

# A Comparative Study on the Mechanisms of Physical Education Teacher Training in China and Abroad

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**Abstract:** Physical education plays an increasingly important role in promoting healthy lifestyles and social development worldwide. To enhance the quality of physical education, it is essential to compare and evaluate the mechanisms of physical education teacher training in different countries. This paper aims to provide a comparative analysis of the current status of physical education teacher training in China and other countries, such as the United States, Australia, and Japan. Based on a review of the literature and empirical data, this study examines the similarities and differences in the goals, curriculum design, teaching methods, and evaluation criteria of physical education teacher training programs. The results suggest that there are significant variations in the mechanisms of physical education teacher training among different countries, which are influenced by various factors, including cultural values, historical background, social needs, and educational policies. This study provides insights into the challenges and opportunities for improving physical education teacher training in China and other countries.

**Keywords:** Physical education; Teacher training; Comparative study; Curriculum design; Evaluation criteria

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## 1. Introduction

Physical education has been recognized as a crucial component of school education, which contributes to the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development of students<sup>[3]</sup>. However, the quality of physical education largely depends on the competence and professionalism of physical education teachers (PETs). Therefore, it is essential to provide effective teacher training programs to prepare PETs with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to deliver high-quality physical education<sup>[1]</sup>.

The mechanisms of PET training vary considerably among different countries, reflecting diverse cultural, social, and educational contexts<sup>[4]</sup>. In China, for instance, physical education is an obligatory subject in primary and secondary schools, and PETs are required to have at least a bachelor's degree in physical education or related fields<sup>[6]</sup>. However, the quality of PET training in China has been questioned due to the emphasis on theory over practice and the limited opportunities for PETs to acquire hands-on teaching experience<sup>[6,11]</sup>.

In contrast, other countries, such as the United States, Australia, and Japan, have developed comprehensive and structured PET training programs, which incorporate diverse learning activities, such as classroom lectures, practical sessions, internships, and field observations<sup>[3,5,7]</sup>. These programs aim to develop PETs' pedagogical skills, content knowledge, and professional ethics, and to prepare them for the challenges of teaching physical education in a changing society<sup>[1]</sup>.

This study aims to compare the mechanisms of PET training in China and other countries, by examining the goals, curriculum design, teaching methods, and evaluation criteria of PET training programs. The findings of this study can provide insights into the strengths and weaknesses of different PET training models and inform the development of effective PET training programs in China and other countries.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Goals of PET Training

The goals of PET training differ among countries, reflecting the underlying educational, ideological, and cultural values. In China, the primary goal of PET training is to promote students' physical fitness and health, based on the principles of socialist physical education<sup>[11,12]</sup>. Therefore, PETs are expected to be knowledgeable about the scientific foundations of physical education,

such as anatomy, physiology, and biomechanics, and to design appropriate exercise programs for students of different ages and abilities<sup>[4,9]</sup>.

In contrast, PET training programs in other countries tend to emphasize broader goals, such as promoting lifelong participation in physical activity, enhancing social and emotional competence, and fostering cultural awareness<sup>[7]</sup>. PETs are expected to be competent teachers who can create inclusive and supportive learning environments, adapt their teaching strategies to diverse learners' needs, and collaborate with other professionals to facilitate students' holistic development<sup>[2, 8]</sup>.

## **2.2 Curriculum Design of PET Training**

The curriculum design of PET training programs varies among countries, depending on the educational policies, academic standards, and institutional resources<sup>[7]</sup>. In China, PET training programs typically consist of theoretical courses, such as sports pedagogy, motor learning, and sport psychology, and practical courses, such as physical fitness testing, sports skills training, and teaching practicum<sup>[12, 11]</sup>. However, the proportion of theory and practice is often imbalanced, with more emphasis on theory than practice, and limited opportunities for PETs to interact with real students in a meaningful way<sup>[13]</sup>.

In contrast, PET training programs in other countries tend to adopt a more comprehensive and integrated approach, which combines theory and practice in a coherent and engaging manner<sup>[3, 4]</sup>. For example, PET training programs in the United States often incorporate field experiences, such as coaching, mentoring, and service learning, into the curriculum, which enable PETs to apply the theoretical knowledge to practical contexts and reflect on their teaching practices<sup>[3, 6]</sup>. Similarly, PET training programs in Japan emphasize the development of "kokoro," or heart and mind, which refers to the holistic approach to teaching physical education that combines physical, social, and emotional aspects<sup>[10]</sup>.

## **3. Methodology**

This study adopts a comparative research design, which aims to compare the mechanisms of PET training in China and other countries, such as the United States, Australia, and Japan. The data were collected through a review of the literature, including academic articles, government reports, and online resources, and empirical data, such as interviews with PETs and PET trainers, and surveys of PET students. The data were analyzed using qualitative methods, such as content analysis, thematic analysis, and case study analysis, to identify the similarities and differences in the goals, curriculum design, teaching methods, and evaluation criteria of PET training programs.

## **4. Findings and Discussion**

### **4.1 Goals of PET Training**

The findings suggest that the goals of PET training vary among countries, as influenced by cultural values, educational policies, and social needs. In China, the primary goal of PET training is to promote students' physical fitness and health, based on the principles of socialist physical education. This reflects the ideology of the ruling Communist Party, which emphasizes the importance of physical fitness as a means of national development and international competition. However, this goal may not fully address the diverse needs and aspirations of students, or prepare PETs for the challenges of teaching in a multicultural and pluralistic society.

### **4.2 Curriculum Design of PET Training**

The findings suggest that the curriculum design of PET training varies among countries, as influenced by academic standards, institutional resources, and social expectations. In China, PET training programs typically consist of theoretical courses, such as sports pedagogy, motor learning, and sport psychology, and practical courses, such as physical fitness testing, sports skills training, and teaching practicum. However, the proportion of theory and practice is often imbalanced, with more emphasis on theory than practice, and limited opportunities for PETs to interact with real students in a meaningful way.

## **5. Conclusion and Implications**

This study provides a comparative analysis of the mechanisms of PET training in China and other countries, such as the United States, Australia, and Japan. The findings suggest that there are significant variations in the goals, curriculum design, teaching methods, and evaluation criteria of PET training among different countries, which reflect diverse cultural, social, and educational contexts. These variations pose challenges and opportunities for improving PET training in China and other countries.

The implications of this study are twofold. First, this study highlights the need for China and other countries to develop PET training programs that meet the diverse needs and aspirations of students, and prepare PETs for the challenges of teaching in a changing society. China can learn from the experiences of other countries, such as the United States, Australia, and Japan, in adopting

a more comprehensive and integrated approach to PET training, which combines theory and practice in a coherent and engaging manner. This approach can enable PETs to develop a range of competencies, such as pedagogical skills, content knowledge, and professional ethics, and to apply them to practical situations.

Second, this study suggests that PET training programs need to adopt a more authentic and multifaceted approach to evaluation, which considers both PETs' academic achievement and teaching performance. This approach can enable PETs to demonstrate their teaching competence in real classrooms, reflect on their teaching practices, and receive feedback from students.

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