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# Thoughts on the Positioning of Local Talent Cultivation Model for Dance in Ordinary Universities in Minority Areas: Also Discussing Regional Dance Curriculum Reform

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**Abstract:** This paper addresses the prevalent issues in the cultivation of dance talents at general institutions of higher education in ethnic minority regions, such as the lack of local cultural subjectivity and the homogenization of competency structures. It proposes a talent cultivation orientation centered on the “trinity” of dance performance competence, cultural interpretation capacity, and creative transformation ability. To explore effective cultivation pathways, three dimensions are examined: Deeply forging performance competence through curriculum system reconstruction, content expansion, and the upgrading of inheritance methods; Systematically nurturing cultural interpretation capacity via semiotic analysis, historical contextualization thinking, and interdisciplinary integration; and facilitating the development of creative transformation ability through multi-dimensional approaches. Building on these, the paper further puts forward strategies to expand practical platforms and reform evaluation mechanisms, thereby providing a systematic pathway reference for the cultivation of local dance talents in ethnic minority regions.

**Keywords:** Ethnic minority regions; Dance studies; Talent cultivation; Ethnic and folk dance; Teaching reform

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## 1. Introduction

The main differences in the educational positioning between ordinary universities in ethnic minority areas and those in other regions lie in “ethnicity, locality, and application”. Educational reforms should be centered around the economic and social development of ethnic minority areas, as well as the characteristics of the local industrial structure, to set up disciplines and majors that meet local needs, cultivate applied talents, and, through the integration of industry, research, and education, contribute to rural revitalization, ethnic unity, and social stability. They should also cover the research and protection of ethnic culture, and carry out the exploration and protection of ethnic traditional culture. Based on this, consider the positioning of the talent cultivation model and the construction or reform of courses.

## **2. Talent positioning**

The talent cultivation plan for the dance major in ordinary universities in ethnic minority areas should closely align with the school's educational positioning, break away from the traditional positioning model of other ordinary universities in talent cultivation, and combine the demands of contemporary social and cultural talents and the economic and cultural construction needs of ethnic minority areas. Reconsider the talent cultivation positioning centered on students and oriented towards output, highlighting the construction of the comprehensive capabilities of the training objects, and focusing on cultivating local talents with a "three-in-one" capability structure. Currently, these three capabilities mainly refer to the ability of dance performance, cultural interpretation, and creative transformation. Performance ability is the carrier, cultural interpretation ability is the core, and transformation ability is the extension. This capability structure reflects the progressive process of talent cultivation from mastering skills to cognitive understanding and innovative output, achieving the transformation from an art inheritor to a cultural disseminator. The "three-in-one" training model not only conforms to the general laws of art education but also meets the special needs of ethnic cultural inheritance, highlighting the educational characteristics of ethnic minority universities, and fulfilling the purpose of cultivating talents to serve local economic and cultural construction.

### **2.1. Dance performance ability**

This is determined by the inherent attributes of the dance discipline. From the perspective of discipline positioning, although dance studies cover multiple dimensions such as theory, creation, and education, its starting point and endpoint of knowledge production are both based on physical practice. Performance is the path for the manifestation of physical meaning and the completion of aesthetic communication. The absence of performance ability will lead to the lack of direct experience in the students' understanding of the basic language of dance, thereby making theoretical research empty and abstract thinking, and causing the creation, practice and teaching transmission to lose the support of embodied perception. From the perspective of the ability structure, performance ability is a comprehensive ability that integrates technical training, body cognition, aesthetic judgment, emotional expression, and stage presentation. Solid performance ability is not only the basic path for its mastery of dance language and establishment of body consciousness, but also the basic skills for subsequent diversification into directing, education, and theory.

### **2.2. Cultural interpretation ability**

Cultural interpretation ability refers to cultural literacy. Dance is a symbolic system of body language in a specific cultural context. The importance of cultural literacy for undergraduate students in dance studies can be regarded as a crucial leap from a technical executor to an artistic creator and a communicator of ideas. "Art is actually the embodiment of one's own cultural literacy. Dance art undoubtedly is the embodiment of the combination of one's own physical literacy and cultural literacy. From this perspective, dancers and those engaged in dance art should be the most externalized manifestations of people with refined and pure cultural literacy <sup>[1]</sup>." Dance art is one of the cultural carriers, and dancers are the practitioners and disseminators of culture. They should have a vision related to art studies, anthropology, and sociology, be able to analyze the interrelationship between dance forms and cultural environments, and have cultural interpretation ability, which is a necessary ability for undergraduate students in dance studies.

### **2.3. Creative transformation ability**

The ability to transform creativity refers to the comprehensive ability to convert artistic ideas, cultural concepts and artistic inspirations into specific, unique and expressive dance works. For contemporary dance students, this is an important survival skill related to professional survival and development, as well as adapting to the development of the times. The innovative creative ability mainly includes driving artistic innovation, promoting cultural inheritance, adapting to diverse careers and responding to artificial intelligence, etc. It can promote the dialogue between traditional dance and modern

aesthetics or the contemporary reconstruction of ethnic elements, meet the needs of cultural tourism integration, and develop new business forms such as dance derivatives and art and cultural products.

### **3. Effective approaches to cultivating the “trinity” ability**

#### **3.1. Deeply forging dance performance ability**

##### **3.1.1. Curriculum system reconstruction**

The curriculum system directly determines the knowledge, ability and quality structure of the training objects. The curriculum system reconstruction for the cultivation of local dance talents in ethnic minority ordinary universities is the practical basis for achieving the goal of trinity talent cultivation. The goal of reconstruction is to cultivate not only stage performers, but also cultural inheritors and artistic practitioners, that is, compound talents with solid physical skills, profound cultural literacy, certain creative ability and teaching and dissemination ability. Reconstruction is the key link to transform the ideal of specific and structured reform into operational and evaluable teaching activities; it is the general guideline for driving the construction of teaching staff, the development of teaching materials and the innovation of teaching methods; it is the way to implement advanced educational concepts such as student-centeredness, cultural literacy orientation and innovative talent cultivation.

Facing the background of globalization, digitalization and cultural diversity, as well as the changes in students' cognitive methods and the changes in society's demand for art talents, the traditional curriculum system shows its lagging nature. Reconstruction means that while emphasizing the cultivation of physical abilities, the training goal should be expanded to guide students to understand the cultural ecological background, historical context, social function and aesthetic concepts behind dance, and on this basis, cultivate their cultural reflection ability and contemporary expression consciousness. Integrating single courses into modular courses or course groups, such as courses in the physical practice dimension, not only includes ethnic folk-dance courses, but also should include dynamic principle analysis, improvisation, choreography, and teaching methods. Cultural theory dimension courses cover courses in dance art studies, anthropology, folklore and related ethnic history and culture, providing a cognitive framework for dance learning. Creation and anti-thinking dimension courses complete the closed loop from input to output, from practice to reflection through project rehearsals, work choreography, field research and academic writing. This enables students to improve from basic abilities to higher-level abilities.

##### **3.1.2. Curriculum content expansion**

The reform of regional dance courses in ethnic minority ordinary universities and the expansion of curriculum content should focus on the training model for local dance talents and the employment direction of graduates.

Ethnic minority universities should base themselves on the local area and fully rely on the geographical location advantages and cultural resources of the region, deeply explore the unique folk dance resources of the area, and introduce more characteristic regional dances into the classroom. Such regional dances often carry more vivid local imprints and ethnic bloodlines, and are an important part of local intangible cultural heritage. By systematically transforming them into school-based characteristic courses, it cannot only effectively inherit and protect regional culture, but also make the curriculum systems of different universities present distinct differentiated characteristics.

The curriculum reform should guide students to develop a broader cultural perspective and artistic vision, and pay attention to the changes and reconstructions that national dance has undergone in contemporary theater creation, urban cultural context, and cross-media artistic practices. Regional dance, folk dance, and traditional dance that have been included in the protection system of intangible cultural heritage should also have their cultural connotations and aesthetic values continuously activated, interpreted, and recreated in the contemporary social structure and cultural ecology. The curriculum reform should focus on guiding students to deeply think about the core proposition of how tradition lives in the present, respecting the original form and cultural roots of dance, and exploring its innovative expression and dynamic

inheritance in the contemporary aesthetic system and diverse communication media. Only in this way can ethnic and folk-dance education truly cultivate dance professionals with cultural self-awareness and innovative practical abilities.

### **3.1.3. Upgrade of inheritance methods**

The upgrade of inheritance methods for regional dance in ethnic minority areas is a systematic project from static protection to dynamic development. Based on current practice, its upgrade path mainly involves the coordinated promotion of three dimensions: education systematization, academic deepening, and digital empowerment.

## **3.2. Systematic cultivation of cultural reading ability**

To cultivate students' ability to understand and explain the cultural core through movement forms, it is necessary to guide students in teaching to go beyond the mastery of techniques and deeply explore the cultural genes behind the movement forms. Dance art is not an isolated physical behavior, but an aesthetic paradigm of a specific social environment, historical context, and social trends. The cultivation of cultural reading ability requires not only physical experience as the foundation, but also theoretical reflection as support, and more importantly, the expansion of interdisciplinary perspectives. In teaching, through physical practice to deepen the intuitive cognition of dance culture, students can personally experience the cultural psychology carried by different dance forms; at the same time, guide students to use theoretical resources from related disciplines such as philosophy, aesthetics, and sociology to conceptualize and theoretically interpret dance phenomena.

## **3.3. Cultivation of creative transformation ability**

The cultivation of creative ability in dance is based on systematic thinking training, cross-disciplinary knowledge accumulation, and the rational application of technical tools. This ability's cultivation must be based on long-term and systematic curriculum reform and talent cultivation processes.

### **3.3.1. Deepen artistic thinking training**

The core of creative ability lies in the cultivation and training of artistic thinking patterns. In the reform of regional dance courses, teachers should consciously guide students to cultivate observational skills and creative thinking. For example, students should go beyond merely observing the superficial form of movements and delve into the creative origin, where the creator's problem awareness arises, how the emotional logic progresses, and how the spatial structure serves the expression of meaning. By guiding students to form an awareness of creative generation, they can gradually internalize the operation mode of advanced artistic thinking, thereby forming a complete creative chain from perception to thinking and from thinking to expression in their own artistic practice.

### **3.3.2. Promote cross-disciplinary learning integration**

To cultivate students' innovative and creative abilities, it is necessary to break through the limitations of a single discipline's perspective. Teachers should guide students to actively construct a cross-disciplinary learning awareness, while also enabling students to systematically come into contact with fields such as literary narrative, theatrical structure, visual art language, and digital technology principles. They should draw creative transformation resources and thinking tools from the diverse knowledge system. "Cross-disciplinary learning does not pursue the knowledge framework of disciplinary standards, but rather the construction of a knowledge grid at the individual cognitive level <sup>[2]</sup>." Through the cultivation of cross-disciplinary knowledge, students gradually form a cognitive structure that integrates different disciplines, and enhance their overall grasp of dance creativity in a broad perspective.

### **3.3.3. Optimize technical integration paths**

Guide students to learn artificial intelligence-assisted tools and digital media technologies, and be proficient in using

them as means for creative conception and visual presentation. Through the integration path of leveraging technology to serve creativity, students not only acquire the application ability of advanced tools, but also adhere to the value orientation of humanistic creativity. They achieve comprehensive improvement in creative ability in the balance between technical rationality and humanistic spirit. However, it is necessary to note that students should always maintain the subject consciousness of the creator when using technological means.

## **4. Expand practical platforms**

In response to the training positioning of ordinary universities in ethnic minority areas for talents with integrated dance performance ability, cultural interpretation, and creative transformation, the key to the teaching reform in expanding practical platforms lies in breaking through the campus barriers and extending the practical space from classrooms, campuses, and stages to cultural sites and social spaces.

### **4.1. Build dual-teacher classrooms inside and outside the campus**

Break through the single internal campus restrictions and deeply cooperate with local cultural heritage protection centers, cultural centers, tourism and culture bureaus, etc., to establish a “dual-teacher system” practical platform. On one hand, hire cultural heritage inheritors as practical mentors to directly introduce the original ecological movements and ritual procedures of regional dance into the classroom, allowing students to master the dynamic cultural genes through oral and practical teaching; on the other hand, expand the practical classroom to villages, festival sites, setting up closed-loop practical modules such as field research, record-keeping, and stage transformation. Students record the ritual functions and social significance of dance in real contexts and complete the interpretive transformation from field materials to stage works, strengthening cultural subjectivity in the process of learning, deconstruction, and reconstruction.

### **4.2. Build a linkage mechanism for serving society**

Relying on the rich tourism and cultural resources in ethnic minority areas, establish a project-based cultural integration creation and performance workshop or sign strategic agreements with cultural communication companies, cultural tourism areas, and cultural heritage study bases. Bind students’ course assignments, graduation creations with local tourism and cultural performance projects, requiring students to transform traditional elements into contemporary forms based on market demand, and hone performance, creation, and operation capabilities in actual projects. Through promoting practice and training and promoting learning, creative transformation directly undergoes market testing, enhancing students’ comprehensive vocational qualities.

### **4.3. Build a virtual-real integrated practical platform**

Encourage students to use technologies such as image recording and motion capture to digitally protect the regional dance of ethnic minorities, and build a shareable dance resource library. At the same time, a cloud-based performance and live-streaming platform for operation was established, combined with a new media matrix. Students were tasked with planning and executing online performances, behind-the-scenes interpretations, and other communication activities. This practical platform not only enables students to develop their ability to interpret and creatively disseminate culture through modern media but also breaks through geographical barriers, empowering the dynamic inheritance of ethnic culture through digital humanities and making students consciously become active disseminators of ethnic culture.

## **5. Evaluation mechanism reform**

The reform of the evaluation mechanism for the cultivation of local talents in dance at ordinary universities in ethnic minority areas should “achieve a transformation from a skills-oriented approach to a quality-oriented approach, focusing

on the comprehensive growth and continuous development of students during their dance learning process, and achieving a deep integration of dance education with the core quality orientation <sup>[3]</sup>.” This reform should be carried out systematically from the dimensions of the evaluation concept, the evaluation scenario, the evaluation indicators, and the evaluation subject.

### **5.1. Establish a three-dimensional collaborative evaluation concept**

The traditional evaluation mechanism for dance teaching often focuses on a single dimension of skill demonstration, making it difficult to comprehensively measure students’ comprehensive qualities. The reform of dance courses in ordinary universities in ethnic minority areas needs to break through this limitation and establish a three-dimensional collaborative evaluation concept based on performance ability, with cultural interpretation ability as the core, and creative transformation ability as the extension. At the performance ability level, the focus is on students’ precise grasp of dance forms and techniques. At the cultural interpretation ability level, it is necessary to examine the depth of students’ understanding of the artistic aesthetics, cultural history, philosophical concepts, and national spirit behind the movement forms. At the creative transformation ability level, the main goal is to examine whether students can creatively transform dance cultural elements and achieve contemporary expression while maintaining the cultural foundation.

### **5.2. Build a diversified evaluation mechanism**

In addition to the traditional evaluation mainly by teachers, the evaluation participants should also be extended to students, schools, parents, and society. They should be invited to participate in the entire learning process of students and participate in the teaching evaluation at appropriate times. Through self-evaluation, mutual evaluation, and peer evaluation by multiple subjects, the evaluation mechanism for course teaching can be made more complete.

At the evaluation method level, more attention should be paid to formative evaluation. A diversified evaluation scenario integrating classroom teaching, field research, and artistic practice should be constructed. In addition to focusing on regular classroom teaching evaluation, the students’ field research and artistic practice can also be introduced into the evaluation system. The evaluation of field research guides students to conduct in-depth field exploration in ethnic villages, through recording the forms of folk dance, oral history interviews of the indigenous population, and cultural function observations, to complete research reports or video ethnographies, thereby evaluating their cultural collection and interpretation abilities.

### **5.3. Establish connected evaluation indicators**

In the teaching reform, it is possible to explore the establishment of evaluation indicators combining course academic performance, growth records, and outcome radiation. The course academic performance is the conventional traditional evaluation focus, and the growth records mainly record students’ participation and achievements in field research, creative conception, and artistic practice at each stage, thereby measuring the depth and breadth of their thinking process. The outcome radiation level can include students’ performance and effectiveness in competitions, performances, and social services in the evaluation scope. It can also be used as supporting indicators for creative transformation ability and social application ability, comprehensively considering participation, stage achievements, final presentation, and social impact, to form a quantitative and qualitative combined evaluation standard.

Ordinary universities in ethnic minority areas undertake the dual missions of cultivating high-quality talents and inheriting excellent ethnic cultural traditions. “The necessity of the localization construction of ethnic folk dance teaching mainly lies in protecting and inheriting ethnic culture, promoting teaching innovation and development, and meeting social needs <sup>[4]</sup>.” Only by embedding talent cultivation in the local cultural soil and constructing a distinctive school-running path that meets the development needs of ethnic minority areas can we truly cultivate high-quality dance talents who can be retained and used.

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## Disclosure statement

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