

# The Construction of a “Five-Education Integration” System in Primary School Labor Curriculum: A Case Study of Moral Cultivation and Aesthetic Education Integration

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**Abstract:** The comprehensive development of students has long been a central pursuit of modern education, yet the rapid evolution of Chinese educational reform has elevated this pursuit into a systematic framework known as the “Five-Education Integration.” This model emphasizes the coordinated cultivation of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education. Within this structure, labor education occupies a pivotal role as both a practical and spiritual field for nurturing responsibility, creativity, and appreciation of work. However, the integration of moral cultivation and aesthetic education within the labor curriculum in primary schools remains underdeveloped, often limited to fragmented activities without coherent design or sustained moral–aesthetic orientation. This paper explores the construction of a comprehensive integration system in which labor education becomes the central carrier for uniting moral and aesthetic growth. Based on a case study in a primary school in Zhejiang Province, the research develops and evaluates a framework where labor tasks are infused with moral meaning and aesthetic value, allowing students to engage in learning experiences that shape both their conduct and sensibility. The findings reveal that students who participated in morally and aesthetically guided labor activities exhibited stronger ethical awareness, self-discipline, and emotional connection to the beauty of their surroundings. This integrated model transforms labor education from a mechanical practice into an active moral–aesthetic cultivation process, offering valuable implications for curriculum innovation, teacher training, and holistic student development in the new era of education.

**Keywords:** Five-Education Integration; labor curriculum; moral cultivation; aesthetic education; primary education; holistic development

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## 1 Introduction

In the context of global educational reform, the question of how to balance intellectual achievement with moral character and aesthetic sensibility has become increasingly urgent. China’s “Five-Education Integration” initiative represents an attempt to construct a well-rounded educational ecosystem that develops virtue, wisdom, physical fitness, appreciation of beauty, and productive labor habits in harmony. Among these five dimensions, labor education has gained renewed importance as an educational means for bridging theory with practice and for cultivating essential life values. It serves as a vital space where students experience responsibility, cooperation, and creative engagement through tangible actions. Nevertheless, in many primary schools, labor education is often treated as a supplementary component, limited to isolated cleaning duties, basic crafts, or schoolyard maintenance tasks that lack systematic design and educational reflection. As a result, its potential to nurture moral and aesthetic dimensions remains largely unrealized. The integration of moral cultivation and aesthetic education into labor education can address this issue by infusing each labor experience with ethical awareness and aesthetic creativity. Such integration allows labor to transcend the utilitarian realm of skill training and become a vehicle for emotional growth and moral maturity. This study aims to construct a systematic model of

moral–aesthetic integration within the labor curriculum for primary schools. The case study presented here demonstrates that labor activities, when guided by ethical principles and aesthetic imagination, can enhance students’ intrinsic motivation, self-discipline, and capacity to appreciate beauty in both process and outcome. This research is thus significant not only for enriching the connotation of labor education but also for promoting a new paradigm of holistic development aligned with contemporary educational goals.

## 2 Literature Review

The concept of comprehensive education emphasizes that intellectual knowledge alone cannot ensure a person’s complete development. True education integrates multiple dimensions of growth—moral, physical, aesthetic, and practical. The “Five-Education Integration” embodies this vision by positioning moral education as the foundation, intellectual education as the core, physical education as the support, aesthetic education as the refinement, and labor education as the unifying practice. Labor education, in particular, represents a return to the idea that knowledge and action must be unified. Through labor, students internalize moral values such as diligence, respect, and cooperation, while also developing the ability to perceive and create beauty in everyday activities. Moral cultivation through labor is not simply about following rules or completing tasks but about forming habits of responsibility and empathy. When students engage in real work—whether planting, cleaning, or crafting—they experience the ethical meaning of contribution and perseverance. Similarly, aesthetic education in the labor curriculum encourages students to discover order, proportion, and creativity in their surroundings. By beautifying environments, designing functional yet artistic products, or appreciating natural forms, students learn that beauty is inseparable from effort and discipline. The integration of moral and aesthetic dimensions within labor activities thus leads to a more complete formation of personality. However, this integration is not automatic. It requires deliberate curriculum design, teacher guidance, and reflective evaluation. The absence of coherent models often results in fragmented implementation where moral or aesthetic goals are treated as secondary. Therefore, the establishment of a structured integration system is essential for transforming the labor curriculum into a genuine medium for comprehensive education.

## 3 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative case-based approach supplemented by practical action research to explore how moral and aesthetic education can be effectively embedded in primary school labor education. The research was carried out at a public primary school in Zhejiang Province that had already initiated exploratory programs in labor and aesthetic education. The participants included 120 students from Grades Four to Six and six teachers who collaboratively designed and implemented the integrated curriculum. The research unfolded in three sequential phases: preliminary planning, implementation, and reflection. During the planning phase, researchers and teachers analyzed existing labor activities to identify potential connections with moral and aesthetic objectives. In the implementation phase, interdisciplinary projects were designed, emphasizing student participation, creative expression, and ethical reflection. In the reflection phase, data were collected through observation, student journals, interviews, and teacher narratives to evaluate the educational outcomes and challenges encountered. The entire process aimed not only to test the feasibility of integration but also to refine a replicable model that could be adapted by other schools. The guiding principles of the design included authenticity of labor context, unity of moral and aesthetic purpose, and continuous self-reflection. The research team ensured that all activities related directly to the students’ daily lives and community culture, thus allowing moral values and aesthetic awareness to emerge naturally rather than through forced instruction.

## 4 Construction of the “Five-Education Integration” System

The integrated system proposed in this study positions labor as the central axis linking moral and aesthetic education. The framework operates on the idea that labor provides a living context where moral reasoning and aesthetic perception converge. The system rests on three interrelated dimensions: moral embeddedness, aesthetic infusion, and experiential reflection. Moral embeddedness means that each labor activity carries ethical significance; tasks are organized to foster responsibility, respect, and cooperation. For instance, students are encouraged to assume collective duties, care for public

spaces, and recognize the social value of their efforts. Aesthetic infusion involves incorporating elements of beauty, creativity, and harmony into every aspect of labor practice. Whether students are planting flowers, designing recycling bins, or decorating classroom corners, they are guided to pursue order, proportion, and imaginative expression. Experiential reflection serves as the connecting thread that transforms external behavior into internal growth. Through written reflections, peer dialogue, and teacher feedback, students learn to articulate what they feel, understand the beauty of effort, and appreciate the dignity of work. Together, these dimensions form a cyclical process: labor generates experience, experience nurtures moral and aesthetic awareness, and awareness deepens future labor engagement. In practice, this framework encourages teachers of different subjects—especially art, ethics, and labor—to co-design activities, ensuring interdisciplinary coherence. It also requires the creation of learning environments that embody aesthetic principles, where tools, spaces, and displays all convey respect for both functionality and beauty. By embedding moral and aesthetic meaning into labor education, the “Five-Education Integration” system transforms schooling into a site of living experience, enabling children to grow as thoughtful, capable, and aesthetically sensitive individuals.

## 5 Case Study: The “Beautiful Campus Creation” Project

To validate the theoretical framework, a semester-long project titled “Beautiful Campus Creation” was implemented for fifth-grade students. The project invited students to collaboratively design and execute a campus beautification plan focusing on neglected spaces within the schoolyard. Rather than treating this as a mere cleaning task, teachers framed it as a moral-aesthetic project emphasizing community responsibility and creative improvement of the environment. The process began with group discussions and surveys, allowing students to identify areas needing enhancement. They then developed design proposals that balanced practical function with aesthetic appeal. With guidance from art and labor teachers, students painted murals, built planters, recycled materials into decorative items, and organized spaces to achieve visual harmony. Throughout the process, they were encouraged to reflect on questions such as: What makes our campus beautiful? How can teamwork create shared value? What do we learn about responsibility and creativity from this activity? As the project progressed, students displayed a growing sense of ownership, pride, and cooperation. The once-neglected area was transformed into a vibrant, orderly garden, but more importantly, the students themselves changed. They began to view labor not as an imposed duty but as an expression of care and creativity. Teachers observed that students developed greater empathy, patience, and appreciation for collaborative effort. The moral dimension manifested through students’ willingness to take initiative and help peers, while the aesthetic dimension emerged in their attention to color, proportion, and texture. The project demonstrated that when labor is guided by moral purpose and aesthetic awareness, it becomes an educational process that unites emotion, action, and reflection.

## 6 Discussion

The integration of moral and aesthetic education into labor activities provides profound implications for rethinking the nature of schooling. First, it redefines labor as a process of self-cultivation rather than mere task execution. Through real work, students learn the ethics of responsibility, the discipline of cooperation, and the joy of creation. The moral and aesthetic elements are not external additions but intrinsic to the act of labor itself. Second, this integration transforms classroom culture. Instead of passively receiving knowledge, students actively shape their environment, turning learning spaces into extensions of their personality and moral imagination. Teachers shift from authoritative instructors to facilitators and co-participants who guide students to reflect on their experiences. Third, the integration aligns with the developmental needs of primary school students, who naturally respond to sensory experience and emotional engagement. By combining aesthetic appreciation with moral reasoning, labor education stimulates both cognitive and affective growth, leading to a more harmonious personality formation. However, challenges remain. Teachers must possess interdisciplinary competence, balancing artistic sensibility with ethical guidance. Assessment of moral and aesthetic outcomes is also complex, requiring qualitative evaluation methods that capture attitude and behavior change rather than mere product completion. Furthermore, time allocation and parental support influence the sustainability of integrated programs. Despite these challenges, the research demonstrates that moral-aesthetic integration in labor education is not only feasible but also transformative, fostering intrinsic motivation and holistic growth. It provides a new pedagogical paradigm that reconnects education with

life, ethics, and beauty.

## 7 Conclusion

The construction of a “Five-Education Integration” system within the primary school labor curriculum represents a significant innovation in the pursuit of holistic education. By embedding moral cultivation and aesthetic education into labor activities, schools can transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries and create a more balanced model of human development. Labor becomes both the medium and outcome of moral–aesthetic growth, uniting practical competence with spiritual refinement. The case study of the “Beautiful Campus Creation” project illustrates how this integration leads students to internalize values of diligence, cooperation, and beauty appreciation. The project did not merely beautify the school environment; it also cultivated the moral character and aesthetic perception of every participant. The experience suggests that when moral awareness and aesthetic creativity are organically intertwined, education attains its fullest meaning—it shapes both the heart and the hand. For the future, schools should strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration, provide professional development for teachers in moral and aesthetic pedagogy, and design evaluation systems that value reflection, emotion, and creativity. The ultimate goal is to enable every child to discover, through labor, the moral satisfaction of contribution and the aesthetic pleasure of creation. Such education not only prepares students for life but also fosters citizens who can appreciate, build, and care for the world with wisdom, virtue, and beauty.

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