

Research on the Practical Teaching Pathways of Integrating Northern Frontier Culture into the "Walking Ideological and Political Course" in Universities

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Abstract: Northern Frontier Culture is the historical accumulation of interactions, exchanges, and integration among multiple ethnic groups in the northern frontier region with Inner Mongolia as its core, and serves as a vivid teaching material for consolidating the sense of community for the Chinese nation. Integrating it into the "Walking Ideological and Political Course" in universities faces multiple pedagogical transformation issues, such as semiotic translation, spatial adaptation, and meaning generation. From the perspective of ideological and political education, this study analyzes the spatial narrative and embodied experiential attributes of walking-based teaching, and constructs a hierarchical model of cultural identity internalization in practice. On this basis, it explores the coupling conditions between regional cultural traits and mobile teaching forms, designs a progressive sequence from cultural perception to political identity, and clarifies the logic of collaborative integration and dynamic adaptation of teaching elements. Furthermore, it proposes strategies for teaching scene reconstruction and spatial activation based on cultural geography, establishes multimodal encoding of cultural resources and curriculum embedding methods, and reveals the interactive pathways of meaning generation and value internalization for learning subjects. This study aims to provide a theoretical framework for the effective integration of Northern Frontier Culture into the "Walking Ideological and Political Course", promote the systematic transformation of regional cultural resources into ideological and political education resources, and contribute to consolidating the sense of community for the Chinese nation.

Keywords: Northern Frontier Culture; Walking Course; Teaching Transformation; Cultural Perception; Spatial Activation; Meaning Generation

Introduction

Northern Frontier Culture is a cultural form accumulated in the northern frontier region with Inner Mongolia as its core through the interactions, exchanges, and integration among multiple ethnic groups, and serves as a vivid teaching material for consolidating the sense of community for the Chinese nation. Integrating it into the "Walking Ideological and Political Course" essentially relies on embodied spatial movement to enable students to intuitively perceive the pluralistic and integrated pattern of the Chinese nation and deepen their identification with the community. This process faces pedagogical transformation issues such as semiotic translation, spatial adaptation, and meaning generation. Traditional classrooms can hardly present the integrity and immersiveness of Northern Frontier cultural symbols, whereas the Walking Ideological and Political Course, using spatial displacement as a cognitive medium, provides a new vehicle for cultural-educational transformation. Current explorations mostly remain at the empirical level and lack a systematic construction from semiotic translation to meaning generation. This study aims to reveal the coupling mechanism between cultural genes and teaching forms, promote the transformation of Northern Frontier cultural resources into ideological and political education resources, and fulfill the fundamental task of fostering virtue and nurturing talents.

1. The Logic of Educational Transformation of Northern Frontier Culture and the Value Foundation of the Walking Course

1.1 The Mechanism of Teaching Transformation of the Symbolic System of Northern Frontier Culture

The symbolic system of Northern Frontier Culture encompasses diverse carriers such as geographical landscapes, folk practices, artistic forms, and everyday utensils, and its meaning generation depends on specific regional contexts and community-shared interpretive rules. In the context of ideological and political education, the selection of cultural symbols must uphold the unity of ideological orientation and regional specificity, giving priority to symbols that reflect themes such as all ethnic groups jointly building China and jointly resisting foreign invasions, so that the teaching transformation process simultaneously becomes a value transmission process. The core task of teaching transformation lies in converting these symbol systems, originally embedded in daily life, from their natural state of presence into cognitively operable materials for the curriculum. This process follows the semiotic principle of the reorganization of signifier and signified, preserving the authentic core of the symbols while endowing them with teachable attributes that can be decomposed, compared, and reconstructed. The transformation mechanism comprises three basic operations: extracting the cognitive schemas behind the symbols, abstracting concrete forms into conceptual nodes, and establishing cross-contextual semantic association networks^[1-3].

In terms of specific operational practices, teaching transformation must address the layered nature of symbolic meaning and the receptive boundaries of learners. A modality conversion strategy is adopted to transform material symbols, such as traditional costume patterns and architectural components, into two-dimensional images, three-dimensional models, or digital twins, so as to accommodate the presentation requirements of different teaching scenarios. For behavioral symbols, such as festival ceremonies and labor techniques, action decomposition diagrams and process scripting are employed to preserve and re-enact their temporal structures. The transformation process also requires the establishment of meaning anchors to prevent symbols from drifting or becoming distorted after being detached from their original contexts, thereby ensuring the accuracy and comprehensibility of cultural information in instructional transmission, and guaranteeing that ideological and political education resources retain their value core throughout the transcoding process.

1.2 The Spatial Narrative and Embodied Experience Attributes of Walking-Based Teaching

Walking-based teaching takes bodily movement as the fundamental medium for cognitive development, and its core feature lies in the high synchronization between the teaching process and spatial displacement. Unlike traditional teaching in fixed settings, the Walking Ideological and Political Course enables learners to sequentially traverse multiple locations with cultural attachments, with each location corresponding to specific thematic nodes, and the walking route itself constitutes a hidden axis for plot progression. Spatial narrative is manifested here in that the sequential arrangement of locations forms a structure of initiation, development, turning point, and conclusion, while the length, direction, and topographic undulations of the route regulate the rhythm of attention and the distribution of information density. Space is no longer a passive backdrop but an active narrative element that participates in meaning construction.

The embodied experience attribute intensifies the degree of perceptual involvement during the learning process. Learners mobilize visual, auditory, tactile, and proprioceptive senses while walking, acquiring multi-channel information about terrain features, climatic conditions, material textures, and the like. This information mutually corroborates with the cultural symbol system, forming cross-modal cognitive imprints. Adjustments in body posture, such as climbing, pausing, and sidling, along with changes in energy expenditure, in turn affect the depth of information processing and the level of emotional arousal. The intermittent pauses in walking rhythm also provide natural temporal windows for reflective observation, allowing transient experiences to settle into storable memory content^[4]. This coupling relationship among body, space, and cognition constitutes the fundamental value basis that distinguishes the Walking Ideological and Political Course from static teaching. This precisely embodies the requirement of the ideological and political course to unify theoretical and practical dimensions, enabling theoretical cognition to acquire perceptual support through embodied experience, and thereby deepening it into value identification.

1.3 The Hierarchical Model of Internalization of Cultural Identity in the Dynamic Course

From the perspective of Marxist practical epistemology, the generation of cultural identity is rooted in human perceptual practical activities. In the Walking Ideological and Political Course, learners achieve an internalization ascent from cognitive identification to behavioral intention through the practice of spatial movement. This process can be modeled as four progressive levels: cognitive identification, emotional engagement, value negotiation, and behavioral intention. The cognitive identification level corresponds to learners' accurate recognition and factual memory of Northern Frontier cultural symbols. The emotional engagement level originates from the emotional connections established with scenes, other people, and one's own bodily state during the walking process, manifesting as emotional responses such as pleasure, awe, or a sense of belonging. The value negotiation level requires learners to compare, contrast, and adjust the cultural norms they encounter with their existing value systems, thereby forming new criteria for judgment. The behavioral intention level is manifested as the tendency to autonomously continue related cultural behaviors, such as recording, disseminating, or imitating, after the course ends, and on this basis, to strengthen identification with the sense of community for the Chinese nation. These four levels are not strictly linear, and field shifts within the dynamic course may trigger jumps or regressions among the levels.

The facilitating effects of the dynamic course on the above levels are manifested in multiple dimensions. The scene changes during the walking process create a continuous shift in cognitive frames of reference, compelling learners to repeatedly mobilize processing resources at different levels, thereby accelerating the transition from identification to emotional engagement. Multi-sensory immersion prolongs attention retention time and provides sufficient processing windows for value negotiation. In particular, when different locations present mutually corroborating or contradictory cultural expressions, cognitive conflicts trigger higher-order reflective activities. In addition, incidental and unanticipated events during walking, such as informal conversations with local residents or the discovery of unexpected landscapes, can generate intense emotional energy, and such energy can propel internalization across multiple levels. This model provides a theoretical tool for evaluating the teaching effectiveness of the Walking Ideological and Political Course that goes beyond knowledge testing, focusing on the deep-level changes in learners' cultural psychological structures, thereby transforming cultural knowledge into value identification, which is precisely the key link in fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue and nurturing talents in the ideological and political course^[5].

2. Integrated Framework Design for the Integration of Cultural Genes and the Walking Course

2.1 Coupling Conditions between Regional Cultural Traits and Mobile Teaching Forms

The core constituent elements of regional cultural traits include spatial distribution density, landscape legibility, and the seasonal rhythm of ritual behaviors. In the northern frontier region, cultural carriers present a settlement pattern characterized by the coexistence of scattered point distributions and linear corridors, which provides a natural path dependence for mobile teaching. The prerequisite for coupling lies in the matching between the temporal attributes of cultural traits and the diachronic structure of the Walking Course: periodic cultural activities are suitable for embedding into walking sequences with fixed rhythms, whereas incidental events require the reservation of dynamic response windows. The flexibility of mobile teaching forms is manifested in adjustable routes, variable stop durations, and switchable information presentation modes, constituting a buffering mechanism that absorbs random variations in regional culture.

The achievement of coupling conditions also requires satisfying the balance relationship between cultural information density and walking load. The abundance of cultural symbols per unit distance determines the design parameters of teaching rhythm: high-density areas require shortening moving intervals and increasing stop frequencies, while low-density areas fill cognitive gaps through landscape transition zones or reflective tasks. In addition, the match between terrain conditions and physical load also constitutes a coupling threshold: excessive physical exertion depletes cognitive resources and reduces the processing quality of cultural information, whereas overly gentle walking routes may weaken the arousal level of attention. The goal of coupling optimization is to find the optimal fit range between cultural presentation intensity and bodily engagement level, so that the two mutually reinforce rather than inhibit each other, thereby ensuring the effective transmission of educational information for consolidating the sense of community for the Chinese nation.

2.2 The Progressive Structural Sequence of Cultural Perception in the Walking Course

Cultural perception in the Walking Ideological and Political Course presents itself as a structured sequence that advances progressively from surface-level recognition to deep-level understanding. The first sequence is location identification, in which learners accomplish the boundary differentiation and type attribution of different fields, thereby forming geographical-cultural correspondences. The second sequence is feature extraction, in which learners extract recurring cultural features through observation and comparison. The third sequence is relational construction, in which learners integrate information from multiple locations and discover cross-scene cultural threads and evolutionary pathways. The ultimate goal of this progressive structure is to guide learners to ascend from cultural cognition to political identification with the sense of community for the Chinese nation, achieving the elevation from "knowing" to "believing."

The internal driving mechanism of the progressive structure originates from the spatial logic of the walking route. The organization of the route can be designed as radial, chain, or loop types, with different topological structures corresponding to different perceptual pathways: the radial type takes a core location as a reference point and radiates outward to several satellite points, which facilitates understanding the cultural hierarchical relationship between center and periphery; the chain type sequentially connects various locations along a linear corridor, which helps trace the transmission sequence of cultural elements; the loop type connects end to end, suitable for presenting cyclical cultural cycles^[6-8]. Transitional links are embedded between each perceptual sequence, used to organize the information already obtained and generate the problem orientation for the next stage. This progressive structure avoids the fragmentation of cultural cognition, making every stop during the walking process an organic slice of holistic understanding.

2.3 Collaborative Integration and Dynamic Adaptation Logic among Teaching Elements

The teaching elements involved in the Walking Ideological and Political Course include walking subjects (learners), moving routes, stop nodes, information carriers (graphics, audio-visuals, physical objects), and interaction rules. Collaborative integration requires these elements to form functionally complementary relationships along both the temporal and spatial axes. Stop nodes assume the function of high-density information input, during which information carriers play the mediating role of encoding and decoding; moving routes assume the functions of cognitive spacing and emotional incubation, during which information carriers shift to low-intensity prompts or background sounds, and walking subjects may engage in preliminary meaning negotiation through informal verbal communication. Interaction rules regulate the degree of openness of information input: highly structured rules are suitable for analyzing more difficult cultural concepts, whereas low-structured rules are appropriate for open sensory experiences or group discussions.

The dynamic adaptation logic focuses on parameter adjustments based on real-time feedback. Attention decay curves, energy consumption levels, and the frequency and types of questions serve as input indicators: when attention decay accelerates, the moving interval is shortened or unexpected nodes are introduced; when energy consumption is too high, the pace is adjusted and silent observation periods are increased; when questions are concentrated, the stop duration is extended and supplementary information is provided. Adaptation also needs to match differences in learning styles: visually oriented learners rely on image-based carriers, while kinesthetically oriented learners require the embedding of tactile operations. By establishing mapping rules between the state space of elements and adjustment actions, individualized adaptation is achieved while maintaining structural stability, with the deeper goal of facilitating the transformation from cultural knowledge to value identification^[9].

3. Strategies for Constructing Teaching Pathways and Operational Models

3.1 Reconstruction of Teaching Scenes and Spatial Activation Based on Cultural Geography

Cultural geographic conditions define the original boundaries of teaching scenes, encompassing terrain undulations, vegetation coverage, water system distribution, and the locational relationships of cultural heritage sites. Teaching scene reconstruction, while preserving key geographic features, transforms natural spaces into pedagogically oriented fields through the deployment of signage systems, path guidance, and information stations. The reconstruction process adheres to the principle of

preserving the spirit of place, maintaining the original perceptual qualities of the sites while embedding cognitive guiding devices, such as setting up observation platforms and comparative view corridors on stepped terrains, and inserting pause nodes along flow corridors to segment movement units, thereby serving the educational requirement of the ideological and political course to "moisten things silently" in nurturing students.

Spatial activation refers to the process by which idle or underutilized cultural geographic units regain their teaching functions. Activation strategies include functional superimposition and path weaving: functional superimposition attaches pedagogical attributes to original locations beyond their daily functions, such as converting a livestock watering point into a water-culture cognition station, thereby adding an information output dimension without altering the location's original state; path weaving connects isolated cultural nodes into a walking network with pedagogical logic by constructing short connecting trails or utilizing existing footpaths. The activation process controls the intensity of intervention to avoid excessive artificialization that would diminish the authenticity of original landscapes, maintains a continuous transition between teaching fields and everyday fields, and ensures that the goal of fostering virtue and nurturing talents is realized within authentic cultural contexts^[10].

3.2 Multimodal Encoding of Cultural Resources and Curriculum Embedding Approaches

Northern Frontier cultural resources are classified into material, behavioral, and environmental types according to carrier forms. Multimodal encoding establishes transformation rules for each type respectively: material resources are presented through a combination of images, three-dimensional models, and tactile replicas, preserving information on form, material, and color; behavioral resources are decomposed temporally through sequential photography or video, supplemented by motion trajectory diagrams and rhythm markers, so that dynamic processes can be repeatedly examined; environmental resources rely on landscape annotations and orientation symbols to make implicit spatial knowledge explicit. The encoding process sets cross-modal alignment anchors to form intertextual relationships.

Curriculum embedding adopts a tiered strategy: the foundational tier consists of original carriers along the route, through which learners acquire first-hand information via direct observation; the enhanced tier sets up information stations at nodes, providing multimodal encoded materials and comparative interpretations; the extended tier is stored in mobile terminals or handbooks for learners to access independently. The three tiers exhibit a decreasing temporal density and a progressively increasing spatial distance from the original sites, forming a spectrum from strong embedding to weak embedding. The timing of resource presentation needs to match the cognitive load curve: high-difficulty materials are arranged along sections with concentrated attention, while lightweight materials are distributed across transition segments, so as to maintain a balanced allocation of cognitive resources. The fundamental purpose is to effectively deliver the sense of community to students' minds and contribute to fostering virtue and nurturing talents.

3.3 Meaning Generation of Learning Subjects and Interactive Interpretive Pathways

Meaning generation is the process in which learners transform external cultural information into individual knowledge structures during the walking process. This process follows the basic assumption of constructivism, namely that meaning is not an entity inherent in cultural resources waiting to be extracted, but is dynamically produced through learners' interactions with scenes, carriers, and other people. From the perspective of Marxist practical epistemology, this is essentially a process in which learners ascend from perceptual cognition to rational cognition through walking practice. In the Walking Ideological and Political Course, the triggering conditions for meaning generation include changes in spatial reference, comparisons of multimodal information, and alterations in bodily states. When learners move from one location to another, the cognitive discrepancies caused by scene transitions give rise to problem awareness; when visual images and tactile models present different aspects of the same cultural symbol, the need for cross-modal integration drives the deepening of meaning; when physical fatigue or excitement changes the threshold of information processing, the intervention of emotional factors attaches personal value weights to meaning.

The interactive interpretive pathway provides a structured channel for meaning generation. This pathway establishes three forms of interaction: directed observation tasks between individuals and scenes, which require learners to complete descriptions, drawings, or records at specific locations,

thereby producing personalized initial texts; comparative dialogues within learning groups, in which participants take turns presenting their own records and pointing out differences, allowing interpretations from different perspectives to intersect; and indirect dialogues between learners and course designers through preset reflection cards, on which open-ended questions are printed to guide learners in comparing their own understandings with the course's preset knowledge framework. These three forms of interaction unfold sequentially along the walking sequence, with the output of each preceding interaction serving as the input material for the subsequent one, thus forming an interpretive chain. This chain does not pursue a single correct interpretation but presents the juxtaposition and overlapping of multiple understandings, shifting the cultural transmission function of the Walking Ideological and Political Course from one-way indoctrination to multi-directional generation. In the context of the ideological and political course, this interactive interpretation guides learners to autonomously construct their identification with the sense of community for the Chinese nation during the process of meaning generation, embodying the educational purpose of fostering virtue and nurturing talents.

Conclusion

This study focuses on the integration of Northern Frontier Culture into the "Walking Ideological and Political Course" in universities, and constructs a theoretical framework from semiotic translation to teaching operation, the essence of which is to consolidate the sense of community for the Chinese nation through walking practice. At the level of value foundation, a four-level model of cultural identity internalization is proposed based on Marxist practical epistemology. At the level of integrated framework, the coupling conditions between regional traits and mobile teaching are revealed, and a progressive sequence of cultural perception and a logic of dynamic adaptation among elements are designed. At the level of construction strategies, tiered embedding approaches of scene reconstruction, spatial activation, and multimodal encoding are proposed, along with an interactive interpretive pathway for meaning generation. This study takes fostering virtue and nurturing talents as its ultimate goal, and promotes the transformation of cultural resources into ideological and political education resources. Future research may empirically test the internalization model, explore the enhancement effects of digital technologies, and examine the cross-regional transferability of the framework.

Fund Projects

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