving ability (Sun & Yin, 2022). Ankang College has also realized innovation in the way of human training. The college has successfully combined the methods of group training and individual training, general training, and elite training so that all early childhood physical education teachers can get the most suitable training according to their interests and potential. Whether it is in general physical education courses or more challenging professional training, the college cultivates physical education teachers with basic teaching abilities, and it also devotes itself to cultivating the educational Elite.

2.2 Analysis of the effectiveness of talent training in Ankang College

Since 2013, Ankang College has made significant investments in the education and teaching

reform of physical education, clearly formulated an innovative talent cultivation program, and established "one teacher and three members" (physical education teacher, coach, referee, and social sports instructor) as the goal of cultivating applied talents for the physical education major. This strategic positioning not only expands the career path of physical education teachers but also enhances their professional ability and market competitiveness. In the past eight years, Ankang College has actively carried out educational and teaching reforms around this goal, including successfully declaring and completing the Shaanxi Higher Education Teaching Reform Research Project, optimizing the teaching mode and curriculum system, and forming a complete set of "one teacher, three members" applied talent training system (Sun & Pan, 2022). The establishment of this system has brought significant results. Students have won a lot of awards in all kinds of sports competitions above the provincial level, showing excellent sports skills and competitiveness. More importantly, graduates have made remarkable achievements in obtaining several certificates such as teacher's license, referee's license, coach's license, social sports instructor's license, etc. Most of them have obtained at least three certificates, which proves the students' all-around ability and shows the depth and breadth of Ankang College's cultivation of pre-vocational education. In addition, the employment of students reflects the high level of quality of education at Ankang College. The high level of employment rate, employment quality, the degree of fit between employment positions and majors, and the satisfaction of employers are all at a high level, which fully proves the success of Ankang College's Physical Education program in cultivating high-quality, applied talents. In March 2021, Ankang College's Physical Education program was awarded as a first-class undergraduate program construction site at the provincial level of Shaanxi Province, which is an affirmation of the college's efforts over the years, and a sign that it will continue to play a leading role in the preservice training of early childhood physical education teachers. training field will continue to play a leading role.

3. Ways to Improve Practical Teaching Ability in Pre-service Training of Early Childhood Physical Education Teachers

3.1 Theory training

Theory training is an important part of the pre-service training of early childhood physical education teachers, providing teachers with the necessary knowledge base and theoretical support. In Ankang College, this stage of training pays special attention to combining theoretical knowledge with practical teaching, aiming to help future teachers better understand and adapt to the learning needs of young children. The study of Educational Psychology at Ankang College is not only a theoretical exploration but also a preparation for future teaching practice. Through an in-depth understanding of young children's psychological development and learning needs, physical education teachers can design courses more effectively to meet the developmental characteristics of children at different ages (Li, 2022). The training in physical education theory at Ankang College focuses on the special needs of early childhood physical education teaching, covering the basic theories of physical education and sports, such as exercise physiology and exercise biomechanics, as well as the theories and practices specialized for early childhood physical education.

3.2 Practical training

Practical training is a core component of the pre-service training program for early childhood physical education teachers in Ankang College, aiming to enhance the practical teaching ability of future teachers through direct teaching practice, transform theoretical knowledge into practical skills, and enhance the ability to adapt to the teaching environment and sensitivity to the learning needs of young children. Simulation teaching at Ancestry College is an important part of pre-service preparation, providing controlled environments that allow students to experience the teaching and learning process before they enter the classroom. simulation teaching environments usually include simulated students (who may be classmates or specialized actors) and a complete classroom setup.

Students take on the role of teacher in this environment, designing and implementing instruction, learning how to manage a classroom, how to interact with different types of young children, and how to effectively teach physical education. The simulation also places special emphasis on reflecting on and adapting teaching methods so that students can continue to refine their teaching skills. On- and off-campus internships are another important aspect emphasized by the Wellness Institute (Gu & Mina, 2022). Through the internship, students have the opportunity to enter directly into a kindergarten or elementary school physical education classroom for field teaching practice, allowing them to apply the theoretical knowledge and teaching skills learned in the classroom, and it provides the opportunity for practical exposure to and understanding of the characteristics of young children's learning. During the practicum, students will be involved in a variety of teaching activities such as instructional design, classroom management, and student assessment under the supervision of their supervising teachers. Future teachers will be able to better understand the behavioral patterns of young children, learn how to remain flexible and innovative in different teaching environments, and how to deal with a variety of challenges that may be encountered in teaching.

3.3 Reflection and assessment

A key component of the Ankang College, Early Childhood Physical Education Teachers' pre-service training is reflection and evaluation. The purpose of this stage is to help prospective teachers gain a deeper understanding of their teaching practice and to continuously improve the quality of their teaching through self-evaluation, peer interaction, and detailed documentation. Reflection and assessment are not only a review of past teaching but also a continuous improvement of future teaching methods and strategies. Self-reflection is regarded as an important tool for teachers' professional development in the training system of Ankang College (Ye, 2022). Prospective early childhood physical education teachers are encouraged to regularly reflect on their teaching practices and student feedback, including evaluating whether their teaching methods are

effective, whether the course content is engaging to students, and how to improve classroom management and student interactions, teachers can identify and solve problems encountered during teaching and continuously improve their teaching skills. Peer assessment plays an important role in the pre-service development of early childhood physical education teachers at Anchor College. Through peer assessment, prospective teachers can receive valuable feedback and advice from other education professionals. This type of assessment typically involves teaching observations, mutual critiques, and discussions. For example, a teacher may invite a colleague to watch one of his lessons and engage in discussion and feedback afterward, providing opportunities to learn from other professionals and encouraging a collaborative and supportive professional culture. Through peer assessment, teachers can learn about different teaching methods and strategies, how to interact more effectively with students, and how to manage different teaching challenges. Documenting and analyzing teaching processes and outcomes is another important aspect of the Wellness Academy preparation program. Prospective teachers are encouraged to keep teaching journals and conduct case studies to detail the teaching experience and student learning outcomes. By recording not only the specifics of each lesson, but also the instructor's reflections on the lesson, student responses, and any ideas for improvement, instructors can track and evaluate their teaching progress, identifying successful teaching strategies and areas for improvement (Xu & Zhang, 2022). Case studies, on the other hand, are more in-depth and usually involve a detailed analysis of a specific teaching scenario or challenge. Case studies provide teachers with an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of a particular teaching method and how it can be applied in similar situations, and are essential for developing teachers' critical thinking and creativity skills.

3.4 Technology and innovation

The pre-service training of early childhood physical education teachers at Ankang College emphasizes the use of technology and innovation in teaching and learning and aims to prepare teachers to

face the fast-changing educational environment and ever-changing teaching and learning technologies. The integration of technology and innovation not only improves the quality and efficiency of teaching but also enhances the learning experience of students. Ankang College places special emphasis on the application of educational technology in the preparation of early childhood physical education teachers, including learning how to use various educational technology tools to enhance physical education teaching and learning, such as the use of interactive software to create more engaging physical education games for young children, or the use of video analytics software to help students understand the correct form of physical education movements, to make teaching more interactive and interesting, and also to help teachers to be more effective in their teaching assessment and feedback (Quan & Lu, 2022). For example, teachers can record videos of children participating in physical activities to analyze movements and provide individualized instruction. In addition, educational technology includes understanding how to find and share instructional resources on the web and social media platforms, and how to utilize these platforms for instructional communication and learning. The Wellness Academy encourages prospective teachers to experiment with and adopt new teaching methods and strategies to increase the effectiveness and appeal of early childhood physical education instruction. Innovative teaching methods include adopting gamified learning to teach physical education skills in the form of games or designing teamwork challenges to promote interaction and teamwork among young children, which is not only limited to refreshing the content of teaching but also includes innovations in teaching methods and approaches, such as the use of story narratives to teach physical education or the use of role-playing games to increase the participatory and educational value of physical education classes (Liu, 2022). The pre-service development of early childhood physical education teachers at Ancestry College also includes interdisciplinary integration strategies that combine physical education with knowledge from other disciplines, which involves

combining physical education with other disciplines, such as science, math, and language arts, to create a well-rounded and interactive educational environment.

Conclusion

In summary, improving the practical teaching ability of early childhood physical education teachers in pre-service training requires multifaceted efforts and innovations. By strengthening theoretical training, deepening practical training, establishing effective reflection and assessment mechanisms, and utilizing modern technology and innovative methods, the teaching effectiveness of early childhood physical education teachers can be significantly improved. The research in this article is of great significance in promoting the development of early childhood physical education and provides a valuable reference for the future training of early childhood physical education teachers. To further improve the effectiveness of training, it is recommended that relevant educational institutions and policymakers continue to explore and optimize teacher training strategies to meet the increasingly changing educational needs and challenges.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that she has no conflicts of interest to this work.

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