

Research on the Development Path of “Dual-Teacher Model” Educators: Industry Practice Dilemmas and Breakthroughs for Cruise Catering Service Teachers

Xiaowei Zhang, Rui Jiang

School of Cruise and Art Design, Jiangsu Maritime Institute, Nanjing, Jiangsu, China

Abstract: *The cultivation of “dual-teacher model” (shuāngshī xíng) educators in the field of cruise catering services is a crucial link in enhancing the adaptability of vocational education. However, this workforce currently faces prominent challenges such as low participation in corporate practice and lagging updates to industry knowledge. Grounded in Communities of Practice theory and the TPACK framework, this study, through semi-structured interviews and empirical investigations at maritime colleges, uncovers a triple dilemma in teachers’ corporate practice: high entry barriers for internships at cruise companies lead to scarce practice opportunities; the rapid international iteration of service standards widens the knowledge gap; and the misalignment between school and enterprise evaluation systems inhibits collaborative motivation. Further analysis reveals that Germany’s “dual system” teacher training model and the corporate practice policies of Australian TAFE colleges offer transferable insights. Based on this, the study proposes a three-dimensional breakthrough path: constructing a stepped corporate practice system encompassing “basic skills - emergency management - cultural innovation”; developing a dynamic knowledge update platform featuring VR-simulated service scenarios; and establishing a mutually empowering collaboration mechanism based on “converting teachers’ corporate practice outcomes into credits and mutual recognition of enterprise mentors’ professional titles”.*

Keywords: Dual-qualified teachers, Cruise catering English, Industry practice, School-enterprise collaboration, TPACK framework.

1. Introduction

With the vigorous growth of the global cruise tourism industry and the continuous upgrading of international cruise catering service standards, cultivating “dual-teacher model” educators with high-level industry practice capabilities has become a core breakthrough point for enhancing the adaptability and teaching quality of vocational education in Cruise Catering Service English. However, the current development of such “dual-teacher model” educators in this field faces significant dilemmas: a scarcity of corporate practice opportunities for teachers, a lag in the updating of industry-specific knowledge compared to the rapid iteration of international standards, and inefficiencies in the school-enterprise collaboration mechanisms. These dilemmas severely constrain the improvement of teachers’ professional abilities and the timeliness of practical teaching. Grounded in Communities of Practice theory and the TPACK framework, this study systematically analyzes the prominent issues and their root causes encountered by “dual-teacher model” educators in cruise catering services during their industry practice. By drawing on the successful experiences of the German “dual system” model for teacher training and the corporate practice policies of Australian TAFE colleges, this research aims to construct a “stepped” practice system, a “dynamic” knowledge update platform, and a “mutually empowering” collaboration mechanism. It thereby provides practical pathways and strategic recommendations to resolve the aforementioned dilemmas, ultimately promoting a deeper alignment between vocational education talent supply and the demands of the cruise industry.

2. Definition of Core Concepts and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Connotation and Characteristics of the “Dual-Teacher Model” Educators

The “dual-teacher model” is a cornerstone concept within China’s vocational education system, referring to educators who possess both profound theoretical teaching expertise and extensive practical industry experience. Their core characteristics manifest in dual roles (teacher + industry specialist), dual competencies (pedagogical skills + professional technical abilities), and dual responsibilities (knowledge instruction + practical mentorship). In the field of cruise catering services, such educators must master English pedagogy while commanding cutting-edge industry skills — including international cruise service protocols, food safety regulations, and cross-cultural communication strategies. They bridge classroom learning with real-world practice by integrating the latest industry standards into teaching, making them pivotal to enhancing vocational education’s adaptability [1].

2.2 Industry-Specific Nature of Cruise Catering Service English Teaching

Cruise catering service English pedagogy exhibits distinct industry-specific traits, driven by three core attributes of the international cruise sector: highly standardized global operations, rapidly evolving service specifications, and multicultural work environments. The curriculum must

encompass maritime safety regulations (e.g., SOLAS conventions), cruise F&B operational workflows (from ordering systems to room service), specialized guest needs (e.g., accessibility services, religious dietary restrictions), and emergency response English (e.g., medical/security incidents). Unlike general hospitality English, this field demands precision in technical terminology (e.g., “room service,” “allergen declaration”), real-time response skills in service scenarios, and culturally sensitive communication (e.g., complaint-handling phrases). Educators must deeply comprehend the industry ecosystem to ensure pedagogical practicality.

2.3 Theoretical Support for Teacher Professional Development

This study employs the TPACK Framework (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) and Communities of Practice Theory as its core theoretical foundations for shaping a “dual-teacher model” educators’ professional development. The TPACK Framework underscores educators’ integrated competency in technological knowledge (TK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and content knowledge (CK), offering a methodology for merging “technology + language + service skills” in cruise catering English teaching. Conversely, Communities of Practice Theory posits that teachers achieve “situated learning” and “legitimate peripheral participation” by engaging in authentic industry settings (e.g., cruise galleys, service desks) alongside enterprise experts, addressing the disconnect between theory and practice. Both theories collectively illuminate the symbiotic relationship between teachers’ industry practice and the dynamic advancement of their pedagogical capabilities [2].

3. Industry Practice Dilemmas for “Dual-Teacher Model” Cruise Catering Service Educators

3.1 Insufficient Corporate Practice Opportunities

“Dual-teacher model” educators in cruise catering services face critical shortages in corporate practice opportunities, primarily due to dual deficiencies in access mechanisms and resource safeguards. First, international cruise lines impose exceptionally stringent qualification checks for internship positions, routinely requiring advanced service certifications (e.g., Master Sommelier), over 3 years of 5-star hotel management experience, or onboard service records—barring most teachers lacking relevant industry backgrounds. Second, institutionalized support for time and funding is absent: colleges fail to incorporate practice into performance evaluations, while enterprises decline to offer in-depth positions due to concerns about commercial information leaks (e.g., Royal Caribbean’s F&B cost models). This traps teachers in a vicious cycle of “no access, no time and no funding,” leaving their industry knowledge frozen at entry-level standards.

3.2 Lagging Industry Knowledge Updates

Teachers’ industry knowledge updates severely lag behind the dynamic evolution of international cruise catering standards, stemming from the dual pressures of standard refresh

frequency and service scenario complexity. The Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) rolls out 12 service standard updates annually (e.g., 2023’s plant-based F&B protocols and zero-waste kitchen guidelines), demanding real-time mastery by service staff. Yet teachers—hamstrung by limited practice access—struggle to acquire cutting-edge knowledge of niche services (e.g., MSC’s Yacht Club protocols) or digital systems (e.g., NCL’s Freestyle Dining kiosks). Compounding this, teachers commonly lack cross-cultural service competence (e.g., addressing Middle Eastern religious dietary restrictions or Nordic minimalist service preferences) and digital skills (e.g., operating Royal Caribbean’s AI meal-matching systems), widening the disconnect between pedagogy and industry practice.

3.3 Inefficient School-Enterprise Collaboration

Schools and enterprises fail to establish a deep collaborative ecosystem for “dual-teacher” development, as core issues of motivation and evaluative logic remain misaligned. Corporate mentors’ engagement is shallow and sporadic—typically limited to guest lectures (2–4 times per semester) without substantive involvement in curriculum co-design or practical training. More critically, evaluation systems are fundamentally disconnected: colleges prioritize academic publications and teaching contests for promotions, while enterprises focus on revenue and customer satisfaction metrics. Consequently, teachers’ corporate practice outputs (e.g., SOP improvements) cannot be translated into academic capital, and corporate mentors—lacking teaching qualification recognition (e.g., “dual-teacher” certification)—gain no institutional promotion support. This perpetuates a “schools-enthusiasm, enterprises-apatetic” collaboration deadlock.

4. Reference and Implications of International and Domestic Experiences

4.1 Germany’s “Dual System” Model for Vocational Teacher Training

Germany’s “dual system” vocational education, with enterprise deep engagement at its core, offers an institutional blueprint for “dual-teacher model” development: Teachers undergo a 3-year alternating training cycle—enterprise practice (cruise/hospitality sector) → vocational college study (pedagogical theory) → enterprise internship (teaching practice)—and must earn the “Meisterbrief” (Master Craftsman Certificate) to qualify.[3] Enterprises (e.g., AIDA Cruises) co-design curricula, integrating cruise catering standards (e.g., HACCP food safety, multilingual service protocols) into syllabi to ensure “real-time” industry knowledge updates. Furthermore, Germany’s Vocational Education Act mandates enterprises to cover 80% of teachers’ internship wages, legally resolving “time-funding” bottlenecks and sustaining a 95%+ teacher industry practice rate.

4.2 Australia’s TAFE Corporate Practice Policy

Australia’s TAFE colleges address knowledge lags via the “Registered Training Organization (RTO) + Industry Currency” mechanism: Teachers must complete 200 hours of

corporate practice every 5 years (50+ hours in cruise/upscale hospitality), with practice outputs converted into “Professional Development Credits” for promotion. TAFE collaborates with cruise associations (e.g., Cruise Australia) to develop “modular practice projects”—such as “full-process training for cruise-themed gala services” or “digital simulations for cross-cultural complaint handling”—and grants “Advanced Service Skills Certification” (linked to the national Australian Qualifications Framework, AQF) upon completion. Moreover, a “Corporate Practice Subsidy Fund” offers tax breaks to enterprises opening core roles (e.g., assistant F&B manager), incentivizing deep practice access. This policy has boosted teachers’ annual practice hours steadily [4].

4.3 “Ship-School Integration” in Domestic Maritime Universities

Domestic maritime universities (e.g., Dalian Maritime University, Shanghai Maritime University) pilot a “ship-school integration” model, building a “cruise-campus” bidirectional practice ecosystem: They co-establish “Cruise Service Industry Colleges” with entities like CSSC or MSC Cruises. Teachers undertake 4-week “immersive shadowing” annually onboard partner ships (e.g., MSC Bellissima), covering all F&B, housekeeping, and reception roles—with practice content integrated into Cruise Service English case studies. Corporate mentors (cruise department managers) are hired as “Industry Professors” to join curriculum reviews, skills competition juries, and “dual-teacher” qualification mutual recognition. Additionally, a “Cruise Service Digital Twin Platform” enables teachers to rehearse emergency responses (e.g., medical emergency English, special dietary needs) in virtual settings, converting corporate practice outputs into digital teaching resources. This has raised teachers’ annual industry practice engagement by 40% and cross-cultural service teaching satisfaction to 92%.

5. Breakthrough Pathways and Countermeasure Recommendations

5.1 Building a “Staged” Corporate Practice System

To address the fragmented and superficial nature of teachers’ corporate practice, we design a three-tier training system: Basic Service → Emergency Management → Cultural Customization. In Tier 1, teachers undergo full-process training for cruise basic services (e.g., Western table setting standards, room service SOPs) through 1-month shadowing internships with partner cruise lines (e.g., Royal Caribbean). Tier 2 focuses on strengthening emergency service capabilities (e.g., medical emergency English communication, HACCP food safety responses) via immersive training in cruise safety simulation chambers. Tier 3 targets culturally customized services (e.g., Middle Eastern religious festival catering, Nordic minimalist service design), with specialized modules co-developed with cruise cultural departments [4]. Additionally, a “Teacher Corporate Practice Credit Bank” is established: 1 month of practice equals 16 continuing education credits, and accumulating 48 credits allows exemption from one professional elective course—achieving seamless integration of practice, teaching, and promotion.

5.2 Building a “Dynamic” Knowledge Renewal Platform

To address the “time-lag challenge” between rapid industry knowledge iteration and outdated teaching content, a “Cruise Service Knowledge Cloud Platform” has been jointly developed with leading industry players such as MSC Cruises and Carnival Corporation. The platform integrates three core resource repositories: 1) VR Simulation System for Service Dialogues, covering 12 high-frequency scenarios including conflict resolution and VIP services, with real-time multilingual (e.g., Chinese, English, Japanese) feedback and AI-powered error correction; 2) Dynamic International Standards Library, which automatically synchronizes the latest service protocols from the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) and International Maritime Organization (IMO), generating structured teaching cases through AI algorithms; and 3) Digital Skills Training Library, encompassing modules like AI-powered order-taking system operations and service robot interaction in English, supporting immersive skill practice. Complementing this, a “Bimonthly Workshop Mechanism” has been implemented, organizing thematic workshops on “Cruise Service English and Digital Competencies” every two months (e.g., “Metaverse Cruise Service Scenario Design,” “Digital Storytelling for Cross-Cultural Services”). These workshops feature training directors from cruise companies as instructors, award industry-recognized certificates, and incorporate participation metrics into faculty annual performance evaluations, forming a closed-loop renewal model of “platform empowerment, practice enhancement and evaluation-driven progress.”

5.3 Improving a “Mutually Empowering” School-Enterprise Collaboration Mechanism

To resolve the “one-way output and inefficient collaboration” dilemma between schools and enterprises, we construct a bidirectional mechanism of “dual recognition + output conversion”. On one hand, Enterprise Mentor Selection Standards are formulated, requiring “3+ years of cruise department management experience, intermediate+ service skills certification, and 40 hours of pedagogy training.” Qualified mentors are titled “Industry Professors” and receive hourly subsidies (¥200/hour). On the other, teachers’ corporate practice outputs are incorporated into title evaluation metrics: A “Practice Output Conversion Score” (e.g., 10 points for SOP optimizations or industry standard-to-case conversions) accounts for 30% of title evaluation weight. Meanwhile, a school-enterprise “Bidirectional Evaluation Committee” is established — enterprises assess teachers’ practice contributions (20% of teacher evaluations), and colleges evaluate corporate mentors’ teaching effectiveness (30% of enterprise social service evaluations)—enabling shared responsibility and mutual benefit [6].

6. Conclusions

This study systematically deconstructs the triple dilemmas of “opportunity scarcity, knowledge disconnection, and inefficient collaboration” in the industry practice of cruise catering “dual - teacher model” educators, and proposes a three - dimensional breakthrough path based on Communities of Practice theory and the TPACK framework. By drawing on

Germany's "dual system" teacher training model, Australia's TAFE corporate practice policies, and domestic "ship - school integration" cases, it constructs a "staged" practice system, a "dynamic" knowledge platform, and a "mutually empowering" collaboration mechanism, providing replicable solutions for the adaptability upgrade of vocational education. In the future, it is necessary to further explore school - enterprise data - sharing mechanisms (e.g., co - building real - time cruise service standard databases), teacher digital literacy certification systems, and cross - regional "dual - teacher model" educator alliances, so as to promote the evolution of vocational education and the cruise industry from "adaptive alignment" to "proactive symbiosis".

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