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A Study on the Weakening of Physical Fitness in Physical Education Reform of China

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Abstract

The Chinese students' physical fitness was weakening from 1985 to 2005. Since 1995, almost all the physical fitness indicators have showed substantial decline over times. This study took this issue as the breakthrough point to examine how the physical education (PE) curriculum reform affected the students' physical fitness in China. The primary and secondary school physical fitness literature has been reviewed. This study summarized the change of PE reform theory and practice during this period. Using the descriptive statistics, the proportions of physical activity in the PE curriculum of Chinese primary and secondary schools were analyzed. In the reform process of school PE in China from single dimension to multi-dimension, the generalization of PE function has blurred the essential function of physical fitness. The PE curriculum of 1992 in Chinese mandatory education was implemented for ten years. During this period, the economy has developed rapidly, and the curriculum showed a relatively weaken trend. Compared with the past curriculum, the PE curriculum of 1997 in Chinese high school has reduced the requirement of physical activity portion in PE classes. Furthermore, the physical activity and physical fitness evaluation were not paid enough attention in school evaluation and assessment. Due to insufficient course consciousness and ability, PE teachers have weakened the effectiveness of physical activity in PE teaching practice. Compared with the social, economic, and cultural development of China during this period, the reform of PE curriculum showed the weakening trend, which coincided with the tendency of students' physical fitness decline. Physical activity and fitness are the foundations to reach school PE goals. The weakening of physical activity and fitness would lead to the difficulty for students to achieve the objectives of strengthening students' health, cultivating interests and habits, mastering techniques, and improving motor ability in school PE. It is recommended to examine the tendency of continuous weakening of physical fitness in the current reform of PE in China, and take effective measures to improve the impact of insufficient physical activities on students' physical health.

Keywords: reform, physical fitness, weakening