



Research on the Construction of Teaching System for Interdisciplinary Talent Training of Drama Performance Majors in the New Era

Youzhu Chen, Sumathi Maniam Raj

City University of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Abstract: Against the backdrop of the integration of culture and tourism and educational reform in the new era, the shortcomings of the traditional, one-dimensional teaching model in the drama performance major have become increasingly apparent. Issues such as entrenched disciplinary barriers, a disconnect between talent development and industry needs, and a lack of comprehensive competencies among students make it difficult to meet the demands for drama performance talent in the new era. Based on this, this paper primarily addresses the practical challenges of interdisciplinary education in the drama performance major, emphasizing the importance of interdisciplinary teaching. Secondly, it proposes principles and practical strategies for achieving interdisciplinary talent development in the drama performance major.

Keywords: drama performance; interdisciplinarity; talent development; educational system; comprehensive abilities

1. Introduction

With the continuous development of drama performance education, professionals in the field of drama performance have become a core force in preserving Chinese theatrical culture and enriching the public's cultural and artistic life; they are indispensable professionals for literary and artistic creation and the preservation of theater in the new era. As the current arts and entertainment market continues to evolve, the industry's demands for well-rounded performing talents are constantly rising. However, due to various factors, there is a severe shortage of outstanding theatrical performers. This is primarily reflected in the various challenges facing the educational systems of theater performance programs in higher education institutions today—such as outdated teaching models, an overemphasis on dance and performance skills training, insufficient interdisciplinary integration, and a one-dimensional skill set among graduates[1]. Consequently, the comprehensive capabilities of theater performers remain weak, making it difficult to meet the talent needs of the arts industry. Against this backdrop, promoting interdisciplinary education in theater performance programs—breaking free from the limitations of single-discipline teaching and integrating multidisciplinary knowledge to enhance performance instruction—will not only solidify students' professional performance foundations and address gaps in humanities literacy, digital technology, aesthetic education, and playwriting and production capabilities, but also optimize the talent development model for university performance programs, broaden career pathways for graduates, comprehensively enhance the overall competitiveness of theater performance professionals, and contribute to the long-term preservation and innovative development of theatrical arts.

2. Practical Challenges in Interdisciplinary Education for the Drama and Performance Major in the New Era

2.1 Entrenched Disciplinary Barriers

At present, most university drama and performance programs are classified under the secondary discipline of "Drama and Traditional Chinese Opera." These programs are managed independently by their respective schools or departments and rarely collaborate with other academic disciplines, such as those in the School of Digital Media[2], the School of Liberal Arts, and the School of Education. As a result, disciplinary barriers are deeply entrenched. Given the current state of educational management in higher education institutions, teaching and research management, curriculum development, and practical training assessments for the acting program are all conducted independently. In particular, the program operates under a different teaching and research system than other on-campus disciplines such as Digital Media, Chinese Language and Literature, and Early Childhood Education, resulting in incompatible evaluation standards and training systems. This is primarily reflected in two aspects. First, existing university assessment and credit systems are generally organized according to first-level disciplines, resulting in inadequate mechanisms for interdisciplinary course selection and joint instruction, and a lack of motivation among departments to engage in collaborative teaching and research; Second, teaching in the performing arts major emphasizes practical stage performance and has long relied on the discipline's theoretical framework to structure

its training program. There is very little integration with humanities-based textual analysis, digital media and imaging technology, or theories of education and aesthetic education. As a result, disciplinary boundaries have long been rigid, making it difficult to support the interdisciplinary cultivation of well-rounded performing arts professionals[3].

2.2 A Fragmented Curriculum System

At present, the curriculum structure in universities is generally divided into two categories: major-specific required courses and general education electives. These two categories tend to be compartmentalized and disconnected from one another. Courses in university theater programs are primarily centered on dance and performance, lacking interdisciplinary courses such as playwriting, drama-based psychotherapy, and cultural tourism production planning. At the same time, the general education electives chosen are mostly public culture courses with little relevance to the theater performance major; there are neither integrated school-based courses nor project-based courses. In actual teaching practice, disciplinary integration remains limited to simply combining or adding courses, without achieving the interconnection of knowledge points, making it difficult to effectively meet the educational objectives of theater performance instruction.

2.3 The Faculty Structure Is Relatively Homogeneous

Judging from the current state of drama performance programs at universities, the majority of faculty members are professionally trained in drama performance. They have long been deeply involved in the field of dance performance and possess extensive experience in drama performance; however, they lack interdisciplinary professional backgrounds in areas such as digital theater production, aesthetic education, and the operation of cultural and tourism performances[4]. Furthermore, the barriers to entry for drama and performance instructors are relatively low. Many young faculty members are proficient only in stage performance and have limited exposure to areas such as new media theater, immersive performances, and the commercial planning of theatrical productions, resulting in a pronounced lack of diversity in the faculty composition. At the same time, talent recruitment channels in higher education institutions are relatively limited, with recruitment efforts primarily focused on performing arts professionals. There is very little effort to actively recruit talent from interdisciplinary fields such as digital media and cultural tourism management, resulting in a significant shortage of multidisciplinary faculty. This one-dimensional faculty structure leads to classroom instruction that emphasizes traditional dance techniques while neglecting topics related to digital theater and other relevant areas. Consequently, students' comprehensive skills remain underdeveloped, making it difficult for them to meet the current industry's demands for theatrical talent.

3. Pathways for Building an Educational System for Interdisciplinary Talent Development in Theater Performance in the New Era

3.1 Setting Tiered Interdisciplinary Educational Goals

In line with the four-year undergraduate curriculum, educational goals are defined in tiers: In the early years[5], students solidify their general foundational knowledge, master the fundamentals of stage performance, and develop literary appreciation and basic media literacy; In the middle years, students engage in interdisciplinary studies to master digital performance, play creation and adaptation, and interactive performance skills; in the upper years, students are guided toward specialization in one of four major tracks—traditional theater performance, cultural and tourism interactive performance, new media theater, and campus theater arts education—to develop targeted cross-disciplinary competencies while balancing in-depth professional development with diverse career opportunities.

3.2 Promoting Disciplinary Integration and Building an Interdisciplinary Curriculum System

The educational system under the framework of the “New Liberal Arts” emphasizes innovation through disciplinary integration. With the continuous development of new forms of performing arts, the design of drama performance courses must—while continuing to build upon traditional skills training—further break down disciplinary barriers to establish a diversified, interdisciplinary, and collaborative curriculum system. This system aims to cultivate students' comprehensive ability to integrate acting skills with knowledge from other disciplines, thereby forming a three-dimensional competency development matrix centered on “traditional skills + new technologies + interdisciplinary thinking.” For example, the shift in public cultural and tourism consumption behavior and preferences within digital immersive environments represents an inevitable trend resulting from the deep integration of the cultural and tourism industries with digital technology. Leveraging cutting-edge technologies such as VR, AR, digital lighting and shadow effects, and artificial intelligence, these environments create highly realistic[6], immersive consumer experiences that not only transcend the limitations of physical space and time but also significantly enhance the public's cultural experiences and aesthetic appreciation.

4. Conclusion

The integrated development of digital technology and the cultural industries has driven the transformation and upgrading of the performing arts sector, while also placing new demands on the comprehensive competencies of drama performance majors. Traditional, single-dimensional teaching models for stage performance are no longer sufficient to meet the industry's evolving needs. In response, this paper explores the construction of an interdisciplinary talent development system for drama performance majors in the new era. Grounded in teaching practices and industry realities, it offers feasible approaches for interdisciplinary teaching reform, curriculum optimization, and the integration of industry and education in the field of drama performance.

References

- [1] Jin Zhu. (2026). A Study on the Innovation of Practical Teaching Models for Drama and Film/Television Performance Majors in Higher Education Institutions. *Knowledge Window (Teacher Edition)*, (4), 24–26.
- [2] Dong Fanyu. (2026). A Study on the Innovation of Teaching Models for Drama Performance Majors Based on the “Art + Technology” Concept. *Research and Practice in Innovation and Entrepreneurship Theory*, 9 (4), 46–48.
- [3] Li Na. (2026). A Study on Teaching Methods for Drama Performance in Higher Vocational Colleges Based on “Immersive Experiences.” *Modern Vocational Education*, (5), 169–172.
- [4] Zhou Huan. (2025). An Analysis of the Industry-Education Collaboration Mechanism in Performance Programs Empowered by the Integration of Culture and Tourism. *Craftsmanship*, (11), 159–161.
- [5] Yang Yueting. (2025). Research on Innovation and Practice in Physical Training Classes for the Drama Performance Major. *Comedy World (First Half of the Month)*, (7), 139–141.
- [6] Lin Lin. (2024). A Study on the Teaching of Drama Performance Courses in Higher Education Institutions Under the OBE Philosophy. *Theater Home*, (13), 51–53.