

# Evaluating a Humanity Course for Drama Students at Sichuan Conservatory of Music: A CIPP Model Approach

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## ABSTRACT

This study applied the CIPP evaluation model to systematically assess a Humanity course for drama majors at Sichuan Conservatory of Music, aiming to examine goal achievement, life skills development, and potential course enhancements. A mixed-methods approach was employed, involving 177 first-year undergraduates, four instructors, and one department head, using document analysis, interviews, surveys, and student performance data. The survey demonstrated strong reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .87$ ). Quantitative results showed solid outcomes in creativity ( $M = 7.26$ ,  $S.D. = 1.33$ ) and critical thinking ( $M = 7.03$ ,  $S.D. = 1.38$ ), but relatively weaker performance in emotional regulation ( $M = 6.99$ ,  $S.D. = 1.49$ ) on a 10-point scale. Although students scored highly on written exams ( $M = 79.52$ ,  $S.D. = 9.19$ ), their ability to apply knowledge in real-world or performance contexts was limited. Qualitative data further revealed difficulties in translating theoretical understanding into embodied stage expression. Based on these findings, the study proposed a revised curriculum emphasizing emotional education, reflective practice, and interdisciplinary integration. The results underscored the value of the CIPP model as a framework for continuous improvement in arts-based higher education.

**Keywords:** Humanity Education, Drama Education, Life Skills Development, CIPP Evaluation Model

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## Introduction

Embedding life skills development into higher education curricula has gained increasing attention, particularly in arts programs where students must cultivate not only domain-specific knowledge but also transferable competencies such as communication, empathy, and emotional regulation. According to the World Health Organization (1997), life skills are adaptive capabilities that enable individuals to respond effectively to everyday challenges. In this light, humanities courses can serve as a platform for both intellectual and psychosocial growth.

Despite mounting evidence that drama and creative expression enhance students' abilities to recognize, express, and manage emotions (Sincuba, 2024), such courses remain marginalized in many university settings. Humanities education, especially for arts students, often lacks structural integration and is undervalued in curriculum planning. This has hindered students' development in areas such as

emotional regulation, self-awareness, and social adaptability—factors closely tied to overall mental well-being (Sincuba, 2024).

Recent research over the past five years has focused primarily on the cognitive and interdisciplinary value of humanities in STEM or education programs, often highlighting their role as supplementary knowledge frameworks (Li & Liu, 2025). In contrast, limited attention has been paid to how humanities courses contribute to students' emotional development or how these courses can be structurally optimized to support social-emotional learning (SEL). Only a small body of literature has begun exploring the potential for integrating humanities into broader psychological and developmental frameworks (Rahma et al., 2025; Wang, 2024).

To address these gaps, the Sichuan Conservatory of Music introduced a compulsory “Humanity” course (Course Code 11200230) for drama students, aiming to broaden their cultural perspectives and enhance life skills. This study employed the CIPP (Context–Input–Process–Product) evaluation model to systematically examine the course's needs, design, implementation, and outcomes. The CIPP model enabled a multidimensional analysis of both instructional quality and student experience, offering insights into the course's strengths and areas for improvement.

This evaluation responded to two key gaps in existing research: the neglect of emotional outcomes in humanities curriculum assessment, and the lack of integrated frameworks for program-level analysis. In doing so, it contributes new understanding of how humanities courses can support both cognitive and affective development, especially in specialized arts programs. The findings offer evidence-based recommendations for more holistic and structurally embedded humanities education within higher education.

## Research Objectives

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of the Humanity course for drama majors at SCM in achieving its educational goals based on CIPP approach.
2. To identify how the Humanity course has improved students' life skills, examining which life skills have developed and to what extent based on CIPP approach.
3. To propose a revised “Humanity” course for drama students at SCM that addresses identified gaps and optimally integrates life skills development.

## Research Methodology

### 1. Participants

This study involved administrative leaders, course instructors, and student participants (see Table 1). For the Context evaluation, the Head of the Drama Department was interviewed to provide insights into the course's institutional rationale and objectives. For the Input, Process, and Product phases, all 177 first-year drama majors enrolled in the Humanity course during the academic year were invited to participate. The sample reflected variation in gender, academic performance, and class participation, allowing for diverse perspectives. To deepen the analysis, 9 students were purposefully selected for interviews based on their quantitative scores in cognitive and emotional coping domains. This purposive sampling ensured theoretical saturation and included both high- and low-performing cases. All four course

instructors also took part in qualitative interviews, contributing insights on pedagogy, design, and implementation. Their educational and professional backgrounds were reviewed as part of the Input analysis. This multi-stakeholder sampling strategy enabled a comprehensive evaluation of the course from both learner and educator perspectives.

**Table 1** Participants in Each Step

The CIPP Model Step	Participants	Number of Participants
Step 1 Context Evaluation	Head of Drama Major	1
Step 2 Input Evaluation	Support Documents	3
Step 3 Process Evaluation	Drama Major Students	177
	Humanity Course Lecturers	4
	Selected Students	9
Step 4 Product Evaluation	Students Final Exam Score	177

## 2. Research Instruments

Various research instruments (Table 2) were employed to collect and analyze data, providing a comprehensive evaluation of the humanity course in the drama major at Sichuan Conservatory of Music:

**Table 2** Research Instruments in Each Step

The CIPP Model Step	Research Instrument
Step 1 Context Evaluation	Semi-Structured Interviews
Step 2 Input Evaluation	Documents from School Data Base
Step 3 Process Evaluation	Questionnaire & Semi-Structured Interviews
Step 4 Product Evaluation	Exam Score

Context Evaluation: Semi-structured interview was conducted with the Head of the Drama Department to obtain information on the designed philosophy and policy background of the humanity course.

Input Evaluation: Documentary analysis was used to examine the resumes of the four instructors, the basic information of the students, and the usage reports of the "Rain Classroom" platform, assessing the resources allocated to the humanity course.

Process Evaluation: Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were utilized. The questionnaires collected feedback from students, while the interviews explored the students' learning experiences and the instructors' teaching plans and methods in depth.

Product Evaluation: Excel software was used to perform statistical analysis on the students' final exam scores.

The interview protocol and questionnaire were developed based on the CIPP model and life skills framework. Content validity was verified by five experts in education and psychology, with IOC scores exceeding 0.80. A pilot test with 30 non-sample students yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89, indicating high reliability.

### 3. Data Collection

To address Research Objective 1, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the Head of the Drama Department and four course instructors to gather detailed insights into the course's design rationale, educational goals, and implementation strategies. Student questionnaires and teacher reflections supplemented the understanding of instructional practices and goal alignment. Final course assessments, including written exams and scriptwriting tasks, were also analyzed to evaluate students' learning outcomes.

For Research Objective 2, a structured questionnaire was administered to assess students' self-perceived development in creative thinking, critical thinking, and emotional coping skills. A total of 174 valid responses were collected, and the instrument demonstrated strong internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.86$ ). Based on score variation, nine students were purposively selected for in-depth interviews to explore how they internalized the course content and applied it to personal and academic challenges. Finally, data across all four CIPP dimensions were synthesized to address Research Objective 3 and generate targeted recommendations for course improvement.

### 4. Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 26.0. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) summarized central tendencies for each outcome variable. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically using NVivo. An open coding process was used initially to identify recurring patterns across transcripts. Codes were then grouped into higher-order themes aligned with the CIPP framework. For example, under Process, themes such as lecture-dominated instruction, student passivity, and demand for more interaction emerged. Under Product, themes included improved conceptual thinking, limited stress-coping support, and a desire for practical application. Matrix coding queries were used to cross-tabulate student and instructor perspectives, highlighting points of consensus and divergence. To ensure analytical rigor, investigator triangulation was conducted by three researchers who independently reviewed coding results and collaboratively resolved discrepancies. Member checking was also carried out, allowing interview participants to verify the accuracy of thematic summaries and clarify any misinterpretations.

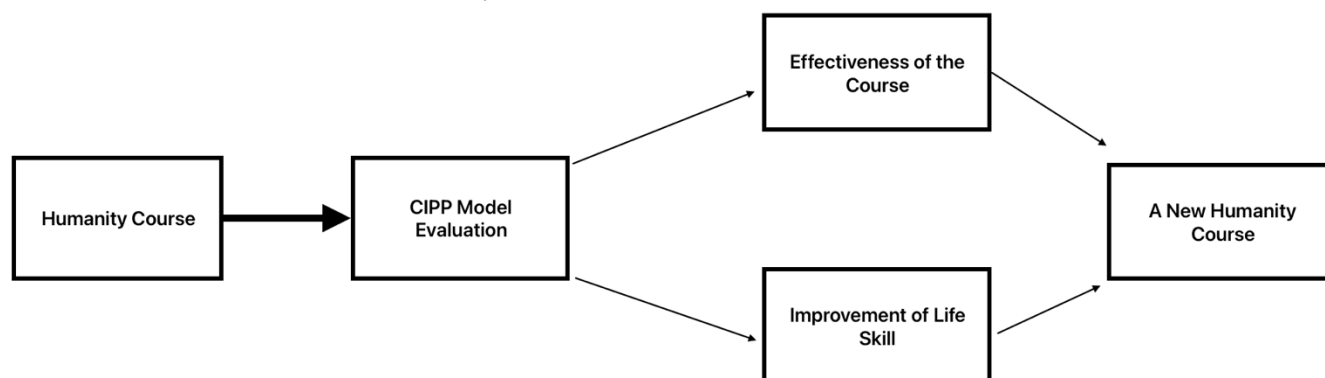
This integrated methodological design ensured both breadth and depth, capturing statistically aggregated trends and rich narrative accounts that together supported the final course evaluation and improvement recommendations.

### 5. Ethical Procedures

All participants were informed of the study's purpose and voluntarily agreed to participate. Written informed consent was obtained from both students and instructors prior to data collection. The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of Rangsit University (COA.NO.RSUERB2025-020), and all procedures adhered to institutional and international research ethics guidelines for studies involving human subjects.

## The Conceptual Framework

This study employed the Context–Input–Process–Product (CIPP) model as the guiding framework for the program evaluation (as shown in Figure 1). The evaluation was structured into four components: Context, which assessed the course objectives and their alignment with students’ academic and professional development needs; Input, which reviewed resources, instructor qualifications, and curriculum design; Process, which examined teaching practices, delivery quality, and student engagement; and Product, which focused on outcomes such as student satisfaction and perceived gains in creative thinking, critical thinking, and stress-coping skills.



**Figure 1** Conceptual of the Study

## Research Results

The quantitative sample consisted of 177 first-year undergraduate students majoring in drama at the Sichuan Conservatory of Music, with 57.1% female and 42.9% male. The majority (61.6%) were aged 18–20, and most reported entry exam scores in the 401–500 range (47.5%), indicating a relatively consistent academic foundation. Qualitative data were collected from four faculty members with 15 to 28 years of teaching experience across disciplines such as screenwriting, stage design, and musical theatre. Their instructional approaches included lectures, seminars, rehearsals, and practical workshops, reflecting both pedagogical diversity and disciplinary expertise.

This section presents the course evaluation results based on this participant background, focusing on instructional quality, student performance, and skill development outcomes.

### **1. The results of evaluating the effectiveness of the Humanity course for drama majors at SCM in achieving its educational goals.**

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Humanity course in achieving its educational goals, four key themes were identified from the interview data (see Table 3): (1) interdisciplinary content expanded cognitive boundaries, (2) disconnection between theory and practice, (3) inadequate emotional support, and (4) lack of cognitive–behavioral integration.

The first theme reflected the extent to which philosophical and social theories stimulated student reflection. As Student F remarked, “The discussion on existentialism really made me rethink the inner conflict of the character.” Instructor B noted, “At first, students were confused by the philosophical content, but they soon learned to apply these concepts to script analysis.” This was echoed by Coordinator A, who explained, “The course was designed to ensure drama students don’t just learn technique, but truly understand humanistic values—so they can portray people, not just characters.”

These insights indicated that the course successfully introduced interdisciplinary thinking aligned with its foundational aims.

**Table 3** Thematic Analysis of Objective 1

Code	Frequency	Category	Theme
Philosophy sparked new perspectives	14	Cognitive Development	Interdisciplinary Content Expanded Cognitive Boundaries
Existentialism deepened reflection	8		
Lacked rehearsal-based activities	17	Theory-Practice Disconnection	Disconnection Between Theory and Practice
Unclear application in performance	10		
Anxiety discussed without solutions	12	Emotional Support Limitations	Inadequate Emotional Intervention
No tools for emotional regulation	9		
Theory disconnected from execution	5	Pedagogical Reflection	Lack of Cognitive–Behavioral Integration
Time constraints blocked integration	4		

Themes two and three revealed structural gaps in implementation. Students and instructors consistently reported a lack of rehearsal-based activities and emotional regulation training. As Student D stated, “We talked a lot about anxiety, but no one taught us how to deal with it.” Instructor C added, “It’s hard to include emotional support when there’s no dedicated module for it.” These limitations also surfaced in the fourth theme, highlighting the absence of a coherent link between cognitive instruction and behavioral application.

The quantitative performance data further highlighted the imbalance between theoretical understanding and practical skill development. A total of 177 students completed the course and were assessed through two equally weighted components: a written examination evaluating their comprehension of philosophy, literature, and drama theory, and a scriptwriting assignment assessed across four subdimensions—integrative ability, creativity, critical thinking, and emotional regulation—each scored out of 10. The average final score was 76.65 (S.D. = 5.74, 95% CI [75.76, 77.54]), while the mean score for the written exam was 79.52 (S.D. = 9.19, 95% CI [78.00, 81.04]). These results suggested a generally solid grasp of theoretical content. The relatively narrow confidence intervals indicated stable performance estimates across the student cohort.

**Table 4** Final Score

Assessment Component	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max	95% CI
Final Score	76.65	5.74	62	92	[75.8, 77.5]
Written Exam	79.52	9.19	51	98	[78.15, 80.89]
Creativity (Scriptwriting)	7.26	1.33	4	10	[7.06, 7.46]
Critical Thinking (Scriptwriting)	7.03	1.38	3.5	10	[6.82, 7.24]
Integration (Scriptwriting)	7.2	1.2	4	9.5	[7.02, 7.38]
Stress Management (Scriptwriting)	6.99	1.49	3	10	[6.77, 7.21]

Among the scriptwriting subcomponents, creativity emerged as the strongest predictor of overall performance ( $r = 0.40$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $r^2 = 0.16$ ), followed by stress-handling ability ( $r = 0.34$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $r^2 = 0.12$ ) and critical thinking ( $r = 0.25$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $r^2 = 0.06$ ). These results indicate that creativity alone accounted for 16% of the variance in final scores, underscoring its central role in shaping course outcomes. Interestingly, a small but significant negative correlation was found between creativity and stress management ( $r = -0.16$ ,  $p = .04$ ,  $r^2 = 0.03$ ), suggesting that students with stronger creative potential may have been more susceptible to emotional volatility or cognitive overload under pressure—an insight that raises important considerations for curriculum pacing and student support.

**Table 5** Correlation Matrix of Final Score

	Written Exam (100)	Integration Score (10)	Creativity Score (10)	Critical Thinking Score (10)	Stress Handling Score (10)	Final Score (100)
Written Exam (100)	1.00	-0.01	0.18	-0.11	0.06	0.84
Integration Score (10)	-0.01	1.00	0.07	-0.03	-0.04	0.19
Creativity Score (10)	0.18	0.07	1.00	0.10	-0.16	0.40
Critical Thinking Score (10)	-0.11	-0.03	0.10	1.00	0.06	0.25
Stress Handling Score (10)	0.06	-0.04	-0.16	0.06	1.00	0.34
Final Score (100)	0.84	0.19	0.40	0.25	0.34	1.00

Note: Effect sizes ( $r^2$ ) for selected correlations Written Exam vs. Final Score:  $0.84^2 = 0.71$ , 95% CI [0.78, 0.88], Creativity Score vs. Final Score:  $0.40^2 = 0.16$ , 95% CI [0.25, 0.53], Critical Thinking vs. Final Score:  $0.25^2 = 0.06$ , 95% CI [0.12, 0.39], Stress Handling vs. Final Score:  $0.34^2 = 0.12$ , 95% CI [0.21, 0.48], Other values yield trivial effect sizes ( $r^2 < 0.03$ ) and were omitted for brevity.

Taken together, these results suggest that while the Humanity course effectively promoted interdisciplinary thinking, creativity, and analytical reasoning, it fell short in transferring these cognitive gains into practical and emotional competencies. The data point to a need for more integrated instructional design—linking theoretical instruction with applied rehearsal tasks and structured emotional resilience training—to fully realize the course’s intended educational outcomes.

## **2. The results of examining how the Humanity course has improved students' life skills, considering which life skills have developed and to what extent.**

During the implementation of the Humanity course, students’ development of life skills exhibited distinct structural differences. The results indicated that while the course was notably effective in promoting creative and critical thinking, it fell short in enhancing students’ emotional coping abilities.

In the domain of creative thinking, survey data revealed that students generally acknowledged the course’s positive influence on their cognitive expansion. The highest-rated item, “Whether the work presents a new perspective” ( $M = 4.24$ ,  $S.D. = 0.853$ ), reflected the course’s success in fostering originality and expressive depth. Similarly, strong ratings for “Logical complexity” ( $M = 4.20$ ) and “Practical adaptability” ( $M = 4.21$ ) suggested that students began to value not only innovation but also coherence and applicability in their creative work. These findings pointed to the course’s potential to bridge conceptual insight with practice, grounding students’ creative output in real-world relevance. However,

the slightly lower rating for “Whether the work stimulates discussion or emotional resonance” ( $M = 4.19$ ) implied that while the course activated cognitive engagement, it did not fully mobilize students’ affective responses.

**Table 6** Descriptive Statistics of Students’ Perceived Development in Creative Thinking

Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation
Creation presents a new perspective	4.24	0.85
Logical complexity of creation	4.20	0.89
Practical suitability of creation	4.21	0.87
Creation inspires discussion and emotional responses	4.19	0.90

A similar pattern emerged in the development of critical thinking. All related items received mean scores above 4.30, indicating broad student recognition of the course’s impact on their analytical depth and breadth. Notably, “Openness to new perspectives helps me understand complex issues” ( $M = 4.46$ ) and “Listening to others helps expand my understanding” ( $M = 4.42$ ) ranked highest, highlighting the course’s effectiveness in cultivating receptiveness to diverse viewpoints and deconstructing complex problems. These findings reinforced the long-term cognitive benefits of the course and underscored its role in shifting drama education toward value-driven and interpretive paradigms rather than merely technical training.

**Table 7** Descriptive Statistics of Students’ Perceived Development in Critical Thinking

Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation
I listen carefully and try to understand different points	4.42	0.74
Open to new perspectives helps me better understand complex issues	4.46	0.72
I break complex problems down and analyze step by step	4.35	0.75
I have a clear plan for problem solving	4.30	0.80
I feel confident in judgment, even when faced with complex problems	4.30	0.81
I seek information to understand new ideas	4.37	0.77
I am able to accept and understand multiple possible viewpoints	4.41	0.75

Compared to the demonstrated strengths in cognitive domains, students’ development in emotional coping skills appeared more complex and uneven. Quantitative data revealed that students performed relatively well in problem-focused coping strategies. High mean scores were observed for “I think seriously about solutions to complete the performance smoothly” ( $M = 4.42$ ,  $S.D. = 0.74$ ) and “I concentrate on doing something in order to complete performance” ( $M = 4.35$ ,  $S.D. = 0.81$ ), suggesting that the course had supported some students in cultivating rational decision-making and goal-oriented self-regulation. Cognitive reappraisal strategies also showed moderately high scores. Items such as “I adjust myself and accept the facts that have happened” ( $M = 4.31$ ,  $S.D. = 0.81$ ) and “Seeing things from different perspectives makes them look more positive” ( $M = 4.21$ ,  $S.D. = 0.88$ ) reflected students’ emerging ability to reinterpret stressful situations and regulate emotions through perspective-taking.

However, students reported noticeably lower satisfaction in areas related to emotional support-seeking and maladaptive coping. While responses to “I seek emotional support from others” ( $M = 4.10$ ,  $S.D. = 1.06$ ) and “I seek advice and help from others” ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $S.D. = 1.00$ ) remained above the midpoint, the relatively wide standard deviations suggested significant variation in students’ willingness or ability to rely on interpersonal support. More critically, maladaptive coping strategies received the lowest ratings. “If I feel nervous, I vent my feelings by saying something” ( $M = 3.87$ ,  $S.D. = 1.18$ ) and “I refused to believe that I would face a challenging task” ( $M = 3.32$ ,  $S.D. = 1.36$ ) indicated a lack of effective emotional regulation under pressure.

**Table 8** Descriptive Statistics of Students’ Perceived Development in Stress Coping Skills

Category	Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation
Problem-Focused Coping	I concentrate on doing something in order to complete performance	4.35	0.81
	I think seriously about solutions to complete the performance smoothly	4.42	0.74
Cognitive Reappraisal	Seeing things from different perspectives makes them look more positive	4.21	0.88
	I adjust myself and accept the facts that have happened	4.31	0.81
Emotional Support-Seeking	I seek emotional support from others	4.10	1.06
	I seek advice and help from others	4.02	1.00
Maladaptive Coping	If I feel nervous, I vent my feelings by saying something	3.87	1.18
	I refused to believe that I would face a challenging task	3.32	1.36

These gaps were further corroborated by qualitative interview data. Many students noted that, while theoretical discussions on anxiety and self-regulation were intellectually stimulating, they struggled to apply these concepts in real-life scenarios such as performance anxiety or interpersonal conflicts. One student commented, “We talked about stress and regulation in class, but right before going on stage, I still felt nervous and didn’t know how to manage it.” Instructors similarly observed that the course lacked structured components—such as stage anxiety management, guided reflection sessions, or techniques for emotional release—that could help students internalize and operationalize emotional coping strategies.

In sum, while the Humanity course made substantial strides in fostering cognitive life skills such as creativity and critical thinking, it remained limited in its ability to develop students’ emotional resilience and self-regulation competencies. This discrepancy pointed to a need for future curricular revisions to integrate more structured and experiential approaches to emotional skill development.

### **3. The revised “Humanity” course for drama students at SCM that addresses identified gaps and optimally integrates life skills development.**

In response to the third research objective—examining whether the revised Humanity course addressed previously identified gaps and effectively integrated life skills development—this study analyzed the redesigned curriculum structure (see Table 9). Compared to the original syllabus, which primarily emphasized philosophical and ethical texts, the updated course incorporated real-world issues, cross-cultural comparisons, and structured training in life skills. Each weekly module was designed to integrate core learning objectives such as creativity, critical thinking, emotional regulation, and social responsibility through a combination of lectures, philosophical readings, case studies, and experiential exercises.

**Table 9** Comparative Overview of the Revised Humanity Course

Week	Core Theme	Course Topics	Learning Methods & Activities	Key Changes from Original Plan
1	Foundations of Humanities and Critical Thinking	The Role of Humanities; Theater as a Medium of Inquiry	Core values discussion, theater case study	Expanded from basic concepts to philosophical inquiry; introduced case-based analysis, enhancing critical thinking
2	Moral Philosophy and Social Responsibility	Ethics, Social Issues in Drama, Gender & Emotion Regulation	Readings (e.g., Nietzsche), Stoic strategies, ethical debates	Broadened ethics framework; added practical Stoic techniques for emotion management
3	Global Cultural Exchange & Identity	Classical Literature, Creative Anxiety, Cultural Conflict	Cultural comparison, psychological research, reflective writing	Integrated cultural identity topics and emotional expression; responded to student anxiety concerns
4	Power, Politics, and Theater	Political Symbolism, Social Change	Textual analysis, historical critique of contemporary theater	Repositioned theater in sociopolitical discourse; fostered creative debate
5	Technology, Media, and Future Humanities	AI and Theater, Human-Technology Dynamics	Philosophical debate, case study, script analysis	Introduced ethical discussion on AI; connected media studies to theatrical creativity
6	Capstone & Interdisciplinary Applications	Final Paper, Public Presentation, Peer Feedback	Academic synthesis, audience presentation, stress management strategies	Replaced final exam with integrative project; added performance anxiety reflection and peer-supported feedback mechanisms

For example, in Week 2, the course shifted from Aristotelian ethics to topics such as cultural appropriation, gender in theater, and Stoic approaches to emotional control, providing students with frameworks to manage anxiety. Week 3 expanded from classical literary analysis to exploring cultural conflict and creative identity through comparative research, directly responding to earlier feedback about the course’s limited engagement with identity and stress-related issues. By Week 6, students engaged in an interdisciplinary capstone project that required them to synthesize knowledge from literature, theater, and emotion science, and to present their work through public sharing and peer review—addressing prior concerns about the lack of applied and integrative assignments.

Overall, the revised curriculum demonstrated a more intentional effort to embed life skills development into pedagogical practice, particularly in areas such as emotional resilience and critical engagement with sociocultural themes. This shift was not only evident in the instructional strategies but also reflected a broader redefinition of the course’s purpose—repositioning theater education as a means of personal and ethical growth, rather than solely artistic production.

**Discussions**

The Humanity Course effectively supported the development of students’ creative thinking. This finding was consistent with Hu and Shu (2025), who observed that drama education enhanced imagination and problem-solving through collaborative practices. Likewise, Samaniego et al. (2024) found that interdisciplinary arts curricula fostered creative cognition while promoting emotional awareness and self-expression. However, this study further indicated that the extent of creative growth was closely tied to the course’s instructional design. Creative outcomes did not arise solely from participating in drama activities; rather, students demonstrated higher levels of innovation when teachers explicitly encouraged

experimentation and reflective engagement (Chang et al., 2022). These results reinforced current educational perspectives that effective creativity development in the 21st century depends on inquiry-driven and cross-disciplinary teaching strategies (Chang et al., 2022).

Although the improvement in students' critical thinking was less pronounced than their growth in creativity, it still showed a clear upward trend. As noted by Hu and Shu (2025), collaborative activities in drama education enhanced students' ability to analyze and evaluate information. This study found that script analysis, group debates, and reflective discussions helped students approach issues from multiple perspectives and develop logical reasoning skills, aligning with Kotsidis and Dima's (2025) emphasis on the role of collaboration and dialogue in fostering critical reflection. However, the findings also indicated that when the course relied heavily on lectures and lacked practical components, students' critical thinking was less effectively activated. This echoed Guo et al.'s (2024) critique of traditional, theory-heavy instructional models. In contrast, integrative teaching approaches—such as combining theoretical study with performance—appeared more effective in encouraging students to apply critical thinking in real-world contexts, promoting greater cognitive flexibility and depth.

The study found that while students demonstrated adequate cognitive coping skills—particularly in goal-directed behavior and cognitive reappraisal—they showed notable weaknesses in emotional regulation and support-seeking. Although relevant theories were covered in class, the absence of contextualized practice limited students' ability to apply these strategies during performances. This disconnect between understanding and execution reflected what Kotsidis and Dima (2025) described as the “knowing–doing gap” in arts and humanities education. The wide variability in scores for maladaptive coping and emotional support further indicated insufficient emotional scaffolding within the course. As Wu et al. (2025) suggested, without resilience training, students were more likely to struggle with emotional regulation under pressure. To address this, future iterations of the course should incorporate structured experiential methods—such as role-play, scenario-based exercises, and reflective feedback—to better equip students for emotion management in high-pressure performance settings (Guo et al., 2024).

Although the Humanity Course demonstrated positive outcomes across multiple dimensions, a key limitation lay in the gap between theory and practice. As noted by Sanchez et al. (2023), the central challenge in drama education is not the content of theory itself, but how to embed it meaningfully within dynamic, multimodal learning environments. This study found that the course structure contributed to this disconnect, with theoretical and practical components taught separately and lacking integrative design. As a result, students struggled to internalize abstract humanistic concepts and translate them into performance. Moreover, the theoretical instruction primarily relied on lecture-based delivery, offering limited opportunities for experiential or interactive learning. Drawing on Kolb's experiential learning model, Javahery & Bavandi (2025) emphasized the importance of participatory practice for effective knowledge transfer, showing that active engagement is essential for skill internalization. Compared to passive instruction, embedding theoretical content into rehearsal and encouraging reflective application proved more effective in fostering applied understanding. In sum, addressing the theory–practice divide requires structural and pedagogical integration. Future course design should adopt cross-modal strategies and fuse theoretical learning with embodied practice to support students' development in creativity, critical thinking, and emotional regulation (Sanchez et al., 2023; Javahery & Bavandi, 2025).

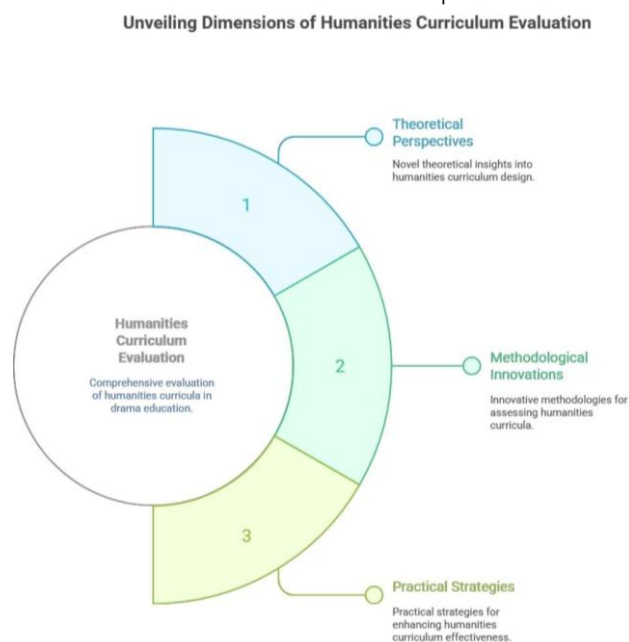
## Originality and Body of Knowledge

This study generated new theoretical, methodological, and practical insights into the design and evaluation of humanities curricula in drama education.

1. Theoretically, it introduced a triadic “Cognition–Emotion–Practice” evaluation model that emphasized a holistic view of humanities education—not merely as knowledge transmission, but as a framework for cultivating students’ creative thinking, critical reasoning, and emotional coping. This model addressed a key gap in previous studies that often focused solely on cognitive outcomes while neglecting affective and behavioral dimensions.

2. Methodologically, the study was among the first to integrate the CIPP model with life skills assessment tools, creating a multidimensional mixed-methods framework suited to arts-based curricula. This approach foregrounded the dynamic links between instructional intent, pedagogical process, and student outcomes, thereby advancing the shift from conceptual embedding of humanities content to structural integration within drama education.

3. Practically, the study outlined a dual-path strategy for curriculum enhancement, combining content innovation with pedagogical redesign. It highlighted the value of embedding diverse philosophical and cultural themes alongside project-based, contextualized, and reflective teaching methods. In particular, the course introduced emotional training modules grounded in Stoic philosophy, performance psychology, and VR simulation, positioning the humanities course not only as an intellectual space but also as a site for emotional resilience and behavioral development.



**Figure 2** New knowledge gained from the research

## Conclusions

This study applied the CIPP model to systematically evaluate the Humanity Course for drama majors at Sichuan Conservatory of Music, yielding actionable insights for curriculum improvement. The course was found to be effective in fostering students’ creativity and critical thinking, confirming its value in expanding knowledge and promoting analytical skills. However, it showed limitations in supporting

students' emotional regulation and stress coping, particularly due to the lack of contextualized training and experiential learning opportunities.

To address these gaps, the study proposed several enhancements: aligning theoretical content more closely with drama practice, incorporating project-based and reflective activities, updating assessment strategies, and introducing targeted stress management modules. These adjustments aimed to strengthen the course's contribution to students' holistic development—cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally. Beyond practical recommendations, the research also reflected on the suitability of the CIPP model in arts-based curriculum evaluation. The model proved effective in capturing the multifaceted nature of learning in humanities education by linking contextual needs, instructional design, process implementation, and learning outcomes. It facilitated a structured integration of quantitative and qualitative data and demonstrated transferability for longitudinal and cross-institutional studies in similar settings.

Ultimately, this study argued that the value of a Humanity Course in drama education lies not only in the delivery of disciplinary knowledge but also in cultivating reflective, creative, and emotionally resilient performers. The findings offered a foundation for modernizing curriculum design and aligning humanities instruction with the evolving demands of students and the performing arts industry.

## Recommendations

### 1. Policy and Practice Recommendations

This study underscored the unique value of humanities education in drama training but also pointed to the need for more systematic curricular and institutional integration. First, universities should be encouraged to embed philosophy, literature, and cultural studies into the general education framework of performing arts programs. These disciplines play a critical role in broadening students' cognitive horizons and deepening their intellectual development. Given the study's findings on students' limited emotional coping skills, it is recommended that emotion-related training—such as emotional regulation, performance anxiety management, and resilience-building—be incorporated into the course design. Faculty should also receive training and resources to support students' emotional well-being. To ensure ongoing curricular refinement, outcome-based evaluation systems combining quantitative and qualitative data should be established. Rather than attempting full-scale reform all at once, institutions are advised to pilot these adjustments through phased implementation, allowing time for iterative improvement based on feedback and context-specific challenges.

### 2. Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should expand upon the current findings by assessing the long-term and cross-contextual effectiveness of the revised curriculum. Longitudinal studies could follow students' creative development, career trajectories, and interdisciplinary collaboration skills one, three, and five years post-course. Comparative studies across different institutions and cultural settings would further clarify the curriculum's adaptability and relevance in diverse educational environments. Methodologically, future research may benefit from incorporating multimodal data sources, such as classroom video analysis, behavioral observation, and physiological indicators, to gain a more nuanced understanding of how pedagogical interventions affect students' cognitive engagement and emotional regulation. Experimental

designs, including the use of AI-assisted scriptwriting or VR-based rehearsal simulations, could offer new insights into how technology-enhanced learning environments contribute to the development of reflective, emotionally intelligent, and creatively capable drama practitioners.

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