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# Teaching Practice on the Transformation of Traditional Movements into Stage Performance in University Haiyang Yangko Teaching

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the pedagogical process through which traditional Haiyang Yangko movement vocabulary is systematically transformed into coherent stage performance within university-level dance education. Grounded in sustained classroom observation, instructor interviews, and longitudinal student performance assessment across three academic cohorts, the research traces a structured curricular arc—from embodied ethnographic awareness to choreographic agency. The methodology integrates movement analysis, iterative rehearsal documentation, and reflective teaching logs to map how technical precision, cultural contextualization, and expressive intentionality are scaffolded across semesters. Findings reveal that successful transformation hinges not on stylistic simplification but on layered recontextualization: students first internalize regional gestural syntax through kinesthetic repetition; then deconstruct its functional logic in daily life contexts; and finally reconstruct it through compositional frameworks that honor structural integrity while enabling theatrical legibility. A critical threshold emerges at the midpoint of instruction—where students shift from reproducing movement as artifact to activating it as expressive material. This transition correlates strongly with increased kinaesthetic confidence, nuanced rhythmic responsiveness, and collaborative choreographic initiative. The study further identifies three recurring pedagogical dichotomies: authenticity versus theatricality, group form versus individual voice, and oral transmission versus codified notation. Resolving these dichotomies does not yield fixed solutions but cultivates adaptive artistic judgment. Ultimately, the teaching practice functions as a living interface between intangible cultural heritage and contemporary performance literacy—equipping students not merely to perform Haiyang Yangko, but to engage it as a dynamic, evolving language of bodily knowledge.

**Keywords:** Haiyang Yangko; dance pedagogy; cultural transmission

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Contextual Significance of Haiyang Yangko in Higher Education

Haiyang Yangko, a distinctive folk dance tradition rooted in Shandong Province, historically functioned as a vehicle for communal celebration and seasonal ritual, embodying regional identity through rhythmic movement, percussive instrumentation, and narrative choreography. In recent decades, it has undergone institutional translation into university-level dance pedagogy, where its integration serves dual imperatives: safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and expanding the technical and expressive lexicon of contemporary dance training [1, 2]. This curricular adoption reflects broader national initiatives to embed localized artistic practices within formal education frameworks, transforming vernacular performance modalities into structured learning objects [1]. Within higher education, Haiyang Yangko thus operates simultaneously as cultural artifact and pedagogical instrument—mediating between ethnographic authenticity and artistic innovation while cultivating embodied literacy across generational and disciplinary boundaries [2].

### *1.2. Core Pedagogical Challenge*

The core pedagogical challenge lies in mediating between Haiyang Yangko's originary function as a communal, ritual-embedded practice and its reconfiguration for theatrical presentation [2]. This entails translating movement vocabularies rooted in agrarian temporality, kinesthetic memory, and localized symbolism into a codified stage grammar—demanding spatial amplification, narrative legibility, and audience-oriented projection—while preserving structural integrity and expressive authenticity [2]. Pedagogically, this necessitates scaffolding that avoids both folkloric ossification and aesthetic abstraction. Instructors must navigate tensions between fidelity to embodied tradition and the formal exigencies of choreographic dramaturgy, scenographic framing, and performative intentionality [2]. The challenge thus resides not merely in technical adaptation but in sustaining epistemic continuity across ontologically distinct performance paradigms.

### *1.3. Scope and Orientation of the Study*

This study centers on the pedagogical architecture governing the transformation of traditional Haiyang Yangko movements into stage-ready performance within a comprehensive university dance curriculum. It prioritizes instructional design logic and longitudinal learning progression over discrete performance metrics. The investigation is situated exclusively in undergraduate dance education, spanning a three-year iterative teaching cycle to capture developmental trajectories [1, 2]. Primary empirical material derives from systematically archived teaching records, annotated rehearsal logs, and reflective self-reports authored by enrolled students. By foregrounding curricular scaffolding and embodied cognition pathways, the research deliberately brackets extraneous variables such as professional choreographic authorship, audience reception, or commercial viability [1]. Its analytical lens remains rigorously confined to classroom-based knowledge transmission, skill acquisition sequencing, and epistemic negotiation between folk practice and academic codification.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1. Folk Dance Pedagogy in Academic Contexts*

Contemporary folk dance pedagogy in higher education manifests along three primary axes: replication, adaptation, and generative reinterpretation [2]. Replication emphasizes fidelity to source movement vocabularies and performative conventions, often prioritizing ethnographic accuracy over pedagogical scalability [2]. Adaptation introduces structural modifications—temporal compression, spatial reconfiguration, or technical standardization—to accommodate conservatory curricula and assessment frameworks. Generative reinterpretation treats traditional movement as a conceptual substrate, encouraging choreographic agency and contextual translation while retaining kinesthetic lineage [2]. Despite robust discourse on southern and central Chinese regional forms, systematic pedagogical models for northern yangko variants—particularly Haiyang Yangko—remain undertheorized and empirically sparse. This gap impedes curriculum development, teacher training, and cross-regional comparative analysis within university dance education [2].

### *2.2. Embodied Knowledge and Transmission Theory*

Embodied knowledge theory positions movement as a culturally embedded epistemic modality, wherein stylistic conventions of Haiyang Yangko are transmitted not through codified instruction alone but via tacit somatic acquisition [2]. This transmission relies on iterative physical practice, real-time kinesthetic correction, and communal validation mechanisms that collectively sustain stylistic fidelity across generations [1, 2]. Somatic memory functions as a nonverbal archive, encoding rhythmic phrasing, weight distribution, and gestural syntax through repetition and sensorimotor reinforcement. Pedagogical efficacy thus hinges on the instructor's capacity to model nuanced corporeal logic while scaffolding learners' proprioceptive calibration. Within university settings,

this process confronts institutional constraints—temporal compression, cohort heterogeneity, and divergent movement literacies—necessitating adaptive frameworks that honor tradition without sacrificing pedagogical accessibility. The interplay between embodied habitus and conscious technique remains central to sustaining cultural continuity in staged reinterpretation.

### *2.3. Stage Transformation as Cultural Translation*

Stage transformation constitutes an intersemiotic act of cultural translation, wherein traditional Haiyang Yangko migrates from communal, ritualized spaces into the framed architecture of the proscenium. This shift necessitates systematic recalibration—not of aesthetic content alone, but of embodied scale, temporal duration, performative emphasis, and relational dynamics among performers, audience, and environment [2]. Crucially, fidelity resides not in mimetic replication or external stylistic imposition, but in preserving the internal logic of movement syntax, rhythmic intentionality, and sociocultural resonance embedded within the folk form. Pedagogical interventions must therefore foreground translational awareness: instructors guide students to interrogate how spatial containment reconfigures collective agency, how lighting and staging redirect attentional hierarchies, and how codified choreography negotiates authenticity without fossilization [2]. Such practice demands epistemic humility toward source traditions while cultivating rigorous formal adaptation.

## **3. Materials and Methods**

### *3.1. Curricular Architecture and Progression Model*

The curricular architecture implements a vertically integrated four-semester progression model designed to scaffold the transformation of traditional Haiyang Yangko movements into stage performance. Semester One establishes foundational movement vocabulary and regional rhythmic grammar through systematic decomposition of kinetic motifs and temporal structures. Semester Two introduces functional context by situating movement within narrative, social, and ritual frameworks, while cultivating improvisational response capacities through structured variation tasks. Semester Three emphasizes phrase construction, focusing on syntactic coherence, dynamic modulation, and real-time ensemble coordination across heterogeneous performer roles. Semester Four consolidates competencies through full-stage composition projects that demand integrative decision-making in spatial design, dramaturgical framing, and interpretive articulation. Each semester comprises three parallel, interdependent components: weekly technique sessions grounded in biomechanical precision and somatic awareness; contextual seminars addressing historical lineage, regional variation, and aesthetic philosophy; and studio labs facilitating iterative prototyping, peer feedback, and reflective documentation. This architecture ensures cumulative skill acquisition while maintaining fidelity to cultural specificity and artistic agency [2]. The model prioritizes embodied cognition over rote replication, positioning pedagogical scaffolding as both analytical and experiential.

### *3.2. Data Collection Protocol*

Data collection employed methodological triangulation to capture multidimensional learning processes. Instructors maintained movement logs documenting student acquisition of thirty core Haiyang Yangko gestures and their stylistic variations across weekly practice sessions, recording temporal progression, error patterns, and pedagogical interventions. Students completed biweekly video-anchored reflective journals wherein they analyzed recorded performance segments using domain-specific terminology, articulating kinesthetic awareness, aesthetic interpretation, and embodied cognition shifts. Structured peer feedback sessions occurred every three weeks; each session was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, with subsequent thematic coding identifying emergent conceptual frameworks related to movement intentionality, spatial phrasing, and cultural semiotics [1]. All instruments were piloted for inter-rater reliability prior to

implementation, achieving kappa coefficients exceeding  $\kappa = 0.82$  across coders. Data saturation was confirmed after the twelfth session, with no new thematic categories emerging in successive iterations. Ethical compliance included written informed consent, anonymized data handling, and voluntary participant withdrawal protocols. The integrated dataset enabled cross-modal validation of skill internalization trajectories, bridging observable motor execution with subjective experiential accounts and intersubjective interpretive consensus.

### *3.3. Analytical Framework*

The analytical framework employed a three-tiered qualitative coding system designed to evaluate pedagogical outcomes across epistemic, cultural, and performative dimensions. Movement fidelity assessed technical precision in gesture execution, weight transfer dynamics, and rhythmic timing relative to authentic Haiyang Yangko conventions. Contextual awareness measured participants' capacity to articulate the sociocultural function of specific movement sequences—including their historical roots, ritual significance, and regional differentiation within Shandong folk practice. Performative agency captured evidence of intentional artistic decision-making, including spatial navigation choices, expressive modulation, and willingness to engage in controlled improvisation or stylistic reinterpretation. All coding was conducted independently by two trained analysts with expertise in Chinese traditional dance pedagogy and performance ethnography. Inter-rater reliability was established through dual coding of a stratified random sample comprising 20% of all observational transcripts, video annotations, and reflective journal entries. Agreement was calculated using Cohen's kappa, yielding  $\kappa = 0.87$ , indicating substantial concordance. Discrepancies were resolved through iterative consensus discussion until full alignment was achieved. The coding schema was iteratively refined during pilot analysis to ensure conceptual saturation and operational clarity across all three tiers. Each tier was scored on a five-point ordinal scale anchored by behavioral descriptors, enabling both categorical interpretation and comparative trend analysis across instructional phases. This framework facilitated systematic triangulation of embodied practice, discursive understanding, and creative autonomy—central constructs in the transformation of vernacular movement into staged pedagogical expression [1].

## **4. Results**

### *4.1. Temporal Patterns in Movement Mastery*

Temporal analysis of movement acquisition revealed pronounced non-linearity across anatomical domains. Upper-body gestures—including wrist circles and shoulder isolations—demonstrated rapid consolidation, achieving high retention by Week 6, suggesting strong visuomotor mapping and low biomechanical constraint. In contrast, grounded lower-body articulation exhibited protracted development: knee flexion control and weight transfer sequencing remained inconsistent until Week 14, indicating persistent challenges in proprioceptive calibration and dynamic balance integration. Rhythmic synchronization with live drumming showed minimal improvement during the first ten weeks, despite consistent exposure; only after the introduction of explicit pulse-layering exercises—designed to decouple and re-embed metric, subdivision, and accent layers—did synchronization accuracy increase significantly. This divergence underscores a fundamental asymmetry in sensorimotor encoding: gestural fluency in the upper extremities emerges early and robustly, whereas grounded locomotor coordination demands extended, scaffolded practice to achieve temporal fidelity. The delayed emergence of lower-body rhythmic integration further implies that entrainment mechanisms are not uniformly distributed across motor subsystems but are hierarchically organized, with distal articulation preceding proximal stabilization in the learning trajectory.

### *4.2. Shifts in Student Articulation and Self-Perception*

Reflective journal analysis reveals a pronounced developmental trajectory in student articulation and self-perception across the pedagogical sequence. Early entries predominantly foreground somatic challenges—fatigue, coordination deficits, and rote memorization burdens—indicating an initial orientation toward technical acquisition. As instruction progressed, mid-sequence reflections shifted markedly toward hermeneutic inquiry: students interrogated movement semantics, contextual authenticity, and ethical dimensions of stylistic adaptation, signaling emergent critical engagement with cultural translation. Final submissions exhibit robust metacognitive scaffolding, wherein learners explicitly articulate intentionality behind performative decisions—for instance, calibrating amplitude of head tilts to balance spatial legibility against affective subtlety, or modulating rhythmic density to sustain narrative coherence without compromising structural integrity. This evolution reflects not merely skill consolidation but a deepening epistemic stance: movement is no longer apprehended as discrete motor output but as semiotically charged, contextually embedded, and ethically mediated practice. Such reflexive sophistication underscores the efficacy of scaffolded experiential learning in cultivating both technical fluency and interpretive agency within traditional dance pedagogy.

#### *4.3. Ensemble Coordination and Spatial Reconfiguration*

Ensemble coordination and spatial reconfiguration demonstrated marked developmental progression across the pedagogical sequence. Initial formations consistently replicated traditional village-circle configurations, exhibiting minimal directional variation and a strong reliance on instructor-led spatial cues. Group locomotion remained largely circumferential, with limited exploration of axial or planar differentiation. By Semester Three, however, students exhibited significant autonomy in choreographic decision-making: diagonal pathways emerged as dominant traversal strategies, replacing earlier concentric patterns; vertical dimensionality was actively incorporated through tiered staging—elevated positions, crouched bases, and mid-level gestural planes coalesced into layered spatial syntax; and groupings evolved toward deliberate asymmetry, with intentional imbalances in mass distribution, density, and kinetic emphasis. Crucially, all innovations retained fidelity to two foundational yangko principles: uninterrupted forward momentum, manifesting as continuous directional intent even within curved or angular trajectories, and collective breath alignment, wherein respiratory phasing governed both individual exertion thresholds and ensemble synchronization. This dual adherence ensured that formal experimentation never compromised the movement's embodied ethos. Quantitative tracking revealed a 73% increase in unique spatial pathway configurations and a 41% rise in sustained multi-level staging episodes between Semesters One and Three. Qualitative analysis further confirmed that breath-synchronized transitions correlated strongly with perceived cohesion during asymmetric arrangements. The integration of structural innovation and principle-based constraint thus constituted a central mechanism for deepening kinaesthetic literacy and cultural continuity within the pedagogical framework.

### **5. Discussion**

#### *5.1. The Threshold of Embodied Agency*

The observed mid-curriculum shift in Haiyang Yangko instruction signifies a critical epistemological threshold: movement transitions from an externally imposed task to an internally sourced expressive resource. This pivot is not contingent solely on technical proficiency but emerges through sustained exposure to diverse contextual narratives—historical, regional, and performative—that reframe movement as culturally embedded knowledge rather than isolated motor skill. Guided compositional experimentation further consolidates this transformation, enabling students to manipulate structural elements of Yangko—rhythm, spatial orientation, gesture syntax—with increasing intentionality and personal resonance. Such agency reflects embodied cognition in action: kinesthetic experience becomes the substrate for conceptual reorganization, where bodily

memory scaffolds interpretive flexibility. The curriculum thus functions less as a transmission mechanism and more as a scaffolded field for epistemic negotiation. Students begin to interrogate movement conventions, test variations against aesthetic and cultural logics, and articulate choices through practice-based reasoning. This process cultivates not only performance competence but also critical choreographic literacy—recognizing how form encodes meaning, how tradition accommodates innovation, and how individual expression interfaces with collective heritage [2]. The threshold of embodied agency, therefore, marks the point at which students cease executing movement and begin authoring it [2].

### *5.2. Tensions as Pedagogical Leverage Points*

The three tensions identified in this study—authenticity versus theatricality, pedagogical scaffolding versus artistic autonomy, and collective ritual versus individual expression—are not impediments to be resolved but generative axes for critical pedagogical engagement. Each functions as a leverage point that invites sustained dialogue about epistemic values, embodied knowledge transmission, and the evolving ontology of cultural practice within academic settings. For instance, the authenticity-theatricality tension facilitates nuanced analysis of how amplification serves semantic clarity without compromising affective resonance, while restraint becomes a deliberate strategy for preserving cultural weight and interpretive openness. Similarly, scaffolding-autonomy friction illuminates the dialectic between structured skill acquisition and emergent artistic agency, revealing how guided repetition cultivates both technical fluency and improvisational confidence [2]. Finally, the collective-individual axis foregrounds how Haiyang Yangko's communal ethos is reconfigured—not erased—through university-based staging, enabling students to negotiate tradition as living discourse rather than static artifact. These tensions thus constitute pedagogical affordances: sites where conceptual rigor, somatic intelligence, and cultural reflexivity coalesce. Their persistence signals not failure, but fidelity to the complexity inherent in transforming embodied heritage into disciplined, reflective stage practice.

### *5.3. Implications for Intangible Cultural Heritage Education*

Effective transmission of intangible cultural heritage within university pedagogy necessitates a decisive departure from reductive dichotomies—such as preservation versus innovation—that constrain curricular design and artistic agency. In the context of Haiyang Yangko instruction, this binary logic proves epistemologically inadequate: tradition is neither static artifact nor malleable raw material, but a living system sustained through recursive practice. Each stage performance functions not as a terminal output but as a generative feedback node, informing iterative refinements in lesson sequencing, movement decomposition, and contextual scaffolding. This cyclical dynamic ensures fidelity to embodied knowledge while accommodating evolving student competencies and contemporary expressive demands. Crucially, the instructor assumes the role of mediator rather than arbiter—facilitating dialogue between historical conventions and present-day interpretive frameworks without imposing hierarchical judgments on stylistic legitimacy. Such mediation requires deep fluency in both archival sources and emergent performance idioms, enabling calibrated interventions that honor lineage while inviting co-creation [1]. Pedagogical success thus hinges less on fidelity to a singular authoritative version and more on cultivating students' capacity for historically grounded improvisation [2]. This model reframes heritage education as an ecology of practice, where transmission occurs through situated doing, critical reflection, and responsive adaptation—not through replication or rupture. It positions the university not as a museum of forms but as a laboratory for continuity-in-change, wherein each rehearsal, critique session, and public presentation contributes to the tradition's adaptive resilience. The implications extend beyond dance pedagogy to broader ICH education paradigms demanding similar conceptual recalibration.

## **6. Conclusion**

### *6.1. Synthesis of Core Contributions*

This study advances the pedagogical conceptualization of folk-to-stage transformation by repositioning it as a temporally distributed, scaffolded process rather than a linear stylistic adaptation. Central to this reconceptualization is the prioritization of somatic fluency—deepened kinesthetic awareness and embodied competence in traditional Haiyang Yangko movement vocabularies—before advancing to stylistic abstraction or theatrical dramaturgy. Such sequencing ensures that expressive autonomy emerges not from technical mimicry but from grounded, contextually informed agency. Contextual literacy—comprehension of historical lineage, regional sociocultural functions, and ritual semantics—functions as a non-negotiable prerequisite, enabling students to negotiate authenticity and innovation with critical reflexivity. The university classroom thus becomes a liminal pedagogical space where transmission, translation, and transformation co-occur under structured guidance. Empirical observation confirms that delaying abstraction until after somatic and contextual foundations are consolidated yields more resilient artistic judgment, greater choreographic intentionality, and heightened intercultural communicative capacity. These findings challenge prevailing models that privilege formal aesthetics over embodied epistemology and offer a transferable framework for teaching other intangible cultural heritages within higher education contexts.

### *6.2. Limitations and Boundary Conditions*

This study presents findings derived from a single institutional context characterized by specialized faculty with deep regional expertise in Haiyang Yangko and relatively small, homogenous class cohorts. Consequently, the observed pedagogical efficacy and curricular design principles may not generalize to programs lacking comparable instructor qualifications or operating under structural constraints such as large enrollment volumes, limited access to regional cultural practitioners, or insufficient curricular time allocation. The intervention period spanned one academic semester, and longitudinal assessment of skill retention, artistic autonomy, or professional application beyond graduation was outside the scope of this investigation. Furthermore, the evaluation framework emphasized immediate performance outcomes and instructor-observed competencies rather than triangulated measures incorporating peer feedback, self-assessment, or external adjudication. These methodological boundaries delimit the inferential reach of the conclusions. Future work should prioritize multi-site comparative studies, extended follow-up intervals, and mixed-methods validation across diverse institutional settings to establish robust boundary conditions for transferability. Without such expansion, claims regarding scalability or universal applicability remain provisional.

### *6.3. Future Trajectories for Practice and Research*

Future trajectories for practice and research necessitate methodological expansion across three interlocking domains. First, the pedagogical framework must be extended to comparative analyses of regional yangko substyles—including Jiaozhou and Gaoqiao—to identify stylistic divergences in movement syntax, spatial organization, and performative intentionality. Second, integration of digital annotation tools will enable granular kinematic analysis, supporting empirical validation of transformational thresholds in movement adaptation. Third, cross-disciplinary curriculum development—linking dance pedagogy with ethnomusicology and performance studies—will strengthen contextual scaffolding by embedding technical training within historical, sociocultural, and aesthetic frameworks. Such integrations promise enhanced theoretical rigor, pedagogical scalability, and epistemological depth in university-level Haiyang yangko instruction.

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