

# Research on Journalism Core Skills Education from the Perspective of Cross-media Narration

Ruifeng Yan\*

Kazakhstan State University, Almaty 050040, Kazakhstan

\*Corresponding email: Yanruifeng130@163.com

## Abstract

The deep development of media integration gave birth to the communication paradigm of cross-media narration, and traditional journalism education faced the structural dilemma of “mismatch between supply and demand of skills”. Based on the theory of cross-media narration, this paper systematically defines the three-dimensional composition of the core skills of journalism in the all-media era: the ability of cross-media narrative structure, the ability of technology integration and application, and the ability of value consensus cohesion. By analyzing the outstanding problems in the current journalism education in terms of curriculum system, practical teaching, teacher structure and evaluation mechanism, this paper puts forward a four-in-one educational reform path of “theoretical foundation-technical empowerment-practice sharpening-value casting soul”. The research aims to provide theoretical reference and practical paradigm for journalism education in colleges and universities to adapt to industry changes and cultivate “all-media, compound and innovative” journalism talents.

## Keywords

Cross-media narration, Journalism, Core skills, Educational reform, Media fusion

## Introduction

The era of media integration has given rise to cross-media narration as a new communication paradigm, fundamentally transforming the journalism industry’s demand for talent. While initiatives like China’s “Excellent Journalism and Communication Talents 2.0” plan call for “all-media, expert and compound” talents, traditional journalism education, focused on “writing, editing and commenting”, struggles to keep pace [1]. This has led to a structural “skills gap” where graduates are unprepared for the demands of cross-media storytelling.

This paper, from the perspective of cross-media narration, aims to reconstruct the core skills system for journalism education. It identifies three key skill dimensions: cross-media narrative architecture, technology integration, and value consensus cohesion [2]. By analyzing current educational shortcomings in curriculum, practice, faculty, and evaluation, the study proposes an integrated reform path to cultivate a new generation of journalists capable of thriving in the all-media landscape.

The iteration of digital technology and the reconstruction

of communication ecology promote the development stage of journalism from single media communication to cross-media narrative. Cross-media narration takes the “story core” as the anchor point and realizes the deep penetration and wide coverage of information dissemination through the differentiated presentation and collaborative linkage of multi-media platforms [3]. The practice of all-media coverage such as “Vibrant China Research Tour” shows that excellent news communication needs to break down the barriers of media forms, integrate multiple expressions such as text, audio, video and data visualization, and build an immersive and interactive communication experience [4]. This industry change has put forward brand-new requirements for the skill structure of journalists, and the traditional skill training mode with “writing, editing and commenting” as the core has been difficult to meet the professional needs of the all-media era [5].

The Education and Training Plan for Excellent Journalism and Communication Talents 2.0 jointly issued by the Ministry of Education of People’s Republic of China (PRC) and Publicity Department of the

Communist Party of China clearly puts forward that it is necessary to train “all-media, expert and compound” journalism and communication talents, which points out the direction for the reform of journalism education. However, at present, there are still some problems in journalism education in colleges and universities, such as the lag of curriculum system updating, the disconnection between theory and practice, the imbalance between technical education and humanistic quality, etc., which leads graduates to face “skills shortcomings” in cross-media narrative practice and cannot meet the urgent demand of the media industry for compound talents [6]. In this context, reconstructing the education system of journalism core skills based on cross-media narrative vision has become the key to solve the mismatch between education and industry demand.

### **The core connotation of cross-media narration and the reconstruction of journalism skills**

#### *The core connotation of cross-media narrative*

The cross-media narrative theory was put forward by Henry Jenkins, and its core was that “a story is unfolded on multiple media platforms, and each platform adds value to the story and contributes a unique experience”. Different from traditional multi-media communication, cross-media narration emphasizes the integrity of the story and the cooperation of the media: Through the complementary characteristics of different media, a multi-dimensional and three-dimensional narrative system is constructed to achieve the communication effect of “1+1 > 2”.

The practical characteristics of cross-media narration are mainly reflected in three aspects: First, the multi-coordination of narrative subjects breaks the single narrative pattern of traditional journalists and forms a narrative ecology created by professional journalists, technicians and users. The second is the integration and innovation of narrative forms, integrating words, images, data, interactive design and other elements to create an immersive and participatory narrative experience. For example, Poem Beautiful Chengdu combines music, drama, intangible cultural heritage and other artistic forms with documentaries to realize the cross-time dialogue between ancient and modern cultures. Third, the value of narrative goal is upgraded, from simple information transmission to meaning construction and

consensus cohesion, which makes the media change from “recorder” to “meaning connector”.

#### *Reconstruction of journalism core skills from the perspective of cross-media narrative*

In response to the rise of cross-media storytelling, the core competencies of journalism are being fundamentally reconceptualized. This shift moves the profession beyond single-media expertise toward collaborative, multi-platform production. Navigating this change requires a new, integrative pedagogical framework that deliberately blends creative, technical, and strategic skills to equip students for the modern media landscape.

(1) Cross-media Narrative Architecture Ability entails the macro-level planning and adaptive execution of a story across diverse media. Practitioners must hone a central narrative theme and then devise differentiated content that leverages the specific affordances of each medium, the depth of text, the immediacy of video, the authority of data. The objective is to implement a cohesive yet versatile narrative strategy, namely, a unified core narrative expressed through multiple forms. For example, “Vibrant China Research Tour” focuses on the theme of high-quality development, highlights in-depth analysis in written reports, presents immersive scenes in short videos, strengthens empirical support in data news, and constructs an all-round narrative matrix [7].

(2) Technology Integration and Application Ability refer to the mastery and creative application of digital technologies. This competency encompasses a suite of skills, including multimedia content production (video shooting/editing, audio production, H5 design), data processing (data mining, visual presentation), and the application of intelligent tools (AI-assisted creation, algorithm comprehension). The effectiveness of this ability is demonstrated by the ecological report of Meilin Village in Zhejiang Province, where technical means transformed data on photovoltaic power generation and carbon emissions into intuitive visual content. This approach not only ensures scientific rigor but also enhances empathetic engagement, showcasing how technology can significantly improve narrative impact.

(3) Cohesive Capacity for Value Consensus: At its core, this competency involves the ability to communicate mainstream values and forge social consensus within complex communication environments. Practitioners

must demonstrate political awareness, cross-cultural communicative skill, and user empathy, enabling them to translate abstract themes into relatable human experiences and specialized terminology into accessible public discourse. A case in point is Hubei Daily's satellite-assisted feature, "*A Decade of Southward Water Diversion*", which achieved effective mainstream narrative dissemination by revealing the institutional significance embedded within individual stories.

### **The present situation and predicament of journalism education from the perspective of cross-media narrative**

#### ***The status quo of education***

(1) Gradually adjust the curriculum system: Some colleges and universities begin to add cross-media related courses, and the School of Journalism and Communication of China Academy of Social Sciences set up elective courses such as TV camera, nonlinear editing and visual communication, trying to cultivate students' multimedia skills. Some colleges and universities learn from MIT's interdisciplinary training concept and explore the interdisciplinary courses of journalism, computer and design.

(2) Practical instruction is increasingly characterized by closer university-media cooperation. Through co-built practice bases and joint project initiatives, students gain hands-on, cross-media experience. "The Content Winning Project" under Hubei Daily Group, for instance, engaged students in comprehensive all-media reporting, facilitating mutual empowerment between academic institutions and the media industry.

(3) Clear upgrade of training objectives: Most colleges and universities incorporate "all-media and compound" into the talent training objectives, emphasizing that students should not only master traditional news skills, but also can apply new media, which reflects the response to the needs of the cross-media era.

#### ***Highlight the difficulties***

(1) The structural imbalance of curriculum system: First, the proportion of traditional courses is too high, and most cross-media related courses are elective and lack of systematisms; Second, technical courses are out of touch with humanities courses, and some colleges and universities overemphasize technical skills and ignore basic courses such as journalism theory and media ethics,

which leads to students' "attaching importance to technology and neglecting literacy"; Third, the content of the course is lagging behind, and the coverage of emerging skills such as data narration and intelligent tool application is insufficient, which is similar to the problem of "teaching gap of core digital skills" in German journalism education [8].

(2) Insufficient effectiveness of practical teaching: Practical teaching mostly stays at the level of simulation training, lacking real experience of cross-media narrative projects. Although there are many practice bases in colleges and universities, some practice contents are still limited to the auxiliary work of a single media, so it is difficult for students to participate in complete cross-media narrative planning and implementation. At the same time, practical teaching lacks interdisciplinary cooperation scenes, and it is difficult to cultivate students' collaborative creative ability.

(3) Shortcomings of teachers' ability: College teachers are mostly from traditional journalism background, lacking practical experience in cross-media narration, and it is difficult to effectively guide students' technical application and multi-media planning. Although some colleges and universities employ industry elites to teach, they lack normalization mechanism, and it is difficult to fundamentally improve the teacher structure. The survey of Hubei Daily Group shows that the disconnect between academic teachers and industry practice is an important reason for the mismatch between talent training and demand.

(4) The evaluation mechanism is overly simplistic, primarily relying on traditional written assignments and theoretical examinations. There is no scientifically sound standard for assessing cross-media works. The evaluation criteria overemphasize content accuracy while neglecting critical dimensions such as narrative innovation, technical proficiency, and communication impact. Consequently, the current system fails to effectively guide students in developing comprehensive cross-media competencies [9].

### **The reform path of journalism core skills education from the perspective of cross-media narrative**

#### ***Restructuring the curriculum system: Building a "theory-technology-narrative" trinity module***

(1) Core theory module: Consolidate the basic theory of journalism and add relevant courses of cross-media

narration. Keep core courses such as journalism theory, journalism history and media ethics, and strengthen students' professional quality. Courses such as Theory and Practice of Cross-media Narration and Ethics of All-media Communication are offered to help students understand the law and value of cross-media narration.

(2) Technology application module: Digital skills courses are set up systematically, forming a progressive training of "basic technology-special skills-comprehensive application". Courses such as digital media foundation and data literacy are offered at the basic level. The special layer offers courses such as video production, data visualization and intelligent tool application. The comprehensive layer offers courses such as cross-media content planning and all-media project practice to achieve mastery of technical skills. Learn from MIT's curriculum principles, ensure a reasonable proportion of theoretical courses and experimental courses, and strengthen practical operation links.

(3) Narrative innovation module: Focus on the cultivation of cross-media narrative ability, and offer courses such as Narratology Principles, Cross-media Content Creativity and International Communication Narration. Through case analysis (such as the narrative strategy analysis of "Vigorous China Research Tour" and "Poetry Beautiful Chengdu"), creative training, simulation planning and other ways, students' narrative structure and innovation ability can be improved.

***Innovative practice teaching: to create a "real project-cross-domain collaboration-closed-loop feedback" model***

(1) Introducing real project-driven teaching: Deepen school-enterprise cooperation and build a "cross-media narrative practice base" with mainstream media and new media platforms. Introduce the real media reporting project into the classroom and let students participate in the whole process from planning, interview, multimedia content production to dissemination and promotion. Learn from Hubei Daily's "cross-platform personnel optimization combination" model, organize students to set up a cross-media project team to simulate the operation mechanism of the media editorial department.

(2) Building an interdisciplinary cooperation scene: Break down discipline barriers and carry out joint teaching with computer college, design college and college of arts. Set up interdisciplinary projects, such as

developing intelligent narrative tool application projects in cooperation with the School of Computer Science and developing visual narrative projects in cooperation with the School of Design to cultivate students' collaborative creative ability.

(3) Establishing a closed-loop feedback mechanism: Introduce industry evaluation standards and invite media editors and senior journalists to comment on students' work. Use the new media platform to conduct communication testing and optimize the works through user feedback and data dissemination. Establish a closed loop of "practice-evaluation-reflection-improvement" to improve the practical teaching effect [10].

***Strengthening the construction of teachers: The implementation of "academic-industry-cross-domain" three-dimensional empowerment***

(1) A multi-faceted approach is essential for enhancing teachers' capabilities within academic institutions. A comprehensive strategy for teacher development entails three core components: the creation of a standardized mechanism for sustained industry engagement in cross-media projects; the active promotion of cross-media research to ensure teaching is informed by scholarly inquiry; and the organization of specialized training programs to remedy deficiencies in digital skills and practical storytelling techniques.

(2) Normalization of teachers in the industry: We will implement a "dual-tutorial system", pairing students with both college teachers and industry tutors. Furthermore, we will hire senior media practitioners and technical experts as part-time instructors to teach practical courses and deliver special lectures. Finally, we will establish an industry expert database to ensure that the teaching content remains at the forefront of the industry.

(3) Interdisciplinary teachers' collaborative teaching: Invite teachers from computer, design, literature and other fields to participate in the teaching of cross-media related courses, such as teaching visual narrative together with design teachers, guiding narrative creativity together with literature teachers, and realizing the integration of multi-disciplinary knowledge.

***Optimize the evaluation mechanism: establish a "ability-innovation-effect" multiple assessment system***

(1) Diversification of assessment content: Breaking through the limitation of single-word assessment and include cross-media works (such as all-media report

planning case and multi-media narrative works collection), technical application ability and teamwork performance into the assessment scope. Refer to Hubei Daily's all-media manuscript scoring method, and set up dimensions such as content quality score, communication effect score and innovation bonus.

(2) Process assessment method: Adopt the process assessment of "usual performance + stage task + final work" and pay attention to the dynamic evaluation of students' learning process. In the practice of cross-media projects, students' planning ability, execution ability and innovation ability are comprehensively evaluated through project proposals, interim reports and final display.

(3) Diversification of evaluation subjects: Build a three-dimensional evaluation subject of "teacher evaluation + industry evaluation + user evaluation". University teachers focus on theoretical and methodological evaluation; industry experts focus on practical application evaluation and collect user feedback through new media platforms to form an all-round evaluation perspective.

### Conclusion

The rise of cross-media narration has completely changed the communication ecology and talent demand of journalism, and traditional journalism education must be systematically reformed to adapt to the development of the times. This paper holds that the core skills system of journalism from the perspective of cross-media narrative includes the ability of cross-media narrative structure, the ability of technology integration and application, and the ability of value consensus cohesion, which support each other and are organically unified.

At present, journalism education is faced with such dilemmas as unbalanced curriculum system, insufficient practical teaching, short teachers' ability and single evaluation mechanism. It is necessary to achieve a breakthrough in reform by reconstructing the trinity curriculum system of "theory-technology-narrative", creating a real project-driven practical teaching model, implementing a three-dimensional teacher empowerment plan, and establishing a multiple evaluation mechanism. The core of the reform is to balance the relationship between technology application and humanistic quality, theoretical teaching and practical training, traditional skills and innovative ability, and to cultivate journalists

in the new era who can "keep their ideals" and "play with algorithms".

In the future, journalism education should further strengthen interdisciplinary integration, deepen industry-university-research collaboration, pay attention to the influence of intelligent technology on cross-media narration, continuously optimize the talent training system, and provide solid talent support for the high-quality development of journalism.

### Funding

This work was not supported by any funds.

### Acknowledgements

The author would like to show sincere thanks to those techniques who have contributed to this research.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

### References

- [1] Lischka, J. A. (2015) How structural multi-platform newsroom features and innovative values alter journalistic cross-channel and cross-sectional working procedures. *Journal of Media Business Studies*, 12(1), 7-28.
- [2] Knuth, I., Petzold, T., Richter, F. (2025) Digital transformation's impact on media concentration and news diversity: a network analysis of cross-platform news usage in Germany. *Journal of Media Economics*, 37(1), 4-19.
- [3] Labio-Bernal, A., García-Orta, M. J., Romero-Domínguez, L. R., García-Prieto, V. (2020) Digital information skills, media literacy and journalism in Spain. A case study on the "Press in Schools" project. *ICONO 14, Revista De ComunicaciÓN Y TecnologÍAs Emergentes*, 18(2), 58-83.
- [4] Cervi, L., Simelio, N., Tejedor Calvo, S. (2021) Analysis of journalism and communication studies in Europe's top ranked universities: Competencies, aims and courses. *Journalism Practice*, 15(7), 1033-1053.
- [5] Molyneux, L., Holton, A., Lewis, S. C. (2018) How journalists engage in branding on Twitter: Individual, organizational, and institutional levels. *Information, Communication & Society*, 21(10), 1386-1401.
- [6] Bouters, L., Mothersill, G., Nystrom, T. (2016)

Identification of skills gap in cross-media design and production in the creative industries at EU-level. *International Circular of Graphic Education and Research*, 9(9), 47-60.

- [7] Hu, W., Liu, Y. (2024) Evaluation model of the teaching effect of college physical education class based on multimedia feature extraction technology and three-dimensional recons. *International Journal of e-Collaboration (IJeC)*, 20(1), 1-20.
- [8] Selvan, K. S. (2019) Media and information literacy training in India: Plenty amidst Scarcity - A case study in Indian Scenario. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 9(7), 101-116.
- [9] Zhang, X. (2024) Evaluating the effectiveness of cross-media writing to enhance children's language competences: An Edu-communicative study of language development in China. *Comunicar: Revista Científica de Comunicación y Educación*, (78), 191-204.
- [10] Lettmann, S. (2024) Curating a public collection launch format to facilitate knowledge dissemination for circular fashion practice through linking it with the theory of relational art. *Fashion Practice*, 1-25.