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**An Analysis of the Use of Paper-Cutting Art in Art Education and Campus Culture  
in Rural Secondary Schools in Multi-Ethnic Regions: A Case Study of Daping  
Middle School in Wanshan District**

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**Abstract**

Chinese paper-cutting, a nationally recognized form of intangible cultural heritage, integrates aesthetic, folkloric, pedagogical, and cultural values. As such, it provides rural primary and secondary schools with a locally grounded resource for strengthening aesthetic education and sustaining the transmission of outstanding traditional Chinese culture. Daping Middle School in Daping Dong, Tujia, and Miao Township, Wanshan District, Tongren, Guizhou Province, is situated in a multi-ethnic cultural environment shaped by Dong, Tujia, Miao, Han, and other communities. Although the school has access to rich local heritage resources, it also faces structural constraints, including limited rural art education resources, discontinuities in ethnic cultural transmission, and an insufficiently distinctive campus culture. Drawing on a four-year school-based practice, the school has developed the “Yijian Yunyi” Paper-Cutting Club, compiled the first volume of Wanshan District Daping Middle School Paper-Cutting Course, and established a three-dimensional instructional system that integrates foundational classroom instruction, club-based advancement, and campus-cultural immersion. Traditional paper-cutting has been incorporated into regular Grade 7 art instruction and connected with local Nuo culture, ethnic customs, revolutionary culture, campus life, anniversary themes, and graduation culture. Using this curriculum as a case, the present study examines the implementation model of paper-cutting instruction in a rural multi-ethnic junior high school, analyzes its value for art education and campus culture development, identifies current limitations in curriculum development, classroom implementation, and cultural transformation, and proposes targeted optimization strategies. The study offers a practical reference for intangible-heritage-based aesthetic education, the cultivation of a strong sense of the Chinese national community, and the development of distinctive campus culture in comparable rural multi-ethnic schools.

**Keywords:** multi-ethnic regions; rural junior high school; paper-cutting art; art teaching; school-developed curriculum; campus culture; intangible cultural heritage transmission

## **Introduction**

### ***Policy Orientation Toward Aesthetic Education and Intangible Cultural Heritage Transmission***

In recent years, Chinese educational policy has repeatedly emphasized the need to strengthen school aesthetic education and to bring intangible cultural heritage into campus life. Policy documents such as *Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving School Aesthetic Education in the New Era* and implementation guidance on intangible cultural heritage in schools require primary and secondary schools to draw on local, rural, and ethnic cultural resources when developing school-based aesthetic curricula. These policies encourage the integration of traditional folk art into classroom teaching so that aesthetic education can nourish students' inner lives while enhancing cultural confidence and ethnic identity (Ministry of Education, 2020). Among folk art forms, paper-cutting is especially suitable for rural schools because it is widely known, inexpensive, technically accessible, and adaptable to ordinary classroom conditions. In ethnic regions, education aimed at fostering a strong sense of the Chinese national community also requires schools to transform local multi-ethnic cultural resources into integrative teaching materials, guiding students of different ethnic groups to understand cultural coexistence, mutual appreciation, and common development.

### ***Practical Limitations in Aesthetic Education in Rural Multi-Ethnic Junior High Schools***

Rural junior high schools in mountainous multi-ethnic areas of Southwest China commonly face shortages in aesthetic education resources. These shortages include insufficient professionally trained art teachers, limited standardized art materials, distance from museums and art institutions, and narrow channels for students to access high-quality art learning. At the curricular level, nationally unified art textbooks often privilege urban visual experience and do not always connect with the everyday life, ethnic customs, or local knowledge of Dong, Tujia, and Miao students. As a result, students' motivation for art learning can be weak. Many students also have only limited knowledge of their own ethnic heritage and of traditional Chinese folk art, leading to an intergenerational discontinuity in cultural

transmission. Meanwhile, campus culture in rural schools is often homogeneous and lacks distinctive cultural media that correspond to local ethnic characteristics and adolescent development. These limitations constrain the integrated educational effects of moral education and aesthetic education.

### ***Regional and Institutional Basis of the Case School***

Daping Middle School is located in Daping Dong, Tujia, and Miao Township, Wanshan District. It is a typical rural junior high school whose students include adolescents from Dong, Tujia, Miao, Han, and other communities. Local cultural resources include Tujia Nuo opera, Miao paper-cutting patterns, Dong brocade motifs, and other forms of folk visual art. These resources provide distinctive cultural material for the development of a paper-cutting curriculum. The school's paper-cutting club has operated steadily for four years and has accumulated a substantial body of classroom examples and student works. The school also offers regular paper-cutting school-based lessons for Grade 7 students with no prior training, supported by a seven-unit modular teaching guide. This structure links basic classroom learning, advanced club-based creation, and campus cultural display, thereby forming a replicable model of paper-cutting education in a rural multi-ethnic setting.

### **Research Significance**

#### ***Theoretical Significance***

This study contributes to research on intangible-heritage-based aesthetic education in rural junior high schools in Southwest China. It addresses the relatively underdeveloped intersection of paper-cutting skills, multi-ethnic local culture, rural junior high school art instruction, and campus culture development. By analyzing one school's curriculum development logic, the study clarifies how traditional folk art can support "fivefold education" and the cultivation of a strong sense of the Chinese national community in ethnic regions. It also adds a rural multi-ethnic perspective to the theory of school-based folk-art curricula.

### ***Practical Significance***

Using Daping Middle School's complete school-developed curriculum as the case, this paper summarizes a low-cost, feasible, and locally adaptive model of paper-cutting art instruction. The model provides comparable rural multi-ethnic schools with directly usable references for unit design, classroom practice, and the transformation of student works into campus culture. Paper-cutting lessons also create a platform for cultural exchange among students of Dong, Tujia, Miao, and Han backgrounds, while the use of student works in campus spaces helps the school form a distinctive cultural brand. In this sense, the curriculum integrates aesthetic education, moral education, and ethnic-cultural transmission.

### **Research Methods and Research Object**

#### ***Research Methods***

This study uses four main methods. First, the literature research method is used to review relevant studies and policy documents on intangible-heritage paper-cutting, rural aesthetic education, ethnic school-based curricula, and campus culture development. Second, the case analysis method is used to examine the seven-unit course structure of Wanshan District Daping Middle School Paper-Cutting Course (Volume I) and the four-year teaching practice of the "Yijian Yunyi" paper-cutting club. Third, textual analysis is used to analyze the school-developed textbook's unit design, class-hour arrangement, teaching objectives, creative themes, and achievement display system. Fourth, practice observation is used to reconstruct authentic teaching scenes from operational procedures, student works, and club-based outcomes in order to identify instructional strengths and remaining problems.

#### ***Research Object***

The core objects of this study are the Grade 7 school-based paper-cutting art course and the "Yijian Yunyi" paper-cutting club at Daping Middle School in Daping Dong, Tujia, and Miao Township in Wanshan District. The research materials include the complete school-developed teaching guide, the

four-class-hour unit model, and the campus paper-cutting cultural display system. The analysis covers three application dimensions: art classroom teaching, campus cultural environment construction, and the development of students' comprehensive literacy.

### **Conceptual Definitions**

Multi-ethnic rural junior high school refers to a rural lower-secondary school located in a township where ethnic minorities live in concentrated communities, where the student body includes several long-settled ethnic groups, and where educational conditions remain relatively limited. In this paper, the term specifically refers to Daping Middle School in Daping Township, Wanshan District, Tongren.

Paper-cutting art refers to a traditional folk-art technique that uses scissors, carving knives, Xuan paper, and cutting mats to produce two-dimensional hollowed-out images through folding, drawing, cutting, carving, and unfolding. It includes negative carving, positive carving, single-color paper-cutting, combined cutting and carving, and flannel-based cutting. Its motifs include auspicious patterns, ethnic designs, and images drawn from everyday life.

School-based art teaching refers to an expanded art curriculum that is developed by a school on the basis of national art standards and local cultural resources. In this study, the school-developed textbook functions as the main teaching carrier and introduces all Grade 7 students to basic paper-cutting techniques.

Campus culture refers to the full range of cultural carriers within the school, including classroom teaching culture, student club culture, campus visual environment, festival and anniversary culture, and graduation-related affective culture. This study focuses on the visible and participatory campus culture generated through the transformation of paper-cutting works.

## **Feasibility and Distinctive Advantages of Integrating Paper-Cutting Into Art Teaching in Rural Multi-Ethnic Junior High Schools**

### **Institutional Conditions: Low Cost and Compatibility With Rural School Resources**

Rural junior high schools often face limited art budgets and a shortage of specialized teaching tools. Paper-cutting has a low threshold for classroom implementation and is therefore highly compatible with rural school conditions. Essential tools include pointed scissors, small carving knives, rubber mats, red Xuan paper, colored cardstock, pencils, and staplers. These materials are inexpensive, reusable, and easy to store. Flannel materials are also resistant to fading and convenient for long-term preservation. The classroom space required is minimal: ordinary desks can support the complete process of drawing, cutting, and carving without the need for a specialized art studio.

The school-developed textbook distinguishes material-use standards for beginners. A beginning student uses only one to three sheets of Xuan paper for a single task and one to two pieces of flannel where relevant. Tools are centrally stored and reused, which addresses the budgetary limits of rural schools. The short learning cycle is another advantage. A complete simple work, such as a snowflake or a round floral pattern, can be finished within a single lesson. This rapid success experience reduces students' fear of art learning, increases classroom participation, and lowers the practical resistance to implementing art courses in rural contexts.

### **Learner Conditions: Alignment With the Cognitive and Developmental Characteristics of Multi-Ethnic Junior High School Students**

The course is aimed primarily at Grade 7 students who have just transitioned from primary school to junior high school. At this stage, students' manual abilities and aesthetic perception are developing rapidly, while concrete thinking remains prominent. Purely theoretical art appreciation is often less attractive to them than hands-on creation. Paper-cutting mobilizes fine motor movement through the

sequential actions of folding, drawing, cutting, and carving, which corresponds well to adolescents' interest in practical making.

Students in the local Dong, Tujia, and Miao communities are often familiar from childhood with ethnic embroidery, silver-ornament motifs, Nuo masks, and symmetrical or hollowed geometric patterns. Transforming these familiar visual symbols into paper-cutting materials lowers the threshold for understanding and creation. The curriculum also adopts differentiated tasks: basic units require simple round floral patterns, whereas advanced units invite students to design ethnic Nuo masks, campus landscapes, and creative name-based paper-cuts. This arrangement accommodates students with varied manual abilities and supports full participation. Since junior high school is also a key period for cultural identification and value formation, the auspicious meanings, revolutionary culture, and ethnic stories embedded in paper-cutting can function as moral education and ethnic-unity education through aesthetic experience.

### **Cultural Resources: A Local Multi-Ethnic Visual Repository**

Daping Township's long-term coexistence of Dong, Tujia, and Miao communities has produced rich local folk-art resources. These include Tujia Nuo masks and totemic symbols, Miao butterfly patterns and floral embroidery, Dong geometric brocade motifs, local rural landscapes, campus ginkgo trees and roses, and the Confucius statue on campus. Together, these materials form a distinctive creative repository for the school-based paper-cutting curriculum.

Unlike general paper-cutting textbooks that rely mainly on standard auspicious motifs, the school's curriculum includes a separate unit on the "campus where ethnic cultures meet." This unit explores local Nuo culture in Tongren through digital Nuo museum resources and Nuo opera videos. Complex traditional Nuo mask patterns are simplified and cartoonized so that junior high school students can convert them into paper-cutting designs. The classroom thereby becomes a platform for ethnic cultural exchange: Dong students share brocade patterns, Tujia students explain Nuo cultural meanings, and Miao

students introduce embroidery motifs. Through collaborative creation, students deepen cross-ethnic understanding and contribute to fostering a strong sense of the Chinese national community.

### **Curricular Sustainability: A Mature Framework Built on Four Years of Club-Based Practice**

Four years of paper-cutting club practice have provided a solid foundation for regular course implementation. The teaching cases, operational procedures, and creative themes have all been tested and revised through repeated classroom practice. The school-developed textbook is divided into seven progressive units, each consisting of four class hours. The sequence proceeds from cognitive introduction to life connection, revolutionary-culture education, anniversary-themed creation, ethnic culture, self-expression, and farewell emotions. This spiral structure moves from foundational skills to cultural inquiry and creative thematic production. It also corresponds to the five dimensions of junior high school art core literacy: image reading, artistic expression, aesthetic judgment, creative practice, and cultural understanding.

### **Layered Applications of Paper-Cutting in Art Teaching: The Daping Middle School-Based Curriculum**

The school has built a two-level teaching system that combines basic classroom popularization with club-based advanced development. All Grade 7 students take a compulsory school-based paper-cutting course, while students with stronger interest and ability join the “Yijian Yunyi” Paper-Cutting Club for deeper creation. These two pathways form a complete teaching cycle for the use of paper-cutting techniques in art education.

#### **Level One: Modular Classroom Teaching for All Grade 7 Students**

The seven textbook units follow a progressive order. Each unit consists of four class hours and uses a standardized process of skill learning, cultural interpretation, thematic creation, and achievement display.

The units cover six teaching dimensions: basic paper-cutting, life aesthetics, revolutionary culture, ethnic culture, campus culture, and affective creativity.

### ***Unit 1: Understanding Paper-Cutting—Standardized Instruction in Basic Techniques***

The first unit introduces students with no prior training to paper-cutting. It lays the foundation for artistic expression through four lessons: the history of paper-cutting, the special language of paper-cutting, the use of basic tools, and beginner-level cutting, carving, or combined cutting and carving. In the appreciation component, students learn the historical development of paper-cutting from its early emergence through its development in the Sui and Tang dynasties, its flourishing in the Ming and Qing dynasties, and its modern innovation. They compare northern and southern styles and analyze the visual language of homophonic meanings, symbolic objects, auspicious motifs, and sacred imagery. In the operational component, the teacher explains the use of scissors, carving knives, mats, Xuan paper, flannel, and staplers; distinguishes cutting from fine carving; and teaches the five basic actions of folding, drawing, cutting, carving, and unfolding. Students practice two-fold, three-fold, and four-fold designs and complete standardized snowflake or floral works. Assessment focuses on line fluency, compositional integrity, and tool-use norms, helping students build confidence through visible progress.

### ***Unit 2: Paper-Cutting and Me—Transforming Campus Scenery Into Paper-Cutting Designs***

The second unit connects paper-cutting with realistic art creation and asks students to transform actual campus scenery into paper-cutting motifs. The core teaching points include negative and positive carving, extraction of natural and geometric patterns, and four compositional principles: extending the image to the edges, combining points, lines, and planes, enriching content, and maintaining continuity even when lines are visually interrupted. Students observe the campus environment and draw from seasonal scenes such as spring peach blossoms, summer roses, autumn ginkgo leaves, winter snow, and the campus Confucius statue. Bright daytime scenes are often expressed through positive carving, while moonlit or quiet scenes may use negative carving to create atmosphere. This process combines outdoor

observation, form simplification, and hollowed paper-cutting techniques, thereby compensating for the limited availability of outdoor art-sketching courses in rural schools.

### ***Unit 3: Revolutionary-Themed Art—Integrating Paper-Cutting With Red-Culture Moral Education***

The third unit creates an interdisciplinary paper-cutting classroom based on revolutionary-culture content from Chinese, history, and art textbooks. Its process involves three steps. First, Chinese classes explore revolutionary poetry, history classes examine local red stories, and art classes appreciate revolutionary-themed paper-cutting works. Second, students transform their understanding into visual sketches and use paper-cutting principles to simplify and optimize the image. Third, students complete revolutionary-themed paper-cutting works and explain their creative ideas and personal reflections. Through revolutionary figures, revolutionary scenes, and revolutionary slogans, the unit links hollowed paper-cutting art with patriotic spirit and broadens the practice of red aesthetic education in rural junior high schools.

### ***Unit 4: Encountering the 50th Anniversary—Paper-Cutting for Campus-Themed Cultural and Creative Design***

The fourth unit emphasizes the practical and design-oriented transformation of paper-cutting. With the school's 50th anniversary as an authentic project, students engage in paper-cutting sketch collection, pattern processing, stage display, and cultural and creative product design. The unit guides students beyond flat decorative paper-cutting toward applications such as scarves, bookmarks, clothing decoration, accessories, cards, and commemorative artworks. By integrating anniversary symbols, campus scenery, and ethnic motifs, students turn paper-cutting into a form of campus cultural design while developing design thinking and affection for their school.

### ***Unit 5: A Campus Where Ethnic Cultures Meet—Integrating Local Multi-Ethnic Intangible Heritage***

The fifth unit is the curriculum's most distinctive module. It explores local Tujia Nuo culture and combines it with Dong and Miao motifs. The instructional sequence includes tracing the history of Nuo

culture, appreciating local Nuo opera resources in Tongren, creatively designing cartoonized Nuo-mask paper-cuts, and producing integrated ethnic patterns. Using digital museum materials and Nuo opera videos, students deconstruct complex traditional mask motifs and simplify them into designs that match their cutting ability. They also integrate Miao butterfly patterns and Dong geometric brocade motifs. Through group cooperation, students from different ethnic backgrounds share visual symbols from their own communities and create integrated works, thereby learning cultural coexistence through artistic practice.

#### ***Unit 6: A Gift for Myself—Personalized Creative Expression Through Paper-Cutting***

The sixth unit focuses on individual emotional expression through name-based creative paper-cutting. Students integrate natural, geometric, and continuous patterns while considering the strokes of their own names, their personality traits, and their aspirations. The textbook offers differentiated design advice: names with simple strokes, open or scattered structures, and enclosed structures may use different combinations of positive carving, negative carving, and border motifs. Evaluation combines self-assessment, peer assessment, and teacher feedback across composition, pattern matching, craftsmanship, and emotional expression. This model respects student individuality and shifts the classroom away from mechanical imitation toward creative self-expression.

#### ***Unit 7: A Farewell Gift—Paper-Cutting as Affective Cultural-Creative Practice***

The seventh unit anticipates students' three-year junior high school experience by using paper-cutting to prepare graduation-related cultural and creative products. Items include bookmarks, three-dimensional cards, and silhouette-based memory pieces. The unit reduces technical difficulty and emphasizes emotional narration. Students use simple motifs to record friendships and campus memories, transforming paper-cutting into a carrier of adolescent emotion and a medium for learning gratitude, memory, and healthy emotional expression.

*Summary of the Seven-Unit Classroom Structure*

| Unit | Theme                       | Main Teaching Focus                                                                   | Educational Function                                |
|------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | Understanding paper-cutting | History, visual language, tools, folding, cutting, carving, and basic floral patterns | Foundational artistic expression                    |
| 2    | Paper-cutting and me        | Campus observation, scenery transformation, positive/negative carving                 | Life-oriented aesthetic experience                  |
| 3    | Revolutionary-themed art    | Revolutionary stories, revolutionary imagery, revolutionary-themed paper-cutting      | Patriotism and moral education                      |
| 4    | 50th anniversary            | Campus symbols, bookmarks, cards, cultural and creative design                        | Project-based design practice and school identity   |
| 5    | Ethnic cultures meet        | Nuo masks, Miao motifs, Dong brocade patterns, group creation                         | Ethnic understanding and shared community awareness |
| 6    | A gift for myself           | Name-based design and personal motifs                                                 | Self-expression and creativity                      |
| 7    | Farewell gift               | Graduation bookmarks, cards,                                                          | Affective education and gratitude                   |

| Unit | Theme | Main Teaching<br>Focus       | Educational<br>Function |
|------|-------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
|      |       | silhouettes, memory<br>works |                         |

### **Level Two: The “Yijian Yunyi” Paper-Cutting Club as an Advanced Pathway**

While the basic classroom introduces all students to paper-cutting, the club provides differentiated advancement for students who show stronger interest and technical ability. Drawing on four years of practice, the club expands beyond flat paper-cutting into three advanced directions. First, students cooperate to create large multi-ethnic scrolls that integrate Tujia Nuo masks, Miao embroidery, Dong brocade, campus scenery, and revolutionary elements. This trains teamwork, overall composition, and large-format visual organization. Second, students transform paper-cutting patterns into cross-media cultural and creative products, including canvas bags, bookmarks, greeting cards, and clothing decorations. Third, students use digital museums and pattern repositories to develop preliminary design ideas before completing offline cutting and carving. Club outcomes are regularly displayed in the school exhibition area and selected works are submitted to district and county-level student art competitions, providing rural students with a broader platform for artistic visibility.

### **Interdisciplinary Integration of Paper-Cutting Teaching**

The paper-cutting classroom is not confined to art instruction. Its cultural richness supports interdisciplinary learning. In Chinese language classes, students analyze poems, idioms, and folk stories associated with paper-cutting motifs and create paper-cutting illustrations for literary texts. In history classes, the history of paper-cutting is connected to ancient customs, ethnic cultures, and local revolutionary stories. In mathematics, folding and symmetrical round-flower designs help students understand axial symmetry, rotation, and translation. In morality and law courses, multi-ethnic paper-cutting works support ethnic-unity education, while revolutionary-themed works support patriotism and

civic values. In this way, paper-cutting functions as an integrated carrier of aesthetic education, moral education, and intellectual development within the limited curricular resources of a rural junior high school.

### **Multiple Pathways for Applying Paper-Cutting to Campus Culture Construction**

Campus culture functions as an implicit aesthetic classroom. Daping Middle School transforms student and teacher paper-cutting works into visible cultural carriers across school spaces. The school has developed a three-dimensional paper-cutting campus culture system consisting of static environmental culture, dynamic activity culture, and long-term achievement culture. This system extends paper-cutting beyond the classroom and makes it a distinctive school cultural brand.

#### **Static Visual Culture: Creating an Immersive Aesthetic Environment**

First, the school designs corridor and hallway paper-cutting walls according to the seven course units. One floor displays paper-cutting history and basic auspicious patterns; another displays campus scenery and anniversary-themed works; another presents Tujia Nuo culture and multi-ethnic integrated designs; and another displays revolutionary-themed, name-based, and graduation-related works. These walls are updated regularly with student works from each unit, allowing students to encounter peer creations in daily movement through the school.

Second, each class establishes a small paper-cutting corner that displays class-level works. The “Yijian Yunyi” Paper-Cutting Club room includes tiered display shelves showing floral designs, ethnic Nuo masks, cultural and creative products, tools, Xuan paper, and other materials. It functions as a miniature campus workshop for intangible heritage, allowing students to observe and practice during free time.

Third, selected paper-cutting works are framed and placed in the gatehouse, library, dining hall, meeting rooms, publicity boards, and other public spaces. Student-designed ginkgo, rose, and campus-

landscape patterns are also used in campus signage and visual decoration. These transformations reduce the monotony and homogeneity of rural campus environments and create a school visual culture with both ethnic features and adolescent vitality.

### **Dynamic Thematic Activity Culture**

After each four-class-hour unit, classes hold small exhibitions in which students display their works and explain their creative thinking. At the end of each semester, the school organizes a campus paper-cutting art festival with exhibition areas for basic floral patterns, red themes, ethnic Nuo culture, anniversary cultural and creative products, and graduation souvenirs. Student docents from different ethnic backgrounds introduce the works and their cultural stories, making the exhibition an all-student campus art event.

The school also uses paper-cutting in anniversary and festival activities. During the 50th anniversary, students created paper-cutting bookmarks and decorative works as commemorative gifts. During Spring Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, National Day, and revolutionary-culture commemorations, students create corresponding works to decorate the campus. During ethnic festivals, students create designs integrating Dong, Tujia, and Miao motifs and participate in cultural sharing activities. The seventh unit also supports a graduation-season gift culture in which graduating students make bookmarks and cards for peers and teachers, while younger students create works to welcome or bless graduates.

### **Long-Term Achievement Culture and Transmission Mechanisms**

The school-developed textbook reserves blank pages at the end of each unit for student works, so that each cohort's outcomes can be preserved in bound form as a campus paper-cutting archive. Outstanding cases can be used to compile a second volume of the school-developed textbook, supporting long-term curricular iteration. The school also preserves bookmarks, flannel works, anniversary designs, Nuo-mask cultural products, and other physical objects as campus cultural collections for parent open days and external exchanges. Finally, the school has begun to build a transmission ladder in which senior club

members assist younger students during after-school service and club activities. This creates an internal mechanism through which paper-cutting skills and ethnic cultural knowledge are passed from cohort to cohort.

### **Paper-Cutting and Campus Ethnic-Unity Culture**

For a rural school with a multi-ethnic student body, paper-cutting has become a key cultural carrier for fostering a strong sense of the Chinese national community. Exhibitions and activities encourage students to combine Dong brocade geometry, Tujia Nuo totems, and Miao butterfly patterns within the same work. A dedicated “multi-ethnic family” display area presents collaborative works, and cultural activities include ethnic-pattern sharing sessions. Through these practices, students explain their own communities’ customs to peers and recognize the beauty of cultural coexistence. Paper-cutting thereby becomes a practical medium for reducing cultural distance and cultivating mutual appreciation.

### **Educational Value of Applying Paper-Cutting in Art Teaching and Campus Culture**

Based on four years of curriculum practice at Daping Middle School, paper-cutting has produced value in five interrelated domains: aesthetic education, moral education, cultural transmission, labor education and psychological development, and school brand construction. These values support the broader goal of integrated education in rural junior high schools.

#### **Aesthetic-Education Value**

First, continuous practice in folding, drawing, cutting, and carving strengthens students’ fine-motor modeling ability and helps them master the folk-art visual language of symmetry, hollowing, positive and negative carving, and point-line-plane composition. Second, systematic appreciation of historical and contemporary paper-cutting, regional styles, and multi-ethnic motifs improves students’ aesthetic perception and judgment. Third, the progression from imitation to independent design of campus scenery, ethnic Nuo masks, and creative names encourages autonomous thinking and creative practice. Fourth,

paper-cutting broadens rural students' knowledge of folk art and connects them to local Dong, Tujia, and Miao intangible cultural heritage.

### **Moral-Education Value**

Revolutionary-themed paper-cutting makes revolutionary history and patriotic spirit visible and tactile. The cutting and carving process requires patience, concentration, care, and responsibility, while tool organization and workspace cleaning cultivate work habits. Anniversary and graduation paper-cutting foster affection for the school, gratitude to teachers, and care for peers. Multi-ethnic integrated works guide students to respect cultural differences, understand the pluralistic unity of Chinese culture, and strengthen a shared sense of national community.

### **Cultural-Transmission Value**

The curriculum introduces all Grade 7 students to the history, skills, and cultural meanings of Chinese paper-cutting, responding to the problem of aging folk-art inheritors and weakened youth transmission. It also transforms local Tujia Nuo culture, Miao motifs, and Dong visual patterns into classroom-suitable design materials, bringing local ethnic heritage back into young people's field of vision. Through making, appreciating, and displaying works, students experience the value of their hometown culture and develop cultural confidence.

### **Campus-Culture Value**

Many rural junior high schools lack distinctive and sustainable cultural carriers. The Daping model uses four years of club practice and a seven-unit school-developed textbook to build a stable campus paper-cutting culture system across instruction, environmental design, thematic events, and archival preservation. Because paper-cutting is inexpensive and sustainable, it is especially suitable for rural schools with limited funding and can help form a distinctive "paper-cutting plus multi-ethnic culture" campus brand.

## **Comprehensive Practice and Psychological-Health Value**

After-school service in rural junior high schools is often limited in content. Paper-cutting classes and club activities offer students a high-quality practical option. The immersive and therapeutic nature of paper-cutting allows students to relieve academic pressure through concentration and to gain a strong sense of achievement when a work is completed. Collaborative creation also provides communication opportunities for introverted students and can reduce social timidity, thereby supporting adolescent psychological development.

## **Practical Problems in Implementing Paper-Cutting Teaching and Campus Culture**

### **Weak Professional Teaching Capacity**

The school currently relies mainly on one art teacher to develop the school-developed curriculum, teach classes, guide the club, and organize campus cultural displays. There is limited collaboration with paper-cutting inheritors or specialists in ethnic folk art. Although the teacher has accumulated four years of practice, systematic training in folk paper-cutting, Tujia Nuo culture, and Miao-Dong embroidery motifs remains insufficient. This limits deeper cultural interpretation and advanced guidance for ethnic-integrated creation. The absence of a dedicated paper-cutting teacher also disperses instructional energy and constrains individualized guidance.

### **Low Digitalization of Curriculum Resources**

Current materials rely mainly on printed textbooks, teacher-taken campus photographs, and offline Nuo opera videos. The school lacks a standardized digital repository of ethnic motifs, complete digital teaching materials from online Nuo-culture museums, and digital tools for assisting paper-cutting design. Multimedia equipment in rural schools is often outdated, which limits immersive digital heritage appreciation. Student works also lack systematic digital archiving and online display, restricting their circulation beyond the campus.

### **Limited Transformation Into Campus Cultural-Creative Products**

At present, campus paper-cutting culture is still dominated by flat paper displays. Cultural-creative transformation remains limited to simple bookmarks and greeting cards. Deeper integration with school uniforms, campus signage, wall design, stage backgrounds, or other cultural products has not yet formed a standardized series. Because professional design guidance is limited, students' cultural and creative products may be repetitive, and public dissemination is mostly limited to internal school exhibitions rather than township or district-level cultural spaces.

### **Insufficient Home-School-Community Transmission**

Most teaching and cultural activities occur within the school. Parents in rural communities may not fully recognize the educational value of paper-cutting or intangible heritage aesthetic education. The school has not yet built regular parent open days, family paper-cutting tasks, or parent-child activities. Consequently, the transmission chain of school teaching, family practice, and village-community dissemination remains incomplete, limiting the broader revitalization of local multi-ethnic intangible cultural heritage.

## **Strategies for Optimizing Paper-Cutting Art Teaching and Campus Culture Development**

### **Build a Dual-Teacher Team of School Teachers and External Heritage Inheritors**

First, local rural art teachers should receive regular specialized training in paper-cutting, Tujia Nuo mask patterns, and Miao-Dong embroidery motifs. Cooperation with district and county cultural centers and intangible heritage offices can provide hands-on workshops. Second, local Nuo opera and folk paper-cutting inheritors should be invited to school for long-term instruction, such as one thematic practical lesson per month. They can explain the cultural meanings of ethnic motifs and guide advanced multi-ethnic paper-cutting creation. Third, surrounding rural multi-ethnic schools can form a paper-cutting art

instruction-research community to share lesson plans, cases, and school-developed textbook resources, thereby reducing the burden on a single school.

### **Use Digital Tools and Build a Local Ethnic Motif Resource Repository**

The school should establish a digital resource repository of local multi-ethnic paper-cutting materials, including high-resolution drafts of Tujia Nuo masks, Miao butterfly motifs, Dong brocade geometry, campus scenery, and revolutionary-culture elements. These resources can be stored on campus multimedia devices for classroom appreciation and design reference. Online digital museums, intangible heritage exhibitions, and short documentaries can be used to compensate for the lack of nearby art institutions. Outstanding student works should also be scanned and archived in an online exhibition platform open to parents and the township community. Simple digital drawing tools may support preliminary design before students complete traditional manual cutting.

### **Expand Campus Applications and Develop a Cultural-Creative Brand**

The school can apply student paper-cutting motifs to uniforms, campus tote bags, notebooks, publicity boards, wall paintings, and art-festival stage backgrounds to form a unified visual brand. Cultural-creative products can be developed at different levels: basic bookmarks and cards for all students, flannel ornaments and decorative products for club members, and higher-level souvenirs in cooperation with local cultural and creative workshops. The school can also send outstanding multi-ethnic works to township cultural stations or district art museums and participate in ethnic festival exhibitions, allowing campus paper-cutting culture to radiate into the local community.

### **Establish Home-School-Community Collaborative Transmission**

The school should design parent-child paper-cutting homework for traditional festivals and ethnic festivals, encouraging students and parents to create auspicious or ethnic motifs together and then exhibit them at school. Regular parent open days can invite parents to observe paper-cutting lessons and learn

about the value of intangible heritage and local ethnic culture. The paper-cutting club can also enter village communities to make festival window decorations or ethnic patterns for residents. Through these activities, a three-part transmission mechanism involving school, family, and community can be formed.

### **Iterate the School-Based Curriculum and Improve Differentiated Progression**

On the basis of the current first volume and its seven units, the school should continue collecting classroom cases, refine the Nuo culture and multi-ethnic integration units, and add modules on digital paper-cutting creativity and cultural and creative design. Teaching goals should be further differentiated for beginners and advanced club members. More challenging tasks, such as ethnic motif integration, large thematic scrolls, and digital paper-cutting design, can help build a more complete curriculum that better fits the learning conditions of rural multi-ethnic students.

## **Conclusion and Outlook**

### **Conclusion**

This paper has examined four years of paper-cutting curriculum practice at Daping Middle School in Daping Dong, Tujia, and Miao Township in Wanshan District. The case shows that paper-cutting is low-cost, easy to implement, and highly compatible with the conditions of rural multi-ethnic junior high schools. Local Dong, Tujia, and Miao heritage motifs provide irreplaceable teaching materials, and a two-level system of basic classroom teaching and club-based advancement is highly feasible. The seven-unit modular school-developed curriculum follows a spiral logic of cognition, technique, life, moral education, ethnicity, creativity, and emotion. It integrates paper-cutting with revolutionary culture, local Nuo culture, campus anniversary themes, and graduation emotions, and it offers a standardized teaching model for Grade 7 students in Southwest China's rural multi-ethnic schools.

The case further demonstrates that paper-cutting can empower campus culture through static visual environments, dynamic activities, long-term archives, and ethnic-unity culture. It produces educational

value in aesthetic education, moral education, intangible heritage transmission, labor education, psychological development, and school brand construction. However, the model still faces constraints in teacher capacity, digital resources, cultural and creative transformation, and home-school-community collaboration. These challenges can be addressed through dual-teacher teams, digital resource repositories, campus cultural and creative branding, and collaborative transmission mechanisms.

## **Outlook**

In the broader context of promoting rural aesthetic education, bringing intangible cultural heritage into schools, and fostering a strong sense of the Chinese national community, paper-cutting art instruction in rural multi-ethnic junior high schools has considerable potential. Daping Middle School can continue to refine its school-developed curriculum, deepen the creative integration of Tujia Nuo culture and Miao-Dong motifs, promote digital paper-cutting teaching, expand campus cultural and creative branding, and build collaborative transmission among school, family, and community. Its four-year practice can also be summarized and shared with neighboring rural multi-ethnic schools as a replicable, low-cost model for intangible-heritage-based aesthetic education and distinctive campus culture development.

With a pair of scissors and a sheet of red paper, Chinese paper-cutting can take root in rural multi-ethnic campuses. Through the craft of the fingertips, students inherit Chinese cultural memory, encounter the beauty of their hometown, and recognize the coexistence of multiple ethnic cultures. In this process, Dong, Tujia, Miao, and Han adolescents can grow into young inheritors of outstanding traditional Chinese culture and local multi-ethnic heritage, realizing the educational ideal of nurturing people through beauty and culture.

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### Appendix: Visual Materials From the School-Based Paper-Cutting Practice

The following figures preserve the visual evidence embedded in the original manuscript. Captions are descriptive because the source file did not provide formal figure numbers for all images.



*Figure A1. Paper-cutting workshop and classroom materials used in the school-based practice.*



*Figure A2. Students participating in paper-cutting practice in an ordinary classroom.*



*Figure A3. Classroom-based paper-cutting activity with students working at their desks.*



Figure A4. Student sketch transforming campus scenery into a paper-cutting design.



*Figure A5. Completed student paper-cutting work based on campus scenery.*



*Figure A6. Student work integrating multi-ethnic visual symbols and thematic imagery.*



*Figure A7. Framed circular paper-cutting works using campus and auspicious motifs.*



*Figure A8. Paper-cutting works showing character imagery and ethnic-style visual design.*



*Figure A9. Ethnic-style paper-cutting design based on costume and mask imagery.*



*Figure A10. Simple repeated motif used for foundational paper-cutting training.*



*Figure A11. Paper-cutting works displayed on a campus exhibition wall.*



山河在，不愁草木不生，壮志在，不愁事业不成  
——大坪中学

*Figure A12. Student works reflecting labor, auspicious, and festive themes.*



*Figure A13. Revolutionary-themed paper-cutting work used for moral and patriotic education.*



*Figure A14. Circular floral paper-cutting work showing symmetrical design.*



*Figure A15. Student engaged in detailed paper-cutting practice.*



*Figure A16. Paper-cutting representation of a traditional architectural form.*



*Figure A17. Framed paper-cutting work used in the school's display area.*



*Figure A18. Paper-cutting bookmarks and small cultural and creative products.*



*Figure A19. School 50th-anniversary paper-cutting cultural and creative design.*



*Figure A20. Anniversary-themed student paper-cutting work.*



Figure A21. Additional anniversary paper-cutting design for campus culture.



Figure A22. Campus display of a paper-cutting club and achievement wall.



Figure A23. Paper-cutting materials and visual displays used for school exhibitions.

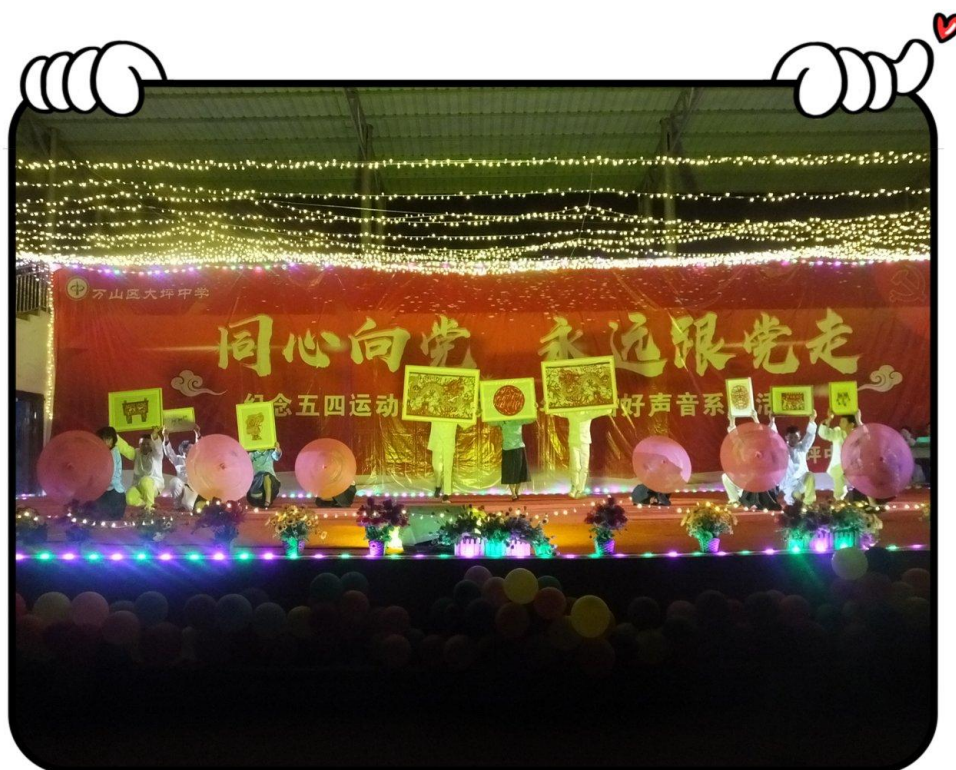


Figure A24. Campus cultural display area for paper-cutting works.



Figure A25. Digital image or poster related to paper-cutting cultural display.



Figure A26. Student or teacher paper-cutting demonstration scene.



*Figure A27. Classroom or exhibition scene associated with the paper-cutting curriculum.*



*Figure A28. Supplementary visual material from the original manuscript.*



*Figure A29. Supplementary visual material from the original manuscript.*