



Application and Challenges of Interdisciplinary Teaching Model in Talent Cultivation for Drama Performance Majors

Youzhu Chen

Guizhou Media Vocational College, Guiyang, Guizhou, China

Abstract: As drama performance integrates with film, television, and new media, the traditional “skill-centric” teaching model for drama performance majors fails to meet the demand for compound talents. The interdisciplinary teaching model — integrating literature, music, film production, and stage design — has become key for talent cultivation innovation. Using literature analysis and case studies, this study explores its application (curriculum integration, project-driven collaboration, interdisciplinary faculty), challenges (poor curriculum cohesion, single evaluation, insufficient resources, faculty competence gaps), and optimization strategies (modular curricula, multi-dimensional evaluation, resource integration, faculty development). It aims to support teaching reform and improve talent quality.

Keywords: interdisciplinary teaching, drama performance major, talent cultivation, application, challenges

1. Introduction

Drama performance requires not only basic skills (line delivery, stage movement) but also understanding of cultural context and cross-team collaboration[1]. With the cultural industry’s development, drama performers now need to adapt to film, television, and immersive theater — making traditional skill-focused teaching outdated.

Interdisciplinary teaching, originating from 1950s American higher education, emphasizes cross-disciplinary knowledge integration[2]. It enriches students’ literacy (e.g., literature for script interpretation, film production for camera-facing skills) but faces obstacles like uncoordinated curricula and limited resources.

This study examines interdisciplinary teaching in Chinese drama performance programs, sorting out its applications, challenges, and strategies to foster compound talents.

2. Application Dimensions of Interdisciplinary Teaching

2.1 Curriculum Integration

Curriculum integration connects drama performance with other disciplines via “embedded courses” and “comprehensive modules.”

Embedded Courses: Literature teachers co-teach “Script Analysis” to deepen students’ understanding of character backgrounds; dance techniques are integrated into “Stage Movement” for diverse expression.

Comprehensive Modules: The “Immersive Theater Module” combines performance, interactive design, and media technology to expand performance forms.[3]

Central Academy of Drama’s practice shows this improves students’ script interpretation and cross-field project participation.

2.2 Project-Driven Collaboration

Taking Shanghai Theatre Academy’s “Student Original Drama Project” as an example:

Cross-disciplinary teams (performance, directing, stage design, film production majors) complete script adaptation, rehearsal, and performance.

Under tutor guidance, students collaborate to solve practical issues (e.g., matching movements to stage design).

Industry experts evaluate the project, enhancing students’ teamwork and problem-solving abilities.

2.3 Interdisciplinary Faculty Teams

Internal Collaboration: Performance and music teachers form teams to teach “Drama Sound Design,” guiding students in music-plot matching.

External Experts: Film directors teach “Camera-Facing Performance”; online drama scriptwriters share new media creation experience.

Beijing Film Academy's practice shows this updates teaching content and expands students' industry resources.

Project Evaluation: Invite industry experts (such as drama directors and film producers) to evaluate the project from multiple dimensions, including performance effect, team collaboration, and innovation.

According to a survey by the academy, 90% of students who participated in the project said they had a deeper understanding of the collaboration between different roles in drama creation, and their ability to solve practical problems (such as adjusting performance strategies due to stage design changes) had been significantly enhanced.

3. Key Challenges

3.1 Poor Curriculum Cohesion: Disconnections Between Disciplinary Goals and Content

Goal conflicts: In co-taught Script Analysis, literature teachers focus on literary value/context while performance teachers emphasize stage action translation. Uncoordinated goals lead to students' fragmented knowledge absorption.

Content redundancy/gaps: Without unified planning, basic music theory repeats across related courses, while key practical content (e.g., film-television performance application) is missing. A survey of 10 domestic universities shows 60% of teachers view this as the top barrier, and 45% of students fail to integrate interdisciplinary knowledge.

3.2 Single Evaluation Mechanism: Misalignment with Comprehensive Literacy Cultivation

Incomplete dimensions: In collaborative projects, students' contributions to team communication or creative ideation are excluded; only final performance is assessed, leading to overemphasis on individual skills over teamwork.

Lack of industry participation: Evaluations are mostly done by in-school teachers, who may be unfamiliar with latest industry demands. This disconnect makes results deviate from employment needs.[4]

3.3 Insufficient Resource Allocation: Constraints on Teaching Implementation

Venue/equipment shortages: Modules like Immersive Theater lack professional venues with interactive systems; Camera-Facing Performance lacks sufficient shooting equipment, limiting students' practice.

Funding limitations: Interdisciplinary projects (e.g., student original dramas) need funds for adaptation, design and promotion, but budgets tilt toward traditional courses—some projects are even suspended due to gaps[5].

3.4 Gaps in Faculty Interdisciplinary Competence: Weaknesses in Guidance

Insufficient cross-disciplinary knowledge: Performance teachers often lack expertise in film shooting or stage design, hindering guidance on related skills.

Limited collaborative experience: Most are used to independent teaching; conflicts in co-teaching (methods/content) weaken effectiveness.

4. Optimization Paths

4.1 Build a Modular Curriculum System: Enhance Coordination

Classify core/elective modules: Core modules (compulsory) include Script Analysis and Stage Adaptation (co-taught by performance + literature); electives (career-aligned) cover Film-Television Performance (performance + film) and Immersive Theater (performance + digital media).

Formulate unified guidelines: Clarify teaching objectives, key content and assessment standards for each module to avoid conflicts and redundancy.

4.2 Establish a Multi-Dimensional Evaluation Mechanism: Reflect Comprehensive Literacy

Process-oriented evaluation: Track students' performance via tools like "team collaboration logs" (records communication/problem-solving); this accounts for 40% of the final grade.

Multi-subject evaluation: Involve interdisciplinary teachers (assess professional skills), industry experts (evaluate market adaptability) and peers (review teamwork).

4.3 Integrate Internal and External Resources: Break Through Constraints

Internal sharing: Coordinate cross-departmental resources (share shooting equipment, use digital media labs) and integrate interdisciplinary funds to support student projects.

External cooperation: Partner with drama theaters (for practice stages), film-television companies (for sponsorships) and new media platforms (for real-case materials) to fill gaps and connect with industry.[6]

4.4 Strengthen Faculty Development: Improve Interdisciplinary Competence

Targeted training: Arrange performance teachers to study film directing or attend literary analysis workshops to expand knowledge.[7]

Collaborative capacity building: Hold monthly “interdisciplinary teaching seminars” and form long-term co-teaching teams (e.g., performance + music/film) with clear responsibilities to avoid conflicts.

5. Conclusion

Interdisciplinary teaching is essential for adapting to industry changes and fostering compound talents. It enriches students’ literacy but faces cohesion, evaluation, resource, and faculty challenges. By optimizing curricula, evaluation, resources, and faculty competence, universities can promote teaching reform. Future research should adapt to new technologies (e.g., virtual reality) to support drama art inheritance and innovation.

References

- [1] Benedetti, J. (2017). *Theatre, Education and the Making of Citizens*. Routledge.
- [2] Smith, L. (2020). Interdisciplinary Curriculum Design for Performing Arts Programs: A Case Study of Beijing Film Academy. *Journal of Drama Education*, 15(2), 45-62.
- [3] Garcia, M. (2023). Technological Integration in Immersive Theater: A Guide for Drama Education. *Theatre Topics*, 23(2), 67-85.
- [4] Li, H. (2022). Industry Demand for Compound Talents in Drama and Film Performance: A Survey of Chinese Cultural Enterprises. *Chinese Journal of Cultural Industry Research*, 10(4), 91-108.
- [5] Chen, Y. (2021). Project-Driven Interdisciplinary Teaching in Drama Performance: Practice and Reflection from Shanghai Theatre Academy. *Chinese Journal of Art Education*, 8(3), 78-89.
- [6] Williams, M. (2019). Challenges and Solutions of Interdisciplinary Teaching in Performing Arts. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 8(4), 112-125.
- [7] Jones, A. (2022). Interdisciplinary Faculty Development in Performing Arts: Strategies and Effectiveness. *Journal of Higher Education in the Arts*, 18(1), 33-50.

Author Bio

- Name: Youzhu Chen
- Gender: Female
- Ethnicity: Miao
- Date of Birth: May 1991
- Place of Origin: Guiyang, Guizhou Province
- Education Background: Master’s degree holder
- Title: Lecturer
- Research Interests: Philosophy of performing arts