

## **From Balancing ‘Skills’ and ‘Principles’ to Paradigm Shift: A Case Study of Hong Kong Baptist University in Teaching Communication and Media**

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### **Abstract**

Based on the case study of the pedagogical practices of the School of Communication of Hong Kong Baptist University, this paper scrutinizes how teaching of media and communication keeps pace with the rapid changes of the media industry and social realities under the impact of technological advancement, and in particular artificial intelligence. From the perspective of the sociology of knowledge, we analyse the transformations and evolutions in media and communication education during the three stages of the development of the School, starting from balancing ‘Skills’ and ‘Principles’, namely the struggles between practice-driven teaching and theory-based teaching, to the paradigm shift with the dominance of new knowledge and curriculum design that creates synergy of teaching and technology. Apart from theoretical and practical implications on media and communication education, the study suggests a new balance in the new paradigm.

*Keywords:* media education, sociology of knowledge, case study

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## Introduction

From its infancy to adulthood, the media industry has undergone perpetual and continuous evolutions and developments. It has met with unprecedented changes since the emergence of Internet technology in the twentieth century. With a technological basis on deep neural networks and interdisciplinary combinations of big data, cloud computing, and mobile Internet, the rapid development of artificial intelligence has reshaped and reconstructed the media industry and simultaneously questioned and challenged the ethical foundation of journalistic professionalism.

In such a context, the teaching of media and communication has to keep pace with the rapid changes of the media industry under the impact of myriad technological developments. Furthermore, it signals the constant but stimulating debate on whether the paradigms of media and communication educators should be transformed to keep up with the social and industrial changes. The media education in the past as the values and tradition of this discipline conflicts with the dynamics and transformations of technologies, thus, to raise the pedagogical issue in the discipline of the day—how to choose the appropriate means to teach communica-

tion/media that strategically balance the tradition and transformation.

The debate over the ways and means of journalism and communication pedagogies can be traced back to the discussion of ‘Skills’ and ‘Principles’ fifty years ago, namely the struggles between practice-driven teaching and theory-based teaching (Greenberg, 2007). Finally, the consensus is tentatively achieved with ‘Principles’ overlaying ‘Skills’.

However, the focal point of media and communication studies has shifted with the dominance of technology in the communication industry a decade ago, which results in the debate on the paradigm shift of teaching communication and media. This means, broadly speaking, a new way of thinking that is accompanied by associated theories, rules, models and assumptions is possible to take place and to cause news practices in the field of media education. It is important to note that the paradigm shift in education includes operational changes, yet additionally ideological and cultural changes at different levels from individual, group to system (Cheng, 2015). Driven by the technological innovations along with the globalization and changes in socio-economic context, knowledge needs to be reconceptualised when sociology is to make its potential contribution to current debates about the