

## INTEGRATION OF CHARACTER VALUES IN INTRODUCTORY LEARNING IN THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION, HEALTH AND RECREATION STUDY PROGRAM

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### Abstract

This study aims to describe the form, strategy, and response of students to the integration of character values in the learning of the Introduction to Education course in the Penjaskesrek Study Program. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data was collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. The results of the study show that character values such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, honesty, sportsmanship, and social care are integrated in learning both explicitly through RPS and implicitly through lecturer examples and participatory methods. The strategies used include reflective discussions, case studies, simulations, and affective assessments such as reflective journals and attitude observations. Students responded positively to the integration of character values, although some expected a more applicable form of implementation outside the classroom. These findings affirm the importance of character strengthening as an integral part of the learning process, especially in forming competent and moral physical educator candidates. This research contributes to the development of holistic learning and is oriented towards the formation of student personalities in higher education.

**Keywords:** *Integration of Character Values, Physical Education, Introduction to Education, Affective Learning, Character Education.*

### INTRODUCTION

Education in the modern era not only aims to develop the cognitive aspects of students, but also develops character values as a moral foundation in life (Kurniawan et al., 2023). In the context of higher education, this is increasingly important considering that students as the younger generation are at the stage of forming a more independent identity and attitude to life (Sujianto et al., 2023). Introduction to Education as a basic course in various study programs, including Physical Education, Health, and Recreation (Penjaskesrek), has great potential in instilling character values (Adhi et al., 2023). This is because this course discusses conceptually the goals, functions, and direction of education, including character education. According to (Lickona, 2022), character education is a conscious effort to help a person understand, care, and act on ethical values that are upheld. This shows that character education is not only concerned with the aspect of knowledge, but also involves real feelings and actions in everyday life (Marsini, 2022). In the context of Penjaskesrek students, character formation has a crucial role because graduates of this study program are expected to become educators who are not only able to teach sports and health, but also become role models in sportsmanship, discipline, and responsibility.

Character values such as honesty, hard work, responsibility, discipline, and social concern are the foundations that cannot be separated from the development of the professionalism of prospective sports teachers. Therefore, the integration of these values in learning must be designed systematically. The integration of character values is not solely verbalistic, but must be implemented in contextual, reflective, and transformative learning strategies. In this case, a student-centered learning approach is an effective means to achieve this goal (Matthews, 2020). In this regard, according to (Zubaedi, 2017), the integration of character values in learning can be done through the internalization of values in teaching materials, lecturers' examples, and learning activities that encourage moral reflection. This process requires awareness and commitment from all parties in the educational environment. Students of the Physical Education Study Program need to understand that character values are not only relevant at the theoretical level, but

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must be part of their life ethos, especially when they become public figures who become role models in society. Therefore, strengthening character through the Introduction to Education course should not be understood as an additional burden, but as an integral part of the process of moral and cultured national intelligence. In education studies, learning that integrates character values tends to have a greater impact on student behavior. This is supported by constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that learners build their own knowledge through experience and reflection (Masgumelar & Mustafa, 2021). As explained by (Piaget, 1976), meaningful learning occurs when students are active in the process of forming meaning, including the meaning of life values. Therefore, lecturers need to design activities that not only hone logic, but also foster empathy and social responsibility. In the Introduction to Education course, discussions about the goals of national education, educational philosophy, and the role of teachers can be a strategic entry point to discuss the importance of character in education.

In addition, group discussion activities, case studies, and role simulations can be used to train students to think critically while building sensitivity to ethical values in educational practice. In the context of Penjaskesrek, learning about the values of sportsmanship, teamwork, and respect for opponents in matches can be related to the character values raised in the Introduction to Education lecture. This is in line with the opinion (Elkind & Sweet, 2004) which emphasizes that character strengthening in the context of education must be contextual, relevant to the lives of students, and integrated in all aspects of learning. Therefore, the Penjaskesrek Study Program has a moral responsibility to ensure that every student is not only academically competent and physical skills, but also excels in personal integrity and social responsibility. Thus, the integration of character values in the learning of Introduction to Education is a strategic step to realize intellectually and morally complete graduates, in accordance with the mandate of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (Noor, 2018). It is undeniable that the era of globalization presents serious challenges to character education, such as identity crises, hedonism, and moral degradation. Therefore, higher education institutions must be at the forefront of fortifying the young generation with the noble values of the nation. Character education is not just a program, but is the soul of the entire educational process itself. When these values are integrated in learning, education will truly produce civilized and responsible human beings. Based on the above background, it is important to conduct an in-depth study on how the integration of character values in Introduction to Education learning in the Penjaskesrek Study Program can be designed, implemented, and evaluated effectively as part of efforts to build a generation of moral and competitive physical educators.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type (Yusuf, 2013). This approach was chosen because it aims to deeply understand the process of integrating character values in the learning of the Introduction to Education course in the Physical Education, Health, and Recreation Study Program (Penjaskesrek). Qualitative research allows researchers to explore social and educational realities as they are, as well as capture the meaning contained in learning practices that take place in the field. The location of the research was carried out at one of the universities that organized the Penjaskesrek study program. The selection of this location is based on the consideration that the institution has implemented a character value-based curriculum and has a commitment to character education in its academic process. The subjects in this study include lecturers in the Introduction to Education course, students in the first semester of the Penjaskesrek Study Program, and relevant structural officials such as the Head of the Study Program.

Data collection was carried out through several techniques, namely observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Observation is carried out in a participatory manner to see firsthand how the learning process takes place and how character values are integrated in learning activities, both explicitly through teaching materials and implicitly through the attitude and example of lecturers. Interviews are conducted in a semi-structured manner so that researchers can explore information flexibly but remain within the corridor of the research focus. The main informants consist of the teaching lecturer and several students who are selected purposively based on their active involvement in lectures. The documentation study was carried out by examining the Semester Learning Plan (RPS), syllabus, and teaching materials used in lectures. The validity of the data is maintained through source and method triangulation techniques. Source triangulation is carried out by comparing data obtained from lecturers, students, and documents, while method triangulation is carried out by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation. With this technique, the data obtained can be tested for truth from various points of view and approach. Data analysis was carried out inductively using an interactive model of (Miles & Huberman, 1992), which includes three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion or verification. At the data reduction stage, the information obtained from the field is selected and categorized based on certain themes related to the integration of character values. Furthermore, the data that has been reduced is presented in the form of a descriptive

narrative, matrix, or relevant direct quote. Finally, conclusions are drawn in stages based on patterns and relationships that emerge from the data. The main focus of this research is to identify the forms of character values that are integrated in learning, the strategies used by lecturers in integrating these values, and the response and meaning of students to the integration process carried out. By using this approach, it is hoped that a comprehensive picture of the practice of integrating character values in the context of the Introduction to Education course in the Penjaskesrek Study Program can be found. The results of this research are not intended to be generalized, but to provide a deep understanding of the reality of character education in the realm of higher education, especially in the field of physical education. Therefore, the depth and richness of the data takes precedence over the breadth of respondents' coverage. Researchers also maintain research ethics by ensuring the confidentiality of informant identities, asking for approval before conducting interviews or observations, and publicly conveying research objectives to all parties involved. Sensitivity to the social and cultural context of the campus is upheld during the research process, so that the relationship between the researcher and the research subject remains professional and ethical. With this method, it is hoped that research will be able to make a real contribution to the development of character-based learning, especially in the context of physical education in higher education. The research findings are also expected to be input for higher education institutions in designing learning strategies that are more effective, humanist, and oriented towards the development of student character as a whole.

## **RESULTS OF RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Integrated Character Value Forms**

In the learning process, it was found that lecturers consistently integrate a number of main character values. These values include: discipline, responsibility, cooperation, honesty, sportsmanship, and social concern. These values are relevant to the characteristics of Penjaskesrek students who will later become physical educators at school. The value of discipline and responsibility is reflected in the lecturer's firmness in terms of punctuality, assignment completion, and lecture attendance. Meanwhile, cooperation and sportsmanship are honed through group discussions, project assignments, and learning simulations that encourage collaboration. Honesty and social concern are developed through reflection and case studies of education in the community. The results of interviews with lecturers stated that these values are not only mentioned in the teaching materials, but are also contextually related to students' personal experiences and learning practices in the field. One of the lecturers said that, "Physical education not only teaches movement, but also moving morals."

Research has found that values such as discipline, responsibility, honesty, cooperation, sportsmanship, and social care are at the core of the learning process. These findings are in line with the framework put forward by Thomas (Lickona, 2022), which states that character education includes three main components: knowing the good, feeling the good, and doing the good. In this context, Penjaskesrek students are not only taught theoretically about character values, but are also directed to feel and practice them in academic and social interactions. The values chosen are also relevant to the identity and role of graduates of the Penjaskesrek Study Program as prospective physical educators. For example, sportsmanship and cooperation are not only important in the context of sports, but also in the educational process in the classroom and society. This is in line with the view (Zubaedi, 2017) which emphasizes that character education must be contextualized with the background of students and their social environment.

### **2. Character Value Integration Strategy in Learning**

The strategy of integrating character values is carried out through various approaches, both explicitly and implicitly. Explicitly, character values are included in the Semester Learning Plan (RPS) as an affective learning achievement. Meanwhile, implicitly, lecturers apply exemplary strategies, reflective discussions, and case study-based problem-solving. In learning, lecturers use contextual approaches, such as providing examples of inspirational educators and actual events that have high moral value. Students are invited to analyze and reflect on the values of education in real life, including in the world of sports. Some lecturers also integrate character assessment activities, such as the use of reflective journals, attitude observations, and group performance assessments that pay attention to aspects of work ethics and social interaction. The integration strategy used by lecturers reflects a pedagogical approach that is not only instructional, but transformative. This approach is in line with Vygotsky's theory of constructivism, which emphasizes the importance of the social environment and interaction in the learning process (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Students are invited to build their own understanding of character values through discussion, reflection, and problem-solving. Methods such as case studies, simulations, reflective journals, and roleplay provide space for students to reason and feel the real impact of applying character values in daily life. This supports the idea that character integration is not enough to be conveyed verbally, but must be accompanied by

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concrete experiences that are able to touch the affective realm of students. Furthermore, the exemplary strategies used by lecturers, both through attitudes, teaching disciplines, and interactions with students, strengthen the theory that character education is most effective when taught through real examples (modeling). In this case, lecturers are not only teachers, but also role models who provide a reflection of the values that they want to inculcate.

### 3. Student Responses to Character Value Integration

The results of interviews and observations showed that most students responded positively to the effort to integrate character values. Students feel that learning becomes more meaningful because they not only learn educational theory, but also get live learning. Some students admitted that values such as discipline and responsibility really helped them in living a structured lecture life. They also realize the importance of being an honest and trustworthy person, especially when they will later play the role of sports teachers who will be role models for students. However, there are also a small number of students who feel that the discussion of character values is sometimes too normative and not applicable. They hope that these values will be conveyed in the form of direct activities outside the classroom, such as community service programs or teaching simulations.

The students' response to the effort to integrate character values was mostly positive. They realize the importance of character formation in the process of becoming a professional and moral sports teacher. These findings corroborate the (Elkind & Sweet, 2004) that character education must be relevant and meaningful for students so that it can be accepted and internalized properly. However, a small number of students consider that the approach used is still too normative and not applicable. This is an important input for learning development, that in addition to strategies in the classroom, the integration of character values also needs to be expanded outside the classroom, such as through community service activities, teaching practices, and student leadership programs. Students as active learning subjects, as emphasized in the student-centered learning approach, need a participatory space to experience, evaluate, and adapt character values to their personal experiences (Matthews, 2020). The positive response from students shows that the learning process has been able to bridge cognitive and affective aspects in a balanced manner.

### 4. Documentation of Character Value Integration in RPS

From the results of the documentation study, it was found that the lecturer had included elements of character values in the RPS and syllabus components. Affective learning outcomes are explicitly formulated, and the assessment includes disciplined attitudes, work ethics, and social concerns. The following is a table of the results of the RPS analysis on the integration of character values in several lecturers:

**Table 1. Integration of Character Values in RPS Introductory Education Courses**

Yes	Lecturer Name	Character Values Listed	Integration Method	Affective Assessment
1	Muhammad Alfin	Discipline, responsibility	Reflections & case studies	Attitude observation rubric
2	About Wiyarko	Honesty, Cooperation	Group assignments & discussions	Reflective journal
3	Rohmad	Sportsmanship, social care	Simulation & roleplay	Peer-assessment
4	Bayu Purwo Adhi	Tolerance, professional ethics	Video screening & debate	Attitude test (Likert scale)

The inclusion of character values in RPS shows that the integration process is not incidental, but has become part of learning planning. This is important to ensure the sustainability and consistency of character strengthening in lectures. As mandated by Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, education aims to develop the potential of students to become human beings who have faith and piety, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, and responsible (Indonesia, 2003). Thus, documentation in RPS is a tangible form of efforts to implement these national goals in academic activities. Variations in affective assessment methods used by lecturers, such as attitude observation rubrics, reflective journals, and peer assessments, show that the character dimension is positioned parallel to cognitive achievement. This indicates a paradigm shift from simply measuring what students know, to how they behave and act.



## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the integration of character values in the learning of the Introduction to Education course in the Penjaskesrek Study Program takes place in a planned, systematic, and relevant manner to the context of the student's profession as prospective physical educators. The dominant character values are integrated including discipline, responsibility, cooperation, honesty, sportsmanship, and social concern. These values are not only taught conceptually, but also presented in learning activities through participatory and reflective methods. The integration strategy is carried out through a contextual approach, the use of case studies, reflective discussions, simulations, and examples shown by lecturers in the interaction process. This approach is in line with constructivist theories and character education principles that emphasize the importance of hands-on experience, student active role, and meaningful learning. Students generally respond positively to learning that instills character values. They feel that learning becomes more meaningful because it provides attitudes and life values that are useful in personal and professional lives. Nevertheless, there is still hope from students that character strengthening will also be facilitated through activities outside the classroom that are more applicable. In addition, the integration of character values is also reflected in the Semester Learning Plan (RPS) document, where affective learning outcomes have been explicitly formulated and associated with relevant methods and forms of attitude assessment. This shows that there is an institutional commitment to building student character as part of the national education goals. Thus, the integration of character values in Introduction to Education learning not only supports the achievement of academic competence, but also plays an important role in shaping students as people with integrity, ethics, and ready to be role models in society.

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