

# Exploration and Practice in Cultivating Interdisciplinary Talents for Education Tourism from the Perspective of Integrating "Tourism + Education"

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**Abstract:** *As a new integrated format combining culture, tourism, and education, education tourism urgently requires interdisciplinary talents. In response to problems in higher education in tourism, such as disconnection from industry practices, disciplinary barriers, and a lack of educational theory, relevant institutions have promoted a "Tourism + Education" dual-discipline integration reform based on theories like constructivism and industry-education integration. By constructing a "Three-in-One" collaborative education model that integrates "theory with practice, competition with innovation, and research with application," they have restructured the curriculum system, implemented immersive practices, promoted competition and innovation, developed micro-majors, co-built research platforms, and served industrial applications. This has resulted in mature experience with dual-discipline integration as the core, competition-innovation-research-application as the pathway, and ecosystem construction as the guarantee. This approach has improved the quality of talent cultivation, providing practical reference and talent support for professional innovation and the development of the local study travel industry.*

**Keywords:** *Tourism+Education; Dual-Discipline Integration; Education Tourism; Interdisciplinary Talents for Education Tourism*

## 1. Introduction

With the rapid expansion of the education tourism market, the industry has raised a demand for interdisciplinary talents who are "knowledgeable in both tourism and education." However, traditional tourism-related majors have long focused on cultivating skills for conventional sectors such as travel agencies and scenic spots, lacking a solid foundation in educational theory. This has resulted in students who "can manage operations but cannot teach," making it difficult for them to meet the practical needs of organizing and implementing education tourism activities.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism's Notice on Promoting the Healthy Development of education tourism Business in Travel Agencies explicitly states that "support should be given to qualified schools in offering majors and courses related to education tours."<sup>[2]</sup> In this context, since 2017, the College of Tourism and Service Management at Chongqing University of Education has proactively aligned itself with emerging industry trends. Leveraging the advantages of its educational discipline as a teacher-training institution, the college has pioneered the integration of "tourism + education" dual-disciplinary resources into its tourism management talent cultivation program.

## 2. Conceptual framework

### 2.1 Constructivist education

This theory posits that learning is an active process in which learners construct meaning based on prior experiences through interaction with their environment, emphasizing contextuality, sociality, and initiative<sup>[5]</sup>. This provides a fundamental guideline for the design and instruction of education tourism courses. The essence of education tourism lies in "learning by doing and reflecting while learning." Talent cultivation must innovate practical pathways, design immersive projects, and enable students to integrate knowledge from both disciplines while solving real-world education tourism problems, thereby transitioning from passive knowledge recipients to active capability builders.

**2.2 Industry-education integration**

This theory advocates for the synchronization of vocational education with industrial development, promoting the alignment of educational and talent chains with industrial and innovation chains, and emphasizes collaborative education between schools and enterprises. In the cultivation of education tourism talent, this theory provides the basis for establishing a "school-enterprise co-construction, competition-innovation integration" education model. Higher education institutions must deeply collaborate with market entities in the education tourism industry to jointly develop cultivation standards, design curricula, and build practical platforms, ensuring that talent cultivation aligns precisely with industry needs.

**2.3 Professional competency model**

This theory focuses on the comprehensive competencies of high-performing professionals in specific roles, providing a "capability blueprint" for setting talent cultivation objectives, restructuring curriculum systems, and establishing evaluation criteria. The competency framework for interdisciplinary education tourism talent encompasses three dimensions: "tourism professional competence," "educational guidance competence," and "cross-domain general competence." Talent cultivation must be guided by this framework to shift from "teaching knowledge" to "nurturing capabilities."

Based on the above theories, a fundamental philosophy for education tourism talent cultivation has been established: "centered on dual-disciplinary integration, guided by the enhancement of professional competency, and implemented through industry-education collaboration." This philosophy guides the subsequent reform practices.(Figure 1).

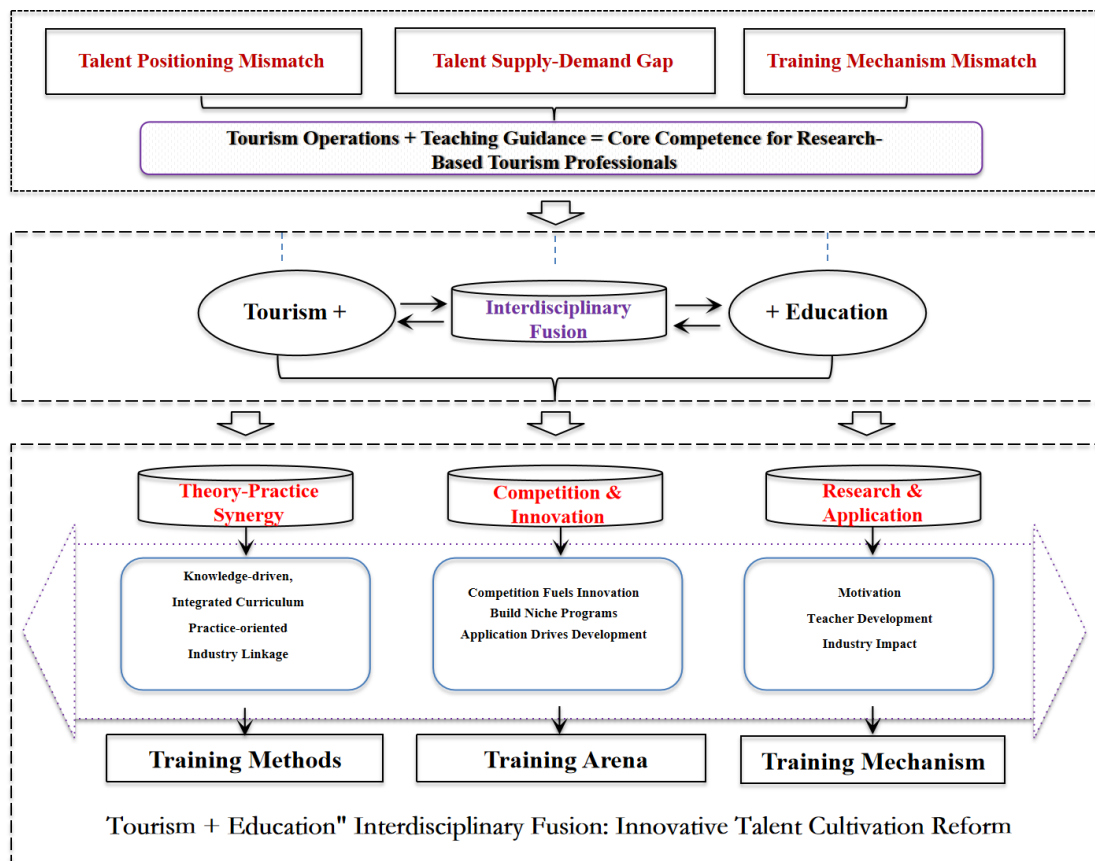


Figure 1 The Composite and Innovative Talent Cultivation System for Education Tourism

### 3. Practical Paths

#### 3.1 Construct a "Theory-Practice Integrated" Training System to Consolidate the Foundation of Dual-Discipline Integration

##### 3.1.1 Reconstruct the Curriculum System to Achieve In-Depth Integration of "Tourism + Education" Knowledge

Guided by cultivating the professional competence of education tourism instructors, the traditional curriculum barriers between tourism discipline and education discipline are completely broken down, and a new integrated curriculum system with "basic level, core level and expansion level" as the framework is established<sup>[6]</sup>.

The basic level (theoretical foundation) covers core general and discipline-based courses such as Introduction to Tourism and Tourism Policies and Regulations. Its purpose is to consolidate students' interdisciplinary theoretical foundation, help them establish a cognitive framework from the dual perspectives of "tourism" and "education", and understand the educational essence and tourism attributes of education tourism activities.

The core level (competency-focused) is the key layer of integration, directly corresponding to core post competencies. Integrated courses including Education Tourism Planning and Management and Education Tourism Curriculum Design and Development are offered. Taking real education tourism project tasks as the carrier, the processes and methods of tourism project management are organically restructured and deeply integrated with curriculum design principles, teaching strategies and evaluation methods in pedagogy. For example, in Education Tourism Curriculum Design and Development, students are required to learn how to design tourism routes based on education tourism resources (such as museums, science and technology museums, nature reserves), and more importantly, master how to set clear educational objectives, design inquiry-based question chains and experiential learning activities according to the cognitive characteristics and curriculum standards of students at different school stages<sup>[1][8]</sup>.

The expansion level (characteristic development) connects market segmentation demands and regional resource characteristics, offering characteristic courses such as Red Education Tourism Product Development and Natural Ecological Education Tourism Practice, aiming to broaden students' knowledge application boundaries and cultivate their expertise in specific fields.

To support the effective operation of this curriculum system, a series of teaching resources have been developed: a clear "curriculum map" and "knowledge graph" have been drawn to visually present the logical connections between courses and the progressive path of competencies; a localized Guidance Manual for the Design and Implementation of Education Tourism Curricula has been compiled; a teaching case library covering a large number of real, typical and regional cases has been built jointly with industrial enterprises.

In terms of teaching modes, online-offline blended teaching, project-based learning (PBL), case-based teaching and other methods are widely adopted, encouraging students to naturally apply and integrate dual knowledge of tourism planning and education design in the process of completing a comprehensive education tourism scheme design project, thus realizing the reconstruction of knowledge structure and the formation of composite competencies.

##### 3.1.2 Innovate Practical Paths and Build an Immersive School-Enterprise Collaborative Education System

Drawing fully on constructivist learning theory, practical teaching is regarded as the main battlefield for knowledge construction and competency development, and an immersive practical teaching system driven by "on-campus simulation + off-campus real scenarios" is constructed<sup>[5][7]</sup>.

On-campus simulation training relies on the upgraded professional experimental teaching center to build a "Smart Education Tourism Training Room". Equipped with VR/AR technology, multimedia sand tables, scenario simulation software and other equipment, the training room simulates and restores various education tourism scenarios (such as museum exhibition halls, field camps, historical sites). Students conduct training including "simulated lessons of education tourism curricula", "emergency response drills for unexpected incidents (e.g., student missing, sudden illness)" and "simulated communication with student teams of different age groups". Such "deliberate practice" in a controllable, repeatable and low-risk environment helps students quickly master core operational procedures and

communication skills, and accumulate preliminary "clinical experience".

Off-campus real-scenario practice establishes in-depth strategic cooperation with well-known regional education tourism service institutions, demonstration education tourism bases (camps), cultural and museum venues, etc., to jointly build a practice base integrating "industry-university-research-application".

Cooperation goes far beyond providing internship positions, and deepens into a "four-joint" industry-education integration mechanism featuring "co-constructing curricula, co-forming teams, co-compiling textbooks and co-evaluating quality".

Schools and enterprises jointly formulate detailed practical teaching syllabi and assessment standards;

Enterprises select gold-medal education tourism instructors and curriculum R&D directors to serve as industrial mentors, who deeply participate in classroom teaching and graduation design guidance, while school professional teachers regularly take temporary posts in enterprises to participate in real project R&D, building a high-level "dual-qualified" teaching team;

The two sides jointly develop loose-leaf and workbook-style textbooks integrating the latest industrial standards, real project cases and post operation specifications;

Students' practical achievements are assessed through a multi-dimensional evaluation system combining "school mentor evaluation + enterprise mentor evaluation + practice base feedback", ensuring that talent training quality is seamlessly aligned with industrial demands<sup>[3][4]</sup>.

### ***3.2 Create a "Competition-Innovation Integrated" Training Field to Stimulate Innovation Potential***

#### ***3.2.1 Promote Innovation through Competitions and Build an Integrated "Learning-Training-Competition" Competency Improvement Mechanism***

High-level discipline competitions and professional skill contests are fully integrated into the talent training process. A stepped competition system and training mechanism of "college-level selection – university-level cultivation – provincial and municipal competitions – national competitions" is established.

Centering on authoritative contests such as the Chongqing University Student Education Tourism Curriculum Design Competition and the "Internet+" College Students Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition (Youth Red Dream Journey Track), specialized pre-competition training workshops are systematically organized, covering the whole process of education tourism market research, innovative scheme conception, curriculum script writing, financial budgeting, on-site presentation and defense.

The high standards and real problem scenarios of competitions force students to actively integrate knowledge of tourism, pedagogy, management, marketing and other disciplines, and complete the full output from creativity to scheme within a limited time, greatly improving students' innovative thinking, complex problem-solving ability, teamwork and stress resistance.

Competition achievements feed back into teaching: excellent schemes are transformed into teaching cases or incubation projects, forming an interactive pattern of "teaching nourishes competitions and competitions improve teaching"<sup>[6]</sup>.

#### ***3.2.2 Promote Application through Innovation and Explore New Interdisciplinary Training Forms such as "Micro-Majors"***

In response to the increasingly refined demands of the education tourism market, especially the important children and adolescents market segment, the micro-major of Children's Education Tourism Education is innovatively offered to outstanding students of relevant majors across the university.

The teaching team consists of core teachers from the School of Tourism and the School of Education, and the curriculum content deeply integrates Child Developmental Psychology, Children's Education Tourism Curriculum Activity Design and other courses.

During learning, students form interdisciplinary project teams to complete the design of a complete education tourism product for real children under the guidance of mentors, and conduct trial operation at cooperative bases.

This "micro-major" model breaks down traditional disciplinary barriers and realizes the "chemical

integration" of interdisciplinary knowledge.

### ***3.3 Establish a "Research-Application Integrated" Training Mechanism to Build a Sustainable Development Ecosystem***

#### ***3.3.1 Build Cross-Border Scientific Research Platforms and Strengthen Research Empowerment for Teaching***

Multidisciplinary strengths including tourism, education, history, geography and art within the university are integrated, and "Education Tourism Collaborative Innovation Center" or "Education Tourism Development Institute" is established jointly with local government cultural and tourism departments and leading industrial enterprises.

This platform focuses on cutting-edge and key industrial issues, such as "research on education tourism curriculum standards and quality evaluation system", "application mode of digital technology in education tourism scenarios", "paths for transforming local red cultural resources into education tourism curricula", etc., and organizes interdisciplinary teams to jointly apply for various scientific research and teaching reform projects.

Teachers are encouraged to timely transform the latest research results into classroom teaching content or practical teaching projects.

Meanwhile, the undergraduate research supervisor system is implemented, and a system of "credits recognition for research achievements (e.g., published papers, patents obtained, research reports completed)" is explored, guiding students to participate in teachers' research projects at an early stage or independently apply for college students' innovation and entrepreneurship training programs.

In real scientific research exploration, students deepen their understanding of the laws of the education tourism industry, improve their academic abilities in data collection, analysis and complex problem-solving, and realize the leap from "learning known knowledge" to "exploring the unknown"<sup>[6][8]</sup>.

#### ***3.3.2 Focus on Applied Achievement Output and Actively Serve Local Industrial Development***

Firmly adhering to the orientation of "rooting in the locality and serving the industry", "Education Tourism Industry Research Institute" is built jointly with local cultural and tourism investment groups, education tourism associations, etc., constructing a three-in-one social service system of "think tank consultation, planning and design, professional training".

Professional teacher teams are organized to actively participate in the evaluation and construction guidance of local education tourism demonstration bases, the planning and development of regional education tourism curriculum systems, the formulation of local education tourism service standards and other work.

Regional and national education tourism industry development forums or academic seminars are regularly held jointly, gathering wisdom from government, industry, university and research sectors to discuss development strategies.

Meanwhile, systematic professional training and certification are provided for primary and secondary school teachers and education tourism base practitioners in the region, radiating the university's talent training standards and curriculum resources to the industry.

Through these measures, the university is no longer a closed "ivory tower", but a "talent pump", "innovation source" and "think tank" for the development of the regional education tourism industry. It truly realizes the effective transformation of talent training achievements into industrial productivity, forming a benign interactive ecosystem where "industrial demands drive talent training, and talent and intellectual support feed back industrial upgrading".

## **4. Conclusions**

After a period of reform practice on the dual-discipline integration of "Tourism + Education", Chongqing University of Education has achieved remarkable results in the quality of talent cultivation, depth of teaching reform, level of scientific research and innovation, as well as social service capacity. A relatively mature paradigm for cultivating interdisciplinary talents for education tourism has been established, and the core experiences are summarized as follows:

First, adhere to “dual-discipline integration” as the core of reform, and promote supply-side structural reform of talent training programs.

The key to solving the imbalance between talent supply and demand lies in fundamentally breaking disciplinary and professional barriers. Instead of merely making “additions” to the original tourism curriculum, a “genetic-level” reconstruction should be carried out to systematically integrate the concepts, methods and evaluation systems of pedagogy into the whole process and all links of tourism talent training. This requires an integrated redesign of training objectives, graduation requirements, curriculum system and practical links, so as to realize a fundamental shift in role perception and competency structure from cultivating “tourism service providers” to “education tourism educators”.

Second, adhere to “competition-innovation integration and research-application integration” as the key path, and build a diversified and stepped growth channel.

The growth of interdisciplinary and innovative talents cannot rely solely on classroom indoctrination. It is essential to stimulate the spirit of challenge through high-level discipline competitions, temper comprehensive abilities through real innovation and entrepreneurship projects, and cultivate inquiry literacy through cutting-edge scientific research activities. A “growth scaffold” should be constructed that organically connects theoretical learning, skill training, competition practice, innovative practice and scientific research exploration, allowing students to experiment, reflect and grow in different practical fields, thus achieving a spiral progression from knowledge acquisition to competency formation and further to internalization of literacy.

Third, adhere to “ecosystem construction” as a long-term guarantee, and realize the circular symbiosis between the education chain and the industrial chain.

Talent cultivation is not a “one-man show” of universities. It is imperative to run schools openly and build an open education ecosystem guided by government policies, deeply participated by industries and enterprises, implemented mainly by universities, and collaboratively evaluated by multiple parties. Through institutional and mechanism innovation, school-enterprise cooperation can be stabilized to realize co-construction and sharing of resources, co-management and co-cultivation in the process, sharing of responsibilities and risks, and mutual benefit of achievements. Only in this way can the direction of talent cultivation always align with industrial development and gain sustained resource input and dynamic support.

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