

Exploration of Teachers' Roles and Teaching Methods in Physical Education

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Abstract: Under the current context of continuous updates in educational philosophy, physical education (PE) instruction is no longer merely a field for skill training; rather, it has become an important platform for knowledge construction, value transmission, and individual growth. As the core of the teaching system, teachers' cognition of their roles and behavioral patterns decisively influence teaching quality and student development. This article begins with the theoretical definition of teacher roles, explores their multidimensional functions and dynamic evolution within PE teaching contexts, analyzes the paradigm shifts in PE teaching methods and their adaptation logic with subject characteristics, and further reveals the interactive construction mechanism between teacher roles and teaching methods. The study shows that teacher role identity not only guides the selection direction of teaching methods, but teaching methods also reciprocally shape teachers' role awareness. The two jointly act in a collaborative relationship to realize teaching effectiveness. This article aims to promote the transformation of PE teaching from "teaching to teach" to "teaching to learn" through a systematic analysis of roles and methods, providing theoretical basis and practical pathways for teacher professional growth and innovation in teaching models.

Keywords: Physical Education Teaching; Teacher Roles; Teaching Methods; Role Identity; Teaching Collaboration

1. Introduction

Physical education teaching is an important component of school education. Its unique physicality, interactivity, and situational nature determine that its teaching approaches and teacher roles possess a high degree of professional specificity. Under the new curriculum reform advocating the concepts of "student-centered" and "whole-process education," the traditional teacher-led instructional model faces challenges. The functions of teacher roles urgently need reconstruction, and teaching methods must achieve a paradigm shift. Teachers are not only transmitters of skills but also designers of learning, guides of situational contexts, and co-builders of values. Their role identity directly affects the selection and organization of teaching behaviors. Meanwhile, PE teaching methods have evolved from mechanical imitation toward diverse models involving situational construction, collaborative inquiry, and motivation activation. This study is based on the above background, aiming to clarify the structure and evolution of teacher roles, to review the paradigm logic of PE teaching methods, and to reveal the interactive mechanisms between the two, thereby providing theoretical support for PE teachers' professional practice and systematic approaches for optimizing teaching effectiveness.

2. Theoretical Definition and Functional Evolution of Teacher Roles

2.1 Multidimensional Connotations and Classification System of Teacher Roles

In the specific context of physical education (PE) instruction, the teacher's role is not a representation of a single identity but a composite structure formed by the interweaving of multiple functions. From the perspectives of educational sociology and instructional psychology, the role of a PE teacher can be understood as a collection of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responsibilities constructed through the interaction of institutional contexts, curricular objectives, and classroom practices. PE teachers are not only transmitters of knowledge and skills but also designers of learning environments, facilitators of physical activity, and shapers of sports culture and values. Their functional roles span multiple dimensions, including cognitive guidance, emotional support, behavioral regulation,

and the construction of social identity. Especially given the high level of practicality and contextual specificity of PE curricula, the teacher's role exhibits pronounced dynamism and multidimensionality, requiring responses to both the technical demands of instructional tasks and the complex challenges posed by students' individual differences and sociocultural backgrounds.

With the continuous evolution of educational philosophy, the types of roles played by PE teachers have also been expanding and undergoing reconstruction. Traditional instructional models emphasized the function of the PE teacher as a technical coach, focusing primarily on the training of motor skills and the mastery of correct movements, with a strong emphasis on goal orientation and instructional control. However, influenced by constructivist learning theories, humanistic education approaches, and critical pedagogical thought, teacher roles are gradually shifting toward learning facilitation, reflective guidance, and cultural construction. In the modern educational context, PE teachers are expected not only to lead students in developing physical skills but also to stimulate motivation at the emotional level and to guide the formation of positive attitudes and group consciousness at the social level.

Current mainstream role types include: the task-oriented type, which centers on goal achievement and skill construction; the supportive-promotive type, which focuses on motivational stimulation and process optimization; and the culturally constructive type, which emphasizes the curricular significance and transmission of values. The proposal of such a diversified role classification reveals the richness of PE teachers' professional identities and provides a theoretical foundation for exploring the synergistic mechanisms among teacher behaviors, instructional methods, and student development. This transformation reflects a deepening of teacher roles from a "functional" to a "relational" orientation, prompting a rethinking of the teacher's core position and operational mechanisms within the ecosystem of PE instruction ^[1].

2.2 Functional Reconstruction of Roles in PE Instructional Settings

As a form of education characterized by high contextualization and strong physical interaction, PE instruction relies heavily on its implementation environment, which plays a decisive role in shaping and evolving the functions of teacher roles. Under traditional instructional paradigms, PE teachers often assumed the authoritative figure in the classroom, with functional roles focused primarily on task execution and student management. The instructional process typically exhibited top-down, directive, and controlling features. In such models, the teacher's role was often reduced to that of a knowledge and skills transmitter, resulting in a unidirectional and hierarchical teaching relationship that neglected students' individual experiences and agency.

However, as educational concepts evolve and curricular practices deepen, PE instruction is gradually transforming toward a student-centered, experience-oriented learning model, necessitating a profound structural reconstruction of teacher roles. This functional reconstruction is not merely a change in identity positioning but a fundamental shift in the logic of professional practice. Teachers are transitioning from being mere transmitters of knowledge to becoming designers of instructional activities, builders of learning environments, and dynamic regulators of teaching processes. In the new instructional settings, teachers must take into account students' physical literacy, cognitive styles, emotional needs, and sociocultural backgrounds, and adjust teaching objectives, content, and methods accordingly to create inclusive and diversified learning scenarios.

This shift requires teachers to assume greater responsibility for resource integration and situational guidance. They must possess not only a high sensitivity to instructional strategies and curriculum design but also comprehensive competencies in effective communication, emotional regulation, and group dynamics management. Furthermore, the transformation of teacher functions profoundly influences the way instructional goals are defined—shifting from the singular attainment of skills to a multidimensional goal system that includes cognitive development, social-emotional cultivation, and the shaping of sports values. This reconstruction of functional roles from a learning ecological perspective positions PE teachers as co-constructors of curricular culture and active guides of students' bodily experiences, reflecting a systemic shift in professional identity and a deep reconstruction of the logic of instructional practice ^[2].

2.3 Mechanisms of Role Identity Formation and Its Internal Link to Instructional Behavior

The role identity of teachers in PE instruction is not merely an externally assigned status but a product of long-term interaction among professional consciousness, instructional beliefs, and behavioral patterns. The formation mechanisms of role identity can be explained through social

cognitive theory and career development theory. Teachers continually construct and adjust their instructional self-concept within multiple social relationships and deepen their role awareness through the accumulation and reflection of practical experiences.

In PE instruction, teachers' perceptions of their roles directly influence their choices and organization of instructional behaviors. For instance, teachers who identify themselves as facilitators of learning are more likely to adopt open and collaborative teaching methods, whereas those who emphasize a controlling role may prefer structured and directive approaches. Role identity, therefore, serves not only as a psychological representation but also as an intermediary mechanism in behavior generation, influencing various dimensions such as the control of instructional pacing, the design of classroom interactions, and the establishment of assessment standards.

Moreover, the dynamic nature of role identity enables adaptive regulation across different teaching stages and tasks. Teachers must seek a balance between self-efficacy and situational demands to maintain coherence and adaptability in instructional behavior. From this perspective, the professional construction of teacher roles depends not only on external training and institutional incentives but also on the internal development of self-consistent identity and reflective teaching capabilities.

3. The Paradigm Evolution and Strategic Construction of Physical Education Teaching Methods

3.1 Paradigm Shifts in Teaching Methods and Their Compatibility with the Characteristics of Physical Education

The evolution of teaching methods in physical education is not merely an outcome of technological updates in pedagogy; rather, it is grounded in shifts in educational philosophy and learning theories. From operant training under behaviorism to contextual engagement supported by constructivism, physical education teaching methods have undergone a deep transformation—from control-oriented to guidance-oriented, and from unidirectional transmission to bidirectional interaction. This transformation has not followed a linear trajectory but is instead premised on the inherent physicality, experiential nature, and dynamism of the discipline, thereby addressing the multifaceted demands of learner agency and complex interactions ^[3].

As a subject that integrates cognition, emotion, and motor skills, physical education necessitates teaching methods that combine goal orientation with process openness. Early approaches emphasized technical imitation and movement standardization, with methods leaning towards mechanical repetition and model-based demonstration, focusing on bodily control and skill internalization. With the re-evaluation of bodily-kinesthetic intelligence and the cognitive value of movement, teaching methods have gradually shifted toward context-guided, task-driven, and collaboration-based approaches, resulting in pedagogical structures that are more aligned with the multidimensional nature of physical education. These paradigm shifts in teaching methodology reflect not only the transformation of educational ideologies but also the reconstruction of knowledge transmission pathways and learning process organization within the curriculum.

3.2 The Structural Logic of Method Selection and Knowledge Organization Strategies

The selection of teaching methods is not an immediate outcome of instructional experience but a structurally informed decision-making process embedded within instructional objectives, learning content, and learner characteristics. This process is grounded in instructional design theories and the systematic organization of pedagogical knowledge, requiring careful consideration of motor complexity in the content, cognitive load of learning tasks, students' prior physical experience, and the intended forms of learning outcomes. In physical education, the hierarchical nature of motor skills, the strategic intent behind actions, and the variability of situational tasks all demand a high degree of structural coordination in method selection.

Regarding knowledge organization strategies, teaching methods should support the systematic development of skill concepts, motor logic, and tactical awareness. A variety of methods—such as static display and dynamic demonstration, part-whole instruction, as well as open and structured practice—must be organically combined based on content properties and instructional goals. Knowledge organization involves not only the sequencing and progression of content but also the coordinated design between learning tasks and cognitive schemata. Structured method selection emphasizes both the rationality and interpretability of instructional design, which in practice manifests

as layered task design, feedback modulation, and continuous dynamic adjustment [4].

The synergistic relationship between teaching methods and knowledge organization not only establishes a clear cognitive pathway in physical education classrooms but also directly reflects the teacher's level of professional maturity and systems thinking in pedagogical decision-making. Through a task-analysis-based structural logic, teachers can systematically clarify the knowledge framework of instructional content, align it with appropriate teaching methods, and thereby regulate teaching tempo and interaction strategies. This enables the construction of internal coherence and logical closure across content delivery, skill cultivation, and value development. Such a synergy enhances cognitive efficacy and learning transfer, while also equipping teachers with greater adaptability and instructional leadership in specific teaching contexts. Ultimately, it promotes a shift in physical education classrooms from experience-driven to theory-supported and strategy-led professional development.

3.3 The Integration Mechanism Between Teaching Methods and Motivation Regulation

Effective learning in physical education relies not only on the technical soundness of teaching methods but also on their adaptability and sensitivity in activating learner motivation. As the concrete carriers of instructional interaction, teaching methods must incorporate motivational regulation mechanisms, forming a bidirectional feedback system between pedagogical behavior and learning drive. Given the participatory nature and achievement-oriented experience of physical education, student motivation is often subject to fluctuations and pronounced emotional responses. This places higher demands on the motivational, participatory, and feedback functions of instructional methods.

In constructing motivational regulation mechanisms, theories such as goal-setting theory, task value theory, and self-determination theory provide foundational support. Teaching methods should strike a balance between task challenge and attainability, centering on the activation of intrinsic motivation. Strategies such as a sense of task accomplishment, peer collaboration, and autonomous choice can enhance student engagement and sustained involvement. Interactive teaching, cooperative learning, and gamified instruction are all method types developed within this motivational activation framework [5].

The key to integration lies in how teaching methods connect with students' motivational structures and maintain the stability and positivity of that connection throughout the instructional process. The effectiveness of feedback systems, visibility of achievement expectations, and students' self-perception of learning progress collectively influence emotional affiliation with physical education and the internalization of learning goals. The systematic integration of method selection and motivational regulation not only optimizes the psychological conditions of the learning process but also enhances the generativity and adaptability of instructional strategies. This forms a vital foundation for both the professionalization and personalization of physical education instruction.

4. The Interactive Construction Logic between Teachers' Roles and Teaching Methods

4.1 The Guiding Role of Role Positioning in the Selection of Teaching Methods

The role positioning of teachers in physical education not only serves as the fundamental paradigm of their professional identity but also profoundly influences their cognitive preferences and implementation orientations regarding teaching methods. Different tendencies in role cognition directly determine teachers' understandings of instructional objectives, teaching organization, and student interaction patterns, thereby guiding their method-level decisions. For instance, teachers who identify themselves as "knowledge transmitters" or "skill shapers" tend to favor directive and control-oriented teaching models. In contrast, those who regard themselves as "learning facilitators" or "exploration guides" are more likely to adopt heuristic, cooperative, or inquiry-based methods with higher levels of interaction.

Role positioning inherently possesses value-oriented attributes, encompassing subjective assumptions about the nature of learning and the function of teaching. Therefore, the selection of teaching methods is not a mere technical arrangement but a concrete expression of the teacher's educational beliefs and professional judgment. In physical education, whether teachers emphasize situational experience, attend to individual differences, or encourage autonomous construction will be reflected in their methods of content presentation, feedback mechanisms, and ways of organizing student participation. This guiding mechanism highlights the primacy and structural nature of role awareness, underscoring the cognitive leadership function that teachers undertake when selecting

instructional strategies.

4.2 The Dynamic Mechanism of Teaching Methods Reshaping Teacher Roles

Teaching methods are not static tools. The patterns of instructional interaction and classroom feedback they trigger during implementation continuously reshape teachers' role cognition and professional self-conception. Teachers' experiences of instructional efficacy, degree of autonomy, and student responses across various methodological frameworks gradually lead to renewed understandings and reconstructions of their role functions. Especially in the context of physical education, which is highly dependent on interaction and real-time adjustment, the feedback characteristics of methods amplify their reverse influence on teachers' behavioral patterns and role cognition^[6].

The operation of this dynamic mechanism is grounded in reflective practice. Through the continual adjustment and refinement of teaching methods, teachers gradually reinforce certain behavioral modes and communication styles, forming new identifications with their professional roles. For example, teachers employing collaborative teaching often reinforce their self-perception as organizers and coordinators, while those who consistently adopt inquiry-based strategies are more inclined to see themselves as cognitive facilitators or question guides. In the actual classroom setting, teaching methods—through structural arrangement, interaction rhythm, and the creation of learning atmosphere—systematically shape the internal structure and external expression of teacher roles, thereby achieving a bidirectional construction between methods and roles.

4.3 The Role–Method Synergy Pathway for Optimizing Teaching Effectiveness

A deep synergy between teacher roles and teaching methods is a key pathway to optimizing the effectiveness of physical education instruction. Teaching effectiveness, as a comprehensive reflection of the teaching system's performance, depends not only on the appropriateness and structure of methods but also on the consistency and regulatory capacity of teachers' role behaviors. During instruction, the degree of alignment between role behaviors and method selection directly affects the achievement of instructional goals, the depth of student engagement, and the quality of classroom interaction and feedback.

Constructing a role–method synergy pathway requires teachers to synchronously align their role cognition with methodological strategies during lesson planning. For example, in task-driven instruction, teachers must assume dual roles as content designers and process supervisors. Corresponding method designs should revolve around task structures and reinforce the coherence of motivational and feedback mechanisms. In experiential instruction, teachers need to act as emotional regulators and experience facilitators, and their instructional methods should emphasize openness, diversity, and autonomy. The essence of the synergy pathway lies in achieving internal consistency between instructional intentions and instructional behaviors, thus forming an integrated structure that unifies teaching resources, instructional approaches, and educational goals, thereby enhancing the stability and generative capacity of the instructional system.

This synergistic relationship also reflects the dynamic nature of teachers' professional development. As teaching experience accumulates and reflective capacity improves, teachers become increasingly sensitive to role–method alignment and more adept at regulating it. This allows for more precise identification of instructional issues, rapid adjustments to instructional strategies, and the construction of personalized teaching styles. The development of such capabilities not only enhances instructional performance but also provides a structural safeguard for the sustained improvement of teaching quality in physical education.

5. Conclusion

The synergistic construction of teacher roles and teaching methods is not only a crucial link in physical education reform but also an intrinsic driver of professional growth and classroom effectiveness. This study indicates that teachers' role identifications significantly influence their choices of instructional strategies, while teaching methods, in turn, reshape teachers' role awareness and behavioral styles during implementation. The bidirectional interaction between roles and methods forms the core structure of the physical education instructional system. Only through cognitive and behavioral alignment between the two can an effective, flexible, and generative teaching system be established. Future research may further explore the contextual differences across various educational

stages and content types, and delve into the pathways through which technological media, instructional assessment mechanisms, and teacher training systems intervene in role–method synergy, thereby achieving a dynamic balance between professionalization and personalization in physical education instruction.

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