

# How to Include Elements of Aesthetic Education in Physical Education Programs

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**Abstract.** This study investigates the practice of introducing aesthetic elements into physical education curriculum, as well as educators' and students' perceptions of it. We employed questionnaires and interviews with physical education teachers and students as our target groups. We discovered that incorporating aesthetic components into physical education classes might increase students' enthusiasm in learning and aesthetic appreciation. However, practice varies across schools and teachers, and both educators and students want a deeper and broader application of aesthetic elements in the PE curriculum. We propose that teacher education emphasize the use of aesthetic education in physical education, and that schools and educational policymakers give more resources and support for aesthetic education. Future study should focus on how aesthetic education aspects can be more effectively integrated into physical education programs, as well as how the effectiveness of such integration can be measured.

**Keywords:** aesthetic education; physical education; aesthetic appreciation; educators; students.

## 1. Introduction

Education's objective is not just to teach knowledge, but also to create individuals with holistic development [1]. Physical education and aesthetic education have become increasingly important in the development of pupils as part of the promotion of comprehensive quality education. Physical activity has been recognized as a vital component of kids' overall development education as a means of enhancing students' physical and mental health, building team spirit, and boosting willpower [2]. Meanwhile, aesthetic education is concerned with the formation of students' aesthetic notions, which has a significant impact on emotional development, creative thinking, social skills, and other areas [3]. In recent years, an increasing number of research have focused on the interaction of physical education and aesthetic education. For example, According to research, the rhythmic and harmonious nature of physical activities, as well as the expression of aesthetic components, can help students increase their aesthetic perception [4]. However, how to mix the two efficiently so that kids can develop artistic ideals while exercising their bodies needs to be examined and researched more. The primary goal of this research is to investigate how to effectively include aesthetic components into the physical education curriculum, with the goal of presenting a fresh perspective and idea to encourage the growth of school education in a more comprehensive manner. We hope to equip educators with a framework with practical direction to actualize the harmonious marriage of physical education and artistic education through in-depth theoretical discussion and empirical research.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Educational Importance of Aesthetic Education

Aesthetic education, commonly known as art education, is an essential component of the educational system. The purpose of aesthetic education is to nurture not only students' artistic

talents and knowledge, but also, and more crucially, students' aesthetic notions and aesthetic literacy, as well as to increase students' creative thinking and emotional expression [5]. Aesthetic education can help pupils think creatively. Artistic production necessitates pupils using their imagination and displaying their individuality, which aids in the development of students' innovative spirit and creativity [6]. Furthermore, via investigation, experimentation, and practice, aesthetic education can provide a diverse learning environment in which students can acquire problem-solving abilities and critical thinking [7]. Aesthetic education can help students develop emotionally. Art can help pupils not only express and comprehend their own emotions, but also improve their understanding and empathy for the feelings of others [8]. Furthermore, art activities can create a safe setting for children to openly express their thoughts and feelings, which is vital for the development of students' self-awareness and emotion management skill [9]. In conclusion, the value of aesthetic education in schooling cannot be overstated. To offer pupils with a comprehensive and rich learning experience, educators and schools should pay close attention to aesthetic education and incorporate it into the school's educational curriculum.

## **2.2 Physical Education's Current Situation and Challenges**

Physical education has an essential role in school education, particularly in improving students' physical and mental health, creating team spirit, and building willpower [10]. However, many obstacles remain in present physical education, such as the design and implementation of program content, the improvement of teacher quality, and the problem of student involvement.

Problems in program content design and implementation. A physical education program's design must consider a variety of aspects, including students' interests, the school environment, and the program's aims [11]. Furthermore, the program's implementation necessitates that teachers possess specific teaching talents and professional expertise in order to ensure that pupils can study efficiently in a safe atmosphere [12]. The issue of improving teacher quality. Physical education teachers' quality has a direct impact on the quality and effectiveness of physical education programs [13]. However, many physical education teachers today lack adequate professional training and development opportunities, posing a challenge to increasing physical education quality [14]. There are issues with student engagement. Many studies have found that student participation in physical education classes is lower than in other subjects [15]. A major difficulty for physical education is increasing students' interest and involvement in physical education courses [16]. To summarize, present physical education has numerous issues that necessitate collaboration between educators and policymakers in order to develop successful solution solutions.

## **2.3 Studies on the junction of aesthetic and physical education**

In terms of forms and purposes, aesthetic education and physical education have several intersections that allow for their integration. Several research have begun to investigate the junction of these two domains, presenting some basic thoughts and directions. Aesthetics, a basic idea of aesthetic education, correlate with rhythmicity and harmony in physical activity. Physical activities, such as gymnastics and dance, for example, intrinsically combine art and movement and express body aesthetics [17]. Students can develop artistic concepts and appreciation while experiencing the thrill of physical activity by participating in such activities. Physical activities can provide a setting for pupils to learn and see beauty in action. For example, the design of sporting laws, the arrangement of competition venues, and the selection of sporting equipment can all reflect aesthetic concepts, allowing students to learn and understand aesthetics while engaging in sports [18]. There are also connections between sports education and aesthetics. Both, for example, promote student active participation, practice and experience, and innovation and personality development [19]. This opens the door to the potential of teaching ways for integrating the two. More exploration and research are needed to determine how to effectively incorporate parts of aesthetic education into the physical education curriculum to produce an organic whole.

### **3. Methodology of research**

To get a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of how physical activity might boost students' aesthetic perception, this study used a Mixed-Methods Research (MMR) technique, which is a blend of quantitative and qualitative research.

#### **3.1 Quantitative Analysis**

A questionnaire survey will be used to collect students' attitudes and views of the physical education program and aesthetic activities for the quantitative research. The questionnaire will be based on existing literature and theories, and it will cover a wide range of elements that may influence aesthetic appreciation, such as students' interest, motivation, and learning experiences [20]. The questionnaires will be distributed to middle school pupils in three separate regions, with a total of 1000 valid questionnaires expected. Following data collection, descriptive statistics and regression analysis will be run in SPSS to evaluate the association between various variables.

#### **3.2 Qualitative investigation**

Interviews and observations will be used in the qualitative research to get insight into the actual experiences and feelings of students participating in physical activities. First, 10 physical education teachers will be interviewed in semi-structured interviews to see how they incorporate aesthetic elements into their lectures and their observations of students' responses. Second, 30 students will be interviewed in focus groups to learn about their experiences and impressions of physical exercise and aesthetic education activities. All interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed, after which they will be coded and thematically analyzed using NVivo [21]. This study uses a mixed-methods research design to present a multi-perspective and multi-level knowledge of how physical activity improves students' aesthetic enjoyment.

### **4. The study's findings**

#### **4.1 Perceptions of educators about the incorporation of aesthetic elements in physical activity**

This study's qualitative component focuses on educators' perceptions of introducing aesthetic elements into physical education exercises. We gathered input and impressions from ten physical education teachers through semi-structured interviews.

##### **4.1.1 Advantageous integration of physical and aesthetic education**

The majority of teachers agreed that combining physical education and aesthetic education is advantageous to pupils' overall development. They hoped that this combination would allow pupils to exercise their bodies while also developing their aesthetic sensibility and creative thinking. This is consistent with relevant literature findings (Veblen, 2007)[22].

##### **4.1.2 The requirement for specialized training and resources**

While teachers recognized the significance of combining physical education and aesthetics, they also underlined the importance of adequate training and resources to achieve this integration. They needed to learn how to include aesthetic aspects into the physical education curriculum as well as how to assess students' learning outcomes in aesthetic education. This is consistent with Catterall's (2009) findings, which also stated in his study that teachers require sufficient training and support to effectively apply aesthetic education [23].

##### **4.1.3 Difficulties and Obstacles**

Many teachers stated that adopting the combination of physical education and aesthetic education presented some problems and difficulties. First, the curriculum's time limits made it difficult to incorporate enough components of aesthetic education into the physical education program. Second, they claimed that the existing grading system places too much emphasis on

evaluating physical education skills while ignoring the importance of aesthetic education. This is congruent with Winner and Hetland's (2000) findings, who also stated in their study that the existing evaluation system frequently fails to comprehensively evaluate students' achievements in aesthetic education [24].

Teachers are usually hopeful about the combination of physical education and aesthetic education, but they also underline the importance of proper policy support and resources to make this combination a reality.

## **4.2 Aesthetic Education Elements in Physical Education Courses: A Practical Application**

We also investigated the practical implementation of aesthetic aspects in the PE curriculum in the qualitative portion of this study. This information was derived mostly from teacher interviews and our examination of lesson plans and teaching materials.

### **4.2.1 The Popularity of Aesthetic Education Elements**

According to the data we gathered, the majority of teachers used aesthetic elements in their physical education programs. They improve pupils' aesthetic appreciation, for example, by involving them in activities such as artistic gymnastics and dance. They also include conversations about sports' beauty in their classes to assist pupils appreciate the aesthetic aspects in sports. This is consistent with relevant research findings (Green, 2002)[25].

### **4.2.2 Inconsistent Use of Aesthetic Education Elements**

However, we discovered an unequal application of aesthetic components in the physical education curriculum. Some schools and teachers performed well in this area, while others struggled to incorporate aesthetic elements. This disparity could be attributed to instructors' knowledge, skills, and access to resources (Catterall, 2009)[26].

### **4.2.3 The necessity for development**

Although teachers largely agreed that introducing aesthetic elements into the PE curriculum is beneficial, they also stated that present methods might be improved. They would prefer more training and resources to improve the incorporation of aesthetic components in physical education curricula (Winner & Hetland, 2000) [27]. Overall, our findings demonstrate that aesthetic aspects are frequently used in the PE curriculum, although the quality and range of their use may be enhanced.

## **4.3 Students' Experiences and Reactions to Including Aesthetic Education Elements**

Students are the immediate beneficiaries of aesthetic education in physical education, thus understanding their experience and input on the incorporation of aesthetic aspects is critical. Through questionnaires and group discussions, we gathered students' perspectives and experiences.

### **4.3.1 Increasing Learning Interest and Participation**

For starters, we discovered that incorporating aesthetic elements into physical education programs might boost students' learning interest and participation. The majority of pupils said that they were pleased with the physical education classes that included aesthetic elements and were eager to participate [28].

### **4.3.2 Improving Aesthetic Appreciation**

Furthermore, pupils generally considered that this instructional style aided in the improvement of their aesthetic perception abilities. They mentioned that they not only gained athletic skills, but also how to appreciate the aesthetic worth of sports during the course [29].

### **4.3.3 Improvement requirements and expectations**

However, several students indicated a wish for aesthetic elements to be more profoundly and widely included into the PE program. They wanted greater opportunities to experience and

comprehend the aesthetic value of sport across the curriculum, rather than simply in certain activities or courses [30]. Overall, students gave favorable comments on the aesthetic components incorporated into the PE program, and they considered that this teaching technique contributed to their increased interest in learning and aesthetic appreciation. They did, however, hope that aesthetic components could be more fully and comprehensively integrated into the physical education curriculum.

## **5. Deliberation**

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the practical implementation of aesthetic features in a physical education curriculum, as well as the responses of educators and students to it. Our findings corroborate our initial hypothesis that aesthetic aspects can be successfully included into physical education programs, hence increasing students' aesthetic appreciation and engagement in learning.

### **5.1 Aesthetic education's significance in physical education**

Aesthetic education, according to our findings, is vital in physical education. It not only increases students' engagement in physical education programs, but it also improves their aesthetic perception, as prior research has shown (Efland, 2002; Uptis, 2011) [31, 32]. This demonstrates the importance of aesthetic education in schooling and how physical education can be an excellent vehicle for aesthetic education.

### **5.2 The Needs and Difficulties of Using Aesthetic Education Elements**

Although the incorporation of artistic elements into physical education programs has yielded some outcomes, our research also uncovered several issues and limitations. On the one hand, the application of aesthetic features varies across schools and teachers, which may be related to teachers' knowledge and skills, as well as resource availability [33]. Students and teachers, on the other hand, have a clear need for a deeper and broader use of aesthetic features.

### **5.3 Future Directions and Suggestions**

We suggest the following recommendations in response to these challenges. First, teacher education should emphasize the use of aesthetic education in physical education [34]. Furthermore, schools and educational policymakers should offer more resources and support for aesthetic education so that components of aesthetic education can be fully integrated into all physical education programs.

More research is also needed to get a better knowledge of how aesthetic education elements might be more effectively integrated into physical education curricula, as well as how to evaluate the effectiveness of such integration.

## **6. Summary**

Our research illustrates the practical implementation and acceptance of aesthetic features in physical education programs through a survey of educators and students. We discovered that incorporating aesthetic components into physical education instruction not only increases students' enthusiasm in learning, but also helps to improve their aesthetic appreciation. This supports our initial premise that including aesthetic features improves physical education teaching. However, we found that the practical application of aesthetic education in physical education continues to confront significant problems, such as a lack of resources and teachers' expertise and abilities. Simultaneously, both instructors and students have indicated a desire for a more extensive and broad application of artistic elements in physical education. This gives us some ideas for how to improve physical education and incorporate aesthetic education into it. To attain this goal more

effectively, we believe that teacher education should focus more on the application of aesthetic education in physical education, and that schools and educational policymakers should give greater resources and support for aesthetic education. Furthermore, future study should explore deeper into how to include aesthetic education aspects into the physical education curriculum more successfully, as well as how to assess the effectiveness of such inclusion.

Overall, our findings indicate that incorporating aesthetic education aspects into physical education is doable and has the potential to be beneficial. We hope that additional research and practice will lead to a broader use of aesthetic elements in physical education, boosting students' whole-person development.

## 7. Fund projects

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Mudanjiang Normal University Graduate Student Science and Technology Innovation Project (Project name: Exploring the relationship between children's digital sports participation motivation and mental health from a psychological perspective, Project number: kjc2023-081mdjnu)

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