

## **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

curriculum and how it should be delivered.

The discussion about how technological revolution in the media industry reconstructs the relationship between ‘Skills’ and ‘Principles’, is casting doubt on whether it will lead to the emergence of a new branch of the discipline, or a thorough reformation of it. Akin to the multifaceted development of mediated communication, the development of media and communication pedagogy also involves the interplay between theories and practices with dynamics and flux. In the context of technological advancement of media and communication, should we replace the existing knowledge system of media and communication pedagogy with the paradigmatic dominance of knowledge in new technologies? The ‘Missouri model’ from the Missouri School of Journalism has foregrounded the tradition and profession of ‘hands-on’ in journalistic practices, which has not changed over time (Zhang & Li, 2019). In such a challenging time of teaching media and communication, how could we implement the paradigm shift in education realities?

The institutional development of journalism education in the Greater China area is differentiated in their starting time, with convergence and divergence in pedagogical modalities, enriching and diver-

sifying various characteristics. As part of it, Hong Kong is characterized as a world city and an information hub in Asia, with a rapidly developing society, a free flow of information, and excellent transportation facilities. Different media institutions can report various social agendas with diversity and plurality. Freedom of speech and independent editorial policy is the ethical foundation of media and communication education, which has the mission to nurture professional talents for society and interact with the social realities actively, thus serving as the window to social developments. Conversely, the research on how the society has informed media and communication studies contributes to a better understanding of Hong Kong media and communication education.

This paper conducts a case study on the pedagogical practices of the School of Communication of Hong Kong Baptist University. From the perspective of the sociology of knowledge, this study aims to analyze the development of media and communication education in the new context of social realities and media ecology, and to investigate its challenges and countermeasures, with an attempt to clarify existing issues based on the changes of knowledge system and the transformation of the industry.

### **Sociology of Knowledge and Media and Communication Teaching**

The sociology of knowledge is the study of the relationship between human thought and society, which originates from sociology. It was pioneered by the philosopher Max Scheler and further developed with its theoretical foundation built and concreted by the sociologist Karl Mannheim. In *Ideology and Utopia*, Mannheim (1936) developed the unique view that a scope of social positions decides forms of knowledge and that it is not conceivable to compare points of view in terms of degrees of truth-value.

As Merton (1968) stated, in any sociology of knowledge, there are three crucial areas: the social, knowledge and the relationship which is held to exist between these two. In short, it is an individual discipline dealing with the fundamental questions of individuals' knowledge in human society from the perspective of sociology.

The theory of sociology of knowledge has been applied to pedagogical studies since the late 1960s, simultaneously extending the studies of the sociology of education. Such studies involve the connection between knowledge and power, with an attempt to explore how education process has been influenced by politics, economy, social class, and ideology (Apple, 1976;

Bernstein, 1971; Witty & Young, 1976). In this respect, it investigates and critiques the content and formulation of the curriculum (Chen, 2000). Scholars maintain that curriculum design aiming to deliver the knowledge. Nonetheless, the process is impacted by social structure and ideologies. The sociology of knowledge and pedagogy studies contribute to the formulation of a critical perspective on curriculum design and adjustment for these educators, shedding light on the connection between social realities and curriculum development (Zhou, 1995). Young (1971) demonstrates that social construction rather than taken-for-granted assumptions formulates the knowledge of education, thus characterized as dynamic and flux. The social changes reshape the education, foregrounding the pedagogical issues and challenges (Chen, 2006). Specifically, the social changes can directly influence the content, methods, intended teaching outcomes, teaching staff and teaching equipment of media and communication pedagogy (King, 1971).

In a nutshell, scholars in the field of the sociology of educational knowledge have undertaken inquiries and critiques into the institutional curriculum content from the perspectives of ideologies and social structures (Toulmin, 1999; Dahlberg & Popkewitz, 2000; Ball, 2008; Seddon, 2014), with less emphasis on integrating

and analyzing the technological impact on the educational knowledge, neglecting the role of technological advancement in the social development. However, knowledge is in need of reconceptualization when the social circumstance is to exert its potential influence on the current discussions about the curriculum (Moore & Young, 2001). Thus, to fill the research gap, this study aims to investigate the technological impact and corresponding influence of emerging knowledge system in the field of the media and communication teaching from the perspectives of sociology of knowledge. In such a vein, it will also examine the transformations and evolutions in practical paradigms.

## **Overview of Hong Kong Society and the Case Study**

### ***Hong Kong Society***

#### ***1. The Political System***

Hong Kong was handed over from the British colony and became a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China in 1997, and the Basic Law came into effect at the same time. The Basic Law is Hong Kong's regional constitutional document, which stipulates 'one country, two systems', 'Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong' and a high degree of

autonomy in legal form. According to the Basic Law, the previous capitalist system and way of life shall remain unchanged for 50 years. The rights and freedoms of people in Hong Kong are based on the impartial rule of law and an independent judiciary. The representative of Hong Kong SAR is the Chief Executive, elected by a broadly representative Election Committee and appointed by the Central Government. Under the representative government structure, the central level is the Legislative Council, which is responsible for enacting laws, approving public expenditures, and monitoring the performance of administrative agencies; at the regional level, there are 18 district councils that provide opinions on the implementation of policies in their respective regions. Hong Kong has an independent judicial authority responsible for the execution of judicial work and trial cases in accordance with the law. After the reunification in 1997, Hong Kong society has formed two major confrontational forces around the preference for 'one country' or respect for 'two systems'. The governance of the government has become increasingly politicized, which stimulates the democratic movement for universal suffrage in 2014 and the Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement in 2019, and the subsequent large-scale social confrontations until June 2020, causing the

National People's Congress directly to enact the National Security Law for Hong Kong from the national level. Hong Kong is facing enormous challenges.

## ***2. The Education System***

The development of higher education (post-secondary education) system in Hong Kong has a history of more than 100 years, beginning with the establishment of the University of Hong Kong in 1911. Hong Kong's education system changed from cultivating elites in the 1980s, to fully introduce the British higher education management system, to quasi-popularization in the 2000s, and now it became a universal higher education society in the 2010s (Hu, 2017).

Hong Kong universities have been reluctant to conduct research studies in the past. In the 1970s, higher education in Hong Kong was about to be expanded, and the community began to debate whether the government should use government funds for research and development; until the 1980s, the government still rejected the establishment of a research grant committee to allocate government funding for universities and colleges for research. Colleges and universities had to apply for funding in a competitive manner. The University Grants Committee pointed out that at that time, the govern-

ment believed that scientific research in universities was very expensive, and private organizations could be responsible for their own research and development projects according to market conditions (Hong Kong University Grants Committee, 1996). Until 1991, the Research Grants Council was established to advise the government on the academic research needs of Hong Kong higher education institutions, including the identification of priority areas, so as to develop an academic research foundation that can sustain the thriving academic development and meet the needs of Hong Kong society. Additionally, through the higher education institutions, the Research Grants Council invites and accepts academic applications for research grants and various postgraduate applications for scholarships, and allocates funds provided by the government through the UGC for research grants and other related expenditures. At present, the research work of higher education institutions in Hong Kong has become a common practice, and it is in the first echelon in the global university competition.

## ***3. The Economic Development***

In the late 1960s when the Department of Communication of Hong Kong Baptist University was established, Hong Kong began to experience the 'economic

take-off', and the economy was developing towards diversification. In the past half-century, Hong Kong's economic development can be divided into three main stages (Zhang et al., 2009). The first stage was from the 1950s to the 1970s, which was also the stage when Hong Kong's economy took off after the war. During this period, Hong Kong gradually transformed from an entrepot to an industrial city dominated by manufacturing. In the 1970s, Hong Kong's economic structure changed dramatically, with the average growth rate of annual GDP reaching 9.1%, which was the fastest growth rate among newly industrialized countries and regions in Asia (Liu, 2016). From the 1980s to the 1990s, Hong Kong's manufacturing industry moved northward to the 'Pearl River Delta' in Chinese mainland, and the economy moved towards the financial industry. The high-end service industry has transformed, and Hong Kong has become a global financial and commercial centre at this stage. After returning to China in 1997, it has continued to develop into a high-value-added service industry and has begun to act as a bridge linking the Chinese mainland economy with international financial and trade services. Hong Kong's economic development has begun a new stage that is different from the time before 1997.

#### **4. The Development of the Media Industry**

Hong Kong has advanced communication technology and a developed media industry. As of November 30, 2019, in addition to 82 daily newspapers and 531 periodicals (including several electronic newspapers), there are also three licensed local free television program service and two licensed local paid television program service, 12 non-local licensed television program service, one government-funded radio stations, and two commercial radio stations with licenses (Hong Kong Information Services Department, 2019). Hong Kong is the Asia-Pacific base for many international news agencies, global newspapers, and overseas broadcasters and other media organizations, such as *AFP*, *Bloomberg*, *Dow Jones*, *Thomson Reuters*, *Financial Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times International Edition*, *CNN*, *Channel News Asia*, etc. Due to its geographical location and economic and political status, Hong Kong has been valued by the international media, the future trend 'will only strengthen but not weaken', and the process of internationalization will accelerate (Liu, 2018). However, as Hong Kong society has become increasingly politicized and confrontational, the media's space for autonomy has shrunk, and the industry is facing a major reorganization and reshuffle.

### ***Case Study: School of Communication of Hong Kong Baptist University***

The history of journalism education in Hong Kong is not long as the standardization of journalism education began in the 1960s. The establishment of the School of Communication of Hong Kong Baptist University began with the first Department of Communication founded in Hong Kong in 1968, and was upgraded to an independent college in 1991. It is one of the pioneers of communication education in Hong Kong.

The word ‘傳理’ is the Chinese translation of ‘Communication’ at the time. According to the explanation from Professor Timothy Yu who was the founder of the Department of Communication, the word ‘Communication’ was just introduced into the Chinese world at that time, and there was no unified translation. Professor Yu believes that as physics is translated as knowledge of matter, psychology is translated as knowledge of mind, communicating should also have the knowledge system. Therefore, he named ‘Communication’ as the knowledge of communicating.

The School of Communication of HKBU currently consists of the School of Film, the Department of Journalism, and the Department of Communication, offering undergraduate, postgraduate, advanced diploma

and degree bridging courses. There are more than 2,000 students and more than 150 faculty members. Its communication courses have cultivated a large number of practitioners in news communication, film and television. In 2011, the HKBU School of Communication was selected by the news website Asian Correspondent as the top ten journalism schools in the world for Asian students, and also ranked in the forefront of the QS global subject rankings. The following is an overview of the history of HKBU School of Communication in three stages.

#### ***1. 1968 to 1990: Truth is Virtue, Skills first***

In 1968, starting with a classroom of tens of square meters, a new department of Hong Kong Baptist College, the Department of Communication, was established. The department was not prospected highly at the time, and it was even questioned that it would create abundant of unemployment among graduates. Unexpectedly, more than one thousand application letters were received in the end. After the written examinations and interviews, 111 people were admitted. The history of the school of Communication began.

The founding dean of the School of Communication is Professor Timothy Yu, known as the ‘Father of Hong Kong Com-



munication Education'. Professor Timothy Yu believes Communication is a discipline to teach theory and practice, whereas there was no unified translation for the English word 'Communication', as it was just introduced to China. The School of Communication of HKBU thereupon introduced the independent and brand new discipline of communication to Hong Kong (Zhang, 2018). Before the establishment of the School of Communication, a number of tertiary or higher education institutions in Hong Kong offered some media courses (such as the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Zhuhai College, etc.), but they were all named as 'news' subjects, HKBU initiated the new fields of mass communication which include advertising, public relations, film and television and etc. On the basis of traditional journalism education, literature and history, Professor Timothy Yu brought elements from social science into communication education, which marked that Hong Kong's communication education has entered a new stage of formal education. The Department of Communication is designed as a four-year diploma course, offering three majors in journalism, broadcasting and public relations.

In 1973, the Department of Communication was revised into four specialties: journalism, radio and television broadcasting, public relations and advertising,

and media education. In 1987, the first degree program, Bachelor of Social Sciences (Honours) in Communication, was launched. It followed the British university model, changing the four-year undergraduate programs to the three-year undergraduate programs.

The Department of Communication at that time focused on teaching and training, concentrating on cultivating students' practical experience and professional skills. The Department of Communication opened up a new chapter for Hong Kong's traditional university education in 1971, by encouraging students to publish two physical newspaper, 'The Young Reporter' in English and '新報人' in Chinese. These two newspapers are the oldest and uninterrupted Chinese and English newspapers for college students in Hong Kong, and it has always been a platform for communication students to perform journalism practice. The positioning of these two physical newspapers is not just a student newspaper on campus, but a newspaper that reports social events, including news, news features, special reports and editorials. The staffing plans and procedures are the same as the official newspapers. Moreover, the students also arrange the editing, shooting and scheduling by themselves, the printing was also settled by students, as the school sets its own printing presses.

After Professor Timothy Yu, the most important founding father of Hong Kong TV news, Mr. Raymond Wong took over as the second head of the Department of Communication in 1974. Mr. Raymond Wong graduated from the Department of Journalism of the University of Missouri in the United States. He has worked as a reporter and editor in many local newspapers in the United States, and participated in interviews on the Vietnam War. As a media practitioner with both theory and practical experience, Mr. Raymond Wong brought the modern journalism theory and practice into the Department of Communication, advocating an educational approach that parallels learning and practice. Senior media person Mr. Chang Kuo-sin served as the third dean of the Department of Communication from 1978 to 1985. He often encourages students that Truth is virtue. This sentence emphasizes that the communicators shoulders the responsibility of seeking truth and morality, which later became the motto for the school, which has been passed down to this day. Mr. Chang Kuo-sin also has rich experiences in journalism, journalism education, politics and China reporting, and the entire department's teaching curriculum and teaching are also practical at that time.

Media is a profession. From the establishment of the department in 1968 to

1990, the Department of Communication of HKBU focused on professional skills training and has trained a large number of graduates to join Hong Kong media and public relations agencies to promote the development of the industry.

## ***2. 1991 to 2014: Lead by Principles, Balance Principles and Skills***

After the Hong Kong Baptist College began to receive government funding in the 1980s, it gradually shifted to an education model that emphasizes both teaching and research. The School of Communication (department) also began to transform, integrating the methods and results of Western journalism education in educational culture, and gradually establishing a suitable media education system in Hong Kong society (Yu et al., 1998).

In 1991, the Department of Communication was upgraded to the School of Communication, with three departments: Film and Television, Journalism and Communication. The first dean of the School of Communication was Professor John Lee Jellicorse. As a leader with academic background, he bases the School of Communication on a broader platform, comprehensively expands advanced degree courses, and establishes a more complete progression ladder.

Starting from the 1990s, the School of

Communication started to transform and develop in the direction of principles, offering advanced degree courses, including Master of Philosophy in Communication (research), Doctor of Philosophy in Communication (research), and Master of Arts in Communication (part-time). Entering the millennium, the college offers a full-time Master of Arts in Communication, a Master of Film, Television and Digital Media Arts (three-year MFA), a Master of Social Sciences in Media Management, and a Master of International Journalism. Among them, the Master of Social Sciences in Media Management was established in 2006, this course is the first of its kind in the Asia-Pacific region. As for the Bachelor of Social Sciences (Honours) in Communication, since 2004, it has offered five major subjects, namely film and television, digital image communication, journalism, organizational communication and public relations and advertising. In 2012, under the new four-year undergraduate academic system, the college adjusted the major subjects, divided into film and media art, journalism, organizational communication, public relations and advertising.

In 1994, Hong Kong Baptist College was upgraded to Hong Kong Baptist University. The upgraded legislation states that the future positioning of the university is to pay equal attention to both teaching and

research. During the Baptist College period, teachers could ‘teach but not research’, while teachers at Baptist University had to ‘teaching and research’. The School of Communication also needs to transform to ‘emphasis on teaching and research’, expand the degree courses after bachelor’s degree, and improve the level of research.

Professor Leonard Chu, the second dean of the School of Communication, took office in 1995. Soon after he took office, Professor Chu issued an open letter mentioning that the School of Communication should learn from the School of Communication of Stanford University, which emphasizes theoretical research; as well as the School of Journalism of Columbia University, which is known for practice. Professor Chu believes that the School should attach importance to academic theory, but not give up practical teaching. He advocated the School and various departments to host academic conferences, encouraged and subsidized teachers and graduate students to participate in international academic conferences, and invited the editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Communication of the International Communication Association (ICA)* to visit and share the experience in submission procedures and selection of academic journals, cultivating the academic atmosphere and research atmosphere.

In the field of research, the School of Communication established the Media and Communication Research Centre, which is responsible for organizing various international conferences, multimedia lectures and workshop series, and inviting international experts and scholars to share the latest developments in media. In addition, the Chinese academic journal *Communication and Society*, which is co-organized with the School of Journalism and Communication of The Chinese University of Hong Kong and has successively become the core journal of the Taiwan Social Science Citation Index (TSSCI) and the world's first Chinese subsidiary of the ICA Journal.

While improving the level of research, the School of Communication also values the importance of practice and close ties with the industry in its operations. Since 2007, the Department of Journalism has initiated the Pulitzer Prize Winners Workshop. Every two years, the Pulitzer Prize winners are invited to HKBU for a week of lectures and exchanges of experience. The Department of Film and Television (now the Academy of Film) held the University Student Film and TV Award in the Greater China Regions and expanded into a global competition in the Global University Film Awards in 2018 to provide talents for the emerging film and television industry in

Greater China.

During this period of time, the School of Communication mainly explored the balance between Principles and Skills. It transformed from a professional teaching-oriented to a school that places equal emphasis on both research and teaching and began to offer postgraduate degrees. Since the early 2000s, universities in Hong Kong have also introduced the teaching quality assurance systems from the United Kingdom and Australia, which set many specific teaching requirements in form to test the quality of teaching. This set of supervision system which is convenient for managers incorporates teaching into a set of key performance indicators (KPI) for assessment. However, the cumbersome and tossing of this system has caused confusion for teachers and has also brought negative effects on teaching during the initial implementation of several years. effect. Fortunately, the university's autonomous tradition and teachers gradual adaptation to the system have helped the university to step out of the quagmire, thus back to the phase where let teaching to teaching and supervision to supervision. During this period, the School of Communication was in a state of catching up in research, and professional training continued to explore and advance on a solid foundation.

### ***3. 2015 to present, new knowledge and paradigm shift***

The wide application of big data and artificial intelligence in media communication and social media promotes new interdisciplinary knowledge led by data and computers (such as big data, network interaction, algorithm and coding, healthy environment, automatic content generation, etc.) into the classroom with systematically. Subsequently, the educational model of the School of Communication has shifted to a new paradigm since 2015. Firstly, the School streamlined the major subjects. Starting from 2016, there are three major subjects, including Film, Journalism and Public Relations and Advertising. There are eight concentrations under three majors, including International News, Chinese News, Data and Media Communication, Organizational Communication, Public Relations, Advertising and Branding, Film and Television, Animation and Media art. Among the concentrations, the major of Data and Media Communication is a new course co-organized with the Department of Computer Science, which is the first of its kind in the Asia-Pacific region.

In terms of research, the School of Communication covers all aspects of media and communication research, including theoretical and applied research, and explores across the academic fields of computer/big

data, health environment, communication, social science and humanities. The college conducts various cooperative research plans and projects with scholars from other faculties, local universities and overseas universities. The teachers will carry out different applied research and surveys for different enterprises and public sectors. The number of students enrolled in research postgraduate programs in the School of Communication each year has doubled from five to six to 10 to 12. There are currently more than 50 PhD and Master of Philosophy students from Hong Kong SAR, Chinese mainland, the United States, the Czech Republic, Poland, Italy, Bulgaria, Philippines, India, Greece, Africa and Pakistan.

The newly established The Centre for Film and Moving Image Research (FMIR) and AI and Media Research Lab, together with the original Centre for Media and Communication Research, expanded the scope of research and nurtured innovative research and cooperation projects that kept pace with the times.

At this time, the School of Communication regards internationalization as its core strategy. The corresponding measures include increasing the number of teachers and students with international backgrounds, organizing overseas exchange programs, establishing partnerships with overseas universities, providing overseas

internship opportunities, and supporting cross-regional research cooperation, support global research projects, encourage teachers and students to participate in high-level international conferences, etc. For example, the School of Communication has established long-term cooperative relations with the University of Leipzig in Germany and Ohio University in the United States in 2015. Teachers and students from the three universities would have regular visits, learning, and exchanges. In 2018, the ‘Asian Journalism Fellow Scheme’ was launched, the School of Communication invited well-known Asian journalists to visit the School for one semester, and held lectures, workshops and other activities at the same time.

### **Tradition and Transformation: Problems and Solutions for the Dilemma of Innovation and Tradition**

#### ***Challenges from Technologies***

Innovative technologies and revolutionary online mediated communication have developed and advanced at a rapid pace. Digital native media has emerged and developed since 2000 and has witnessed a boom in 2010. In 2016, the market scale of digital native media had surpassed the one of traditional media with digital platforms. *The Hong Kong Digital Media Report*

*2018* demonstrates that technology advancement has a significant impact on the traditional media institutions (Li & Man, 2018). Many media practitioners negatively speculate the not-too-distant future of the Hong Kong media industry, but also believe that new media is the crucial issue in the future development of the industry.

The report also shows that new media technologies of data journalism, virtual reality, and visual display have not been extensively applied in the media industry of Hong Kong. The automated generation of news reports with the assistance of artificial intelligence technology is still not achievable for Hong Kong media institutions, who lack long-term plans to strategically integrate digital technologies with journalistic practices, with insufficient resources allocated into new media technology training to the professions.

In the era of technological advancement and industrial transformation, what knowledge should be taught in media education? What is the most valuable knowledge? How should media education adapt to the social and industrial changes? The adaptation of objectives, content, and structure of the curriculum are the key to solving these issues from the perspective of the sociology of knowledge. Nowadays, the tradition of journalistic professionalism as the foundation of the pedagogical paradigms

has been dismantled, a new pedagogical paradigm of teaching media and communication with the dominance of new technologies of artificial intelligence and big data has emerged. With such pedagogical transformation, the 'Principles' and 'Skills' have been redefined as 'traditional foundation of media education' and 'applications of new technologies', co-existed with their struggling relationship in a new context. The necessity for paradigm shift has again become the spotlight in media and communication pedagogy, owing to the breakthroughs in communication technologies.

The new paradigm should be contextualized in the contemporary significance. In recent years, School of Communication has foregrounded the interdisciplinary synergy of cutting-edge areas, such as artificial intelligence and big data, with an attempt to reconstruct the curriculum design with a mixture of knowledge in different areas. Therefore, the mandatory core curriculum has been systematically redesigned to meet the needs of the new media age. For example, for the 2016 and previous cohorts, the School offered three mandatory courses in the core curriculum in communication studies, including *Introduction to Communication: A PRA and ORGC Perspective*, *Introduction to Moving Image and Sound*, *Introduction to Journalism*, and one selective course from *Visual Communication*,

*Developing Creativity*, *Current Hong Kong Issue for Communicators*, *Media Management*, *Culture, Society and the Media*, or *Communication, Technology and Change*. For 2017 and 2018 cohorts, the School has changed the setting of the core curriculum, with three mandatory courses as *Introduction to Media and Communication*, *Ethics, Law and Communication and Multimedia Storytelling*, and one selective course from *Media, Culture and Society*, *Media Writing and Production in English*, *Visual Communication*, *Writing and Producing for the Chinese Media*, *Big Data and Nonverbal Communication* or *AI and Digital Communication*. For the 2019 cohort, the core curriculum is composed of four courses, with three mandatory courses same as the previous ones, and one selective course to choose from a range of three courses instead of six, which are *Visual Communication*, *Big Data and Nonverbal Communication*, and *AI and Digital Communication*. The transformation of curriculum design of School of Communication, particularly the latest setting of three selective courses, signifies the School's attempt to integrate advancements of AI and new media with the curriculum to cultivate students' comprehensive skills beyond the traditional media and communication studies, which is needed in the evolutionary age of digital media. (See Table 1 for highlight of changes in courses)

Table 1

*Highlight of Changes in Courses (School of Communication of Hong Kong Baptist University)*

Enrolled in 2016 or before	Enrolled in 2017 & 2018	Enrolled in 2019 or after
Introduction to Communication: A PRA and ORGC Perspective	Introduction to Media and Communication	
Introduction to Moving Image and Sound	Ethics, Law and Communication	
Introduction to Journalism	Multimedia Storytelling	
Visual Communication	Media, Culture and Society	–
Developing Creativity	Media Writing and Production in English	–
Current Hong Kong Issue for Communicators	Visual Communication	
Media Management	Writing and Producing for the Chinese Media	–
Culture, Society and the Media	Big Data and Noverbal Communication	
Communication, Technology, and Change	AI and Digital Communication	

The majors and concentrations offered at School of Communication have also undergone a directional change. Taking the Department of Journalism as an example, the major of journalism initially offered three concentrations: *Chinese Journalism*, *Broadcast Journalism*, and *International Journalism*. A new concentration of *Financial Journalism* was offered later, and *Broadcast Journalism* was merged into *Chinese Journalism*. In 2018, *Financial Journalism* was merged into *Chinese Journalism* as well, and the department offered

the first interdisciplinary concentration of communication and computer sciences in Hong Kong-*Data and Media Communication* in collaboration with the Department of Computer Science. The current concentrations in the major of journalism are *Chinese Journalism*, *International Journalism*, *Data and Media Communication*. The new concentration not only enable students to master data-driven journalism and exploit technologies in daily journalistic practices, but also reflects the changes in the teaching concepts and the importance of new



knowledge.

Teaching and research staff is the fundamental component of School of Communication's pioneering endeavours. There are currently over 90 full-time faculty members in the School, half of whom are academic professionals and half of whom are industrial practitioners, with additional 50 adjunct part-time lecturers with industry background, 50 general staff and technical staff. To fulfil the needs of curriculum reformation, the School has recruited eight faculty members with expertise in computer science, digital media, network analysis, data and artificial intelligence, and other cross-disciplinary backgrounds in recent years. Additionally, some cross-disciplinary courses are taught by faculty members from the Department of Computer Science of the Faculty of Science. The School has also established a strategic partnership with Tencent, the world's largest Chinese media content provider, to better integrate technology with media and communication teaching.

The students are educated to prepare to meet the needs of new media age through on-campus activities. For example, *San Po Yan*, an experimental newspaper edited and operated by students of the department of journalism in School of Communication has developed from traditional paper media to media with multiple modes, including

online news, electronic publication, and social media editions. The students' practical training is not constrained to solely one domain, but extended to applications in all media platforms, including print media, radio and television, digital media, and mobile applications.

Technology-assisted journalistic practices have become inevitable in the domain of journalism. Communication and media teaching should also be supported by sufficient technological facilities. In 2018, the Media Innovation Laboratory for Artificial Intelligence and the Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality Studio were established and started operation in School of Communication.

### ***The Distance between Ethics and Practices in Journalism***

'Truth is virtue' is the motto of School of Communication of HKBU. We hope that students should approach and uphold the truth through courage and responsibility to find the truth, wisdom to check the facts, and honesty and genuineness to life and career. In the School, courses in ethics and morality are mandatory.

In recent years, the society of Hong Kong has witnessed a series of social movements, and students in tertiary institutions are concerned about and even

participate in them. Students of School of Communication of HKBU are required to participate in various on-campus and off-campus practices which might allow them to be exposed to the social and media realities. When students are in the front-lines of interviewing, shooting, and reporting these movements, they may encounter ethical and moral dilemmas. How do they position themselves in the reporting scene? Could they uphold journalistic professionalism and objectivity? Could they put theories into practice with rationality? It is also a challenge for the School to nurture values, to maintain journalistic professionalism, and to keep up with conscience and social responsibility for the students. It is an arduous task in the current social context of Hong Kong.

## Conclusion

In the age of technological advancement and industrial transition, School of Communication of HKBU meets the changes with flexibility in pedagogical practices, with highlights on the synergy of teaching and technology, the dominance of new knowledge in education, and evolution of curriculum design, thus, to implement the paradigm shift in media and communication teaching and uphold the motto of ‘truth is virtue’ and the ethical

foundation of the discipline.

The tradition of journalism education in Hong Kong emphasizes practical training, nurturing journalistic skills including news writing, reporting techniques, and television and broadcast production. The School of Communication of HKBU offers new courses integrating communication studies and computational data processing techniques to meet the needs of technological development, which could be perceived as the professional training of ‘Skills’ in compliance with the tradition of journalism education in Hong Kong. The development of media and communication education is characterized by the co-existence of divergence and convergence in the pedagogy. Although media has been reshaped and its relationship with human beings has been transformed in the age of technological advancement, the ethical foundation of journalistic professionalism and practices remains unchanged. The flux in the interplay between journalistic professionalism and dynamic media ecology and social realities has been perpetuated with the advancement of cutting-edge technologies (e.g., artificial intelligence, algorithm, big data, and automated generation of content).

With the maturity of artificial intelligence, machine-generated content, chatbot, and robot anchor could be realized, but

journalistic professionalism is still the core competency of human generated journalism, particularly in conducting interviews and reporting. Media and communication practitioners should exploit the technology to assist the journalistic work and promote the efficiency and productivity of news data analysis. The experience and skills of journalists are still the fundamental and preliminary components of investigative and in-depth reporting. The relevant courses in the media and communication curriculum aim to nurture the students for the skills of data collection and analysis in news reporting and their competency in their future career in the new era with the advancement of digital media and intelligent communication facilities.

In the trajectory of the development of media and communication teaching in Hong Kong, theories and research methodologies have complemented the practical training to meet the need of social development (Lo, 1989). Subsequently, the teaching model of Principles leading Skills has been proved to be effective in more than 20 years of application and exploration. In the context of technological advancement, the core curriculum of School of Communication of HKBU transformed with cross-disciplinary foundations, such as *Big Data and Non-verbal Communication*, *Artificial Intelligence*, and *Digital Communication*.

The offering of various majors and concentrations is adjusted to stay abreast of social and technological changes, with the new concentration of *Data and Media Communication*. This is not to add one or two technology-related courses to traditional journalism and communication courses, or to allow students to simply get access to the inter-disciplinary field of information technology, learning the skills of writing codes and making sense of big data, in order to make the original teaching model look better, but a fierce leap forward to solve new problems in an overall system. It is called a fierce leap forward because the previous balance between ‘Principles’ and ‘Skills’ has encounter new variables in practice, and it is no longer competent to effectively solve the corresponding problems in media and communication education caused by the latest development of society and news media. Frameworks and concepts of new knowledge provide a new paradigm for theory and practice, serving media industry and adding legal, moral and ethical thinking to the challenges brought by technologies.

The advancement of technology opens up opportunities and possibilities in education. The high-tech facilities make research, teaching, and learning more convenient. But Internet and multimedia is also a threat to tertiary education (Taylor,

2010), which should not be a panacea for education. Preservation of the essential pedagogical traditions is requisite in the new era. Transformation is not equal to demolishing all traditions. New changes should be appreciated and understood with the traditional values, and be boosted by novelty and innovation.

The paradigm shift in media and communication education is partly caused by the technological development and its applications, but more fundamentally, is driven by the ideas of innovative education. For example, the class delivery mode is changed from face-to-face to online due to the pandemic, facilitated by new technologies of computers and the Internet. Going beyond such tools, the practices of teaching and learning how to build the interactive map of the pandemic with the aim to debunk the relevant misinformation represents the technology-driven paradigm shift in media and communication teaching. In the wave of new media, the new interpretation of the media industry will facilitate the emergence of the new knowledge system and pedagogical modalities in media and communication teaching. Such paradigm shift does not mean to dismantle and reconstruct, but to touch up within the basis of traditional values in the discipline.

The surging market demands for big data and AI talents in a wide range of industries, including non-technical fields like media, business and medicine, give rise to the needs for universities to nurture talents that can bridge their own areas and information technology. Pertaining to the deficiency in the institutional training of digital media and data sciences in Hong Kong, the local universities, including School of Communication of HKBU, can strengthen the cooperation with Hong Kong media to facilitate students' training at school and future career in the industry. In addition, relevant training can be offered to the industry practitioners, including journalists and editors, to stay perfect in the global wave of digitalization.

The media industry is one of the most impacted industries in the age of new technology, but it also benefits most from the proliferation of artificial intelligence and Internet technologies. Thus, media and communication education should attach vital importance to the technological advancement and its application into the practices. However, the virtues of journalistic professionalism and liberal arts education are still the fundamental components in media education. This might be a balance in the new paradigm.

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