



# Research on the Interdisciplinary Integration and Development of Dance under the “New Liberal Arts”

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## Abstract

With the continuous progress of society, opportunities and challenges coexist. Dance, as a discipline with a long history, originated from drama, but gradually developed into an art form with independent value. However, in its development process, due to the high artistic threshold and limited audience range, dance has gradually become out of touch with the public. At present, the proposal of the concept of “new liberal arts” provides an opportunity for dance studies to expand the boundaries of art and re-attract public attention in interdisciplinary integration. Therefore, in response to the problems of scarce talents, limited market size, and low technical level in the field of dance studies, this article explores the interdisciplinary integration strategy with fine arts, science and technology, and humanities and social sciences, aiming to promote the development of dance art from a single form to a diversified and integrated direction.

## Subject Areas

Art

## Keywords

New Liberal Arts, Dance Studies, Interdisciplinary Integration, Development

## 1. Introduction

The concept of “new liberal arts” has been proposed in the field of global higher education in recent years, aiming to cope with the challenges brought by digitalization, globalization and social change. Before 2017, the concept pointed out the limitations of traditional liberal arts education and emphasized the division and

dialogue between natural sciences and humanities and social sciences. Two years after 2017, China began to work with 13 relevant departments to launch the process of building new liberal arts. From 2020 to the present, the development of new liberal arts has evolved from the “interdisciplinary” stage to a new stage of reconstructing traditional liberal arts with digital technology as the core. This reconstruction process has undergone systematic changes in the three dimensions of the school system, evaluation system and discipline layout. At the same time, at the philosophical level, new liberal arts emphasize the importance of innovation and reset of thinking. Therefore, the core characteristics of new liberal arts include interdisciplinary integration, technology-driven, problem-oriented, and local care from a global perspective. Under the guidance of innovative ideas, the original knowledge system can be continuously expanded and developed [1]. At the same time, learners in the original field can take advantage of this integration opportunity to deepen their understanding of the profession and improve their overall comprehensive quality. In addition, the new liberal arts cover a wide range of humanities and arts disciplines, and the public’s cultural and aesthetic literacy will be greatly improved. With the rise of innovative compound talents, the overall development of society will also be promoted.

## **2. Existing Problems in the Development of Dance Discipline**

As a discipline with a long history and continuous inheritance, dance is facing problems such as talent loss, low market acceptance and insufficient technological integration in today’s society.

### **2.1. Brain Drain**

The root causes of brain drain can be attributed to two core issues: defects in the education system and limited career development opportunities. From the perspective of the education system, there are significant differences in the development of dance disciplines in different regions, which leads to uneven education quality. The integration of theory and practice in dance education is not close enough, and the goal of cultivating knowledge expansion and innovative thinking advocated by the “new liberal arts” education concept has not been fully realized [2]. Therefore, students trained in such an education system still have a lot of room for improvement in their comprehensive quality and innovation ability. Restrictions on career development are also an important factor leading to talent loss. Take dancers as an example; their careers are usually short and come with a lot of uncertainty and risk. Career paths are often unclear and there are relatively few opportunities to choose from. Compared with their counterparts in other artistic professions, dancers often receive lower wages and inadequate social security in terms of state economic support. Society’s diverse views on pursuing a career in dance have also had a significant impact on the loss of talent. In the current social environment, dance, as an art form, faces a lot of challenges and pressures that its practitioners face, which further exacerbates the problem of talent loss.

## 2.2. Low Market Acceptance

The main reasons for the low market acceptance are the lack of public acceptance and the low social influence. Specifically, the public's acceptance of dance art is relatively small, which is different from art forms such as music, fine arts, and sports. The latter are often included in the curriculum system of compulsory education, so their acceptance is generally high. Since dance art does not occupy an equally important position in the education system, the public's cognition and understanding of dance is naturally not as profound as other art forms. In addition, there is a close connection between low social influence and acceptance. The public's ability to appreciate dance directly affects the influence of dance art in society. The two are complementary. If the dance discipline wants to achieve self-generation in society, that is, self-development and growth, it faces great challenges.

## 2.3. Insufficient Technology Integration

The main reasons for the lack of technology integration are the limited application of technology and the lack of interdisciplinary cooperation. The limited application of technology, dance is a course rooted in Chinese traditional culture. The application of new technologies in the field of dance is relatively limited. It is difficult to apply it without destroying the dance art itself and its cultural connotation. There is little interdisciplinary cooperation. In the current market, the integration of dance with music, fine arts, poetry, humanities and other disciplines has set off a wave and attracted public attention. However, under the proposal of "new liberal arts" the dance discipline still needs to continue to innovate and integrate between disciplines.

## 3. Specific Combination Path and Significance

### 3.1. Dance and Fine Arts

Dance and art seem to be two extremes of dynamic and static, but they have been constantly colliding with new sparks through exploration in recent years. The combination of the two is a cross-media artistic fusion, providing a lot of material for each other [3]. The earliest combination of dance and art was in stage design, that is, stage art. Dance workers used stage scenery, lighting, costumes and props to build a visual narrative space for dance. For example, "Sleeping Beauty", which is known as the encyclopedia of 19th century ballet, contains luxurious and diverse costumes and stage art design. The imitation palace garden architecture, fountains, streams, etc., on the stage all add a sense of immersion to the Russian court story background behind the ballet [4]. Later, more and more dances were drawn from art works. The short works "The Lady with Flowers in Her Hairpin" and "Mrs. Xiangjun and Mrs. Xiang", and the dance poem "Only Green" that triggered a wave of national style were all inspired by ancient paintings, making the body a flowing painting. In addition, artists also use the body as a medium to create, blurring the boundaries between dance and fine arts. For example, Marina Abramović's Rhythm 0 transforms the body into a "canvas" that carries violence

through audience interaction. This combination complements the immediacy of dance and the eternity of fine arts: dynamic body language gives vitality to static images, while the visual precipitation of fine arts gives fleeting dance movements a traceable carrier.

### **3.2. Dance and Technology**

With the rapid development of modern science and technology, the creation and dissemination of art are no longer limited to human power. The blessing of science and technology has brought new vitality to dance [5]. Since electronic information has a randomness different from that of the human brain, as early as the neo-avant-garde dance period, Merce Cunningham used the infinite changes of electronic computers to publish computer-choreographed dances such as “Franken”, “Neighbors”, “Seabirds”, and “Input”. At the same time, the blessing of multimedia has also broken the physical limitations of traditional dance on the stage. There are also many works that use 3D holographic projection technology to increase the expressiveness of dance [6]. For example, Tang Shiyi’s “Xihe Sword” makes “a sword dance that moves all directions” concrete and vivid, and the stage play “Dafengge” makes Liu Bang and Cao Shi’s missed opportunity regrettable. This combination creates a surreal visual spectacle and narrative method, which expands the possibilities of dance in a multi-dimensional narrative structure. In addition, video recording has also allowed more dances to be preserved, and the speed of the Internet has also allowed more dances to be spread, allowing the dance audience to continue to expand.

### **3.3. Dance and Humanities and Social Sciences**

As early as in primitive society, dance was more of a utilitarian means. With the overproduction of productivity, it derived entertainment and social functions [7]. Today, dance has gradually become only artistic, which has gradually become self-admiring. Therefore, relevant scholars are also committed to promoting the integration of dance with humanities and social sciences. Dance dramas such as “Thunderstorm” and “Dream of Red Mansions” were created based on literary works. The promotion of Yingge and dragon dance has strengthened the folk social attributes of dance. The contact improvisation and equal dialogue in dance are used to explore trust, boundaries and power negotiation, becoming a metaphor for social experiments, giving dance a deeper meaning, and making dance art a mirror of human survival and a dynamic force for social change.

## **4. Conclusion**

“New liberal arts” provides new ideas and methods for the development of dance disciplines, which is conducive to taking root in the deep connotation of dance disciplines and innovating the ideological concepts of dance disciplines, so as to adhere to the fundamentals, inherit the essence, keep pace with the times, innovate, and promote diversified development. In addition, the specific combination

path proposed in this article can effectively break down disciplinary barriers, promote the integration of disciplines, and affect the improvement of public cultural and aesthetic literacy, improve the quality of aesthetic education in China, and cultivate more dance professionals who can adapt to the diversified needs of society. It is of great significance to promote cultural innovation in dance disciplines. However, at present, there is still a long way to go to achieve this goal. There are still many problems that the interdisciplinary integration of dance under the “new liberal arts” will face, such as the collision of concepts between disciplines, the mutual transformation of disciplinary ideas, and the natural transition of the teaching process. However, we will continue to contribute to the development of dance disciplines.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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