

An Analysis of the Training Methods of Journalism Talents in Yenching University

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Keywords: Yenching University, department of journalism, journalism talents, talents training, journalism education

Abstract: The Department of Journalism of Yenching University was a leader in journalism education during the period of the Republic of China. It achieved great success in the cultivation of journalism talents through the combination of professional education and general education, equal emphasis on theory and practice, simultaneous development of knowledge learning and academic research. Through the analysis of the specific implementation of the training ways of Yenching University journalism talents, we can find five deep reasons why they can be implemented. First of all, it can't be separated from the high-minded talent training objectives of scholars, focusing on training the press leaders to transform the society. Secondly, because of the scholars' grasp of the characteristics of journalism talent training, they pay attention to multi-disciplinary collaborative training. Thirdly, it is necessary for scholars to combine the training of journalists with the needs of the press and society, and they pay attention to the close interaction between schools and the press. Fourthly, it is inseparable from the persistent and seeking spirit of educating people, and they are good at summing up successful experience and reflecting on failure lessons. Fifthly, it is inseparable from the unique development vision of scholars, and they can grasp the development trend of disciplines according to the development situation of the industry. These historical experiences are still of great significance to the cultivation of today's journalists.

1. Introduction

The Department of Journalism of Yenching University was the first department in modern mainland of Asia to comprehensively conduct journalism teaching with complete courses. It had been in a superior position in discipline construction and talents training. Its achievements have attracted the attention of many researchers, the earlier researcher is the American scholar Dwight Edwards, who was also a teacher and senior staff working in Yenching University. In the 1950s, he summarized the development of journalism in Yenching University in his works. [1] Twenty years later, Philip West, an American scholar, discussed the Department of Journalism of Yenching University from the perspective of cultural exchange between China and the West. [2] After that, Chinese scholars began to join the ranks of research, such as Liu Fang-I, who studied the educational activities of the Department of Journalism of Yenching University, believing that the journalism education of Yenching University was the origin of Chinese journalism education. [3]

Chen Jiashun studied the characteristics of journalism education in the Department of Journalism of Yenching University, believing that it was an example of the localization of journalism education in modern China. [4] In their research, Xiao Lang and Fei Yingxiao not only discussed in detail the relationship between the change of talent training objectives and curriculum adjustment in the 1930s [5], but also explored Walter William's contribution to the development of journalism education in Yenching University from the perspective of educational exchanges between China and foreign countries [6]. Deng Shaogen studied the support of the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri for the establishment of the Department of Journalism at Yenching University. [7] Starting from the graduation thesis of Yenching University students, Hu Baijing and Wang Xueju believed that the Department of Journalism of Yenching University paid attention to grasping professional autonomy, responding to society and balancing China and the West in the process of running a school. [8] The above researches mainly focus on the introduction of the general situation of the Department of Journalism of Yenching University, the summary of the mode and characteristics of journalism education in the Department of Journalism of Yenching University, and the help of Missouri School of Journalism to the establishment of the Department, etc. There is a lack of systematic research about the methods of training journalism talents in Yenching University. It is still of great significance to the training of journalism talents at present.

2. Combination of Professional Education with General Education

The Department of Journalism of Yenching University was founded in 1924, since the date of its birth, it has attached great importance to the cultivation of students' comprehensive literacy, focusing on the combination of professional education and general education. The teaching policy of the department once stipulated: "The purpose of the department is to train students for journalism and to impart a wide range of specialized knowledge and skills. Other knowledge closely related to the newspaper business should also be taught according to the time, so that students can develop in different ways and make full use of their strengths." [9] According to this policy, students of the department should not only take compulsory subjects, but also take elective subjects in the curriculum.

In the autumn of 1934, when Liang Shichun served as the dean of the department, he further strengthened the importance of combining professional education with general education: "Journalism is related to every aspect of life. Therefore, journalism talents should not only have special knowledge and training, but also have a clear concept of all kinds of knowledge. On the one hand, the department attaches great importance to the special knowledge of journalism, and at the same time, it also attaches great importance to other special disciplines of journalism." [10]

As a result, the department divided the curriculum into four categories: Category 1: specialized in — journalism; Category 2: compulsory — writing discipline (Chinese and English); Category 3: minor — all disciplines that had a special relationship with journalism, such as politics, economy, society, etc.; Category 4: electives — other disciplines, in which major students must choose a discipline that is more directly related to journalism. At the same time, majors in the Department of Journalism were required to take 36 credits of specialized courses and a minor subject, which whose credits must be at least 20 credits.

The scope of the choice of minor subjects could be freely chosen by each student under the guidance of the department, but it was more appropriate to focus on political, economic, social and other subjects; However, if Chinese or English was the minor subject, the credit originally required by the first-year student of the Faculty of Arts of the University shall not be counted as 20 credits of the minor course. At the same time, at least 15 credits of elective courses, 16 credits of Chinese and English for compulsory courses. Majors in the Department of Faculty must graduate with at least

150 credits. In this way, it could be seen that the credits of professional education in the department, that was, the credits of specialized courses account for about 1/4 of the total credits of graduation, while the total credits of compulsory, minor, and elective courses as the content of general education account for about 3/4 of the total credits of graduation.

After Liu Huoxuan succeeded him as the head of the department in 1937, he also had a clear understanding of the combination of professional education and general education, saying: Education other than the major curriculum of journalism education, such as language and writing, such as general education, etc., in the whole of journalism education, they are at least equally important compared to the journalism course itself. The teaching of journalism courses, no matter how successful, can by no means be said to have fulfilled the mission of journalism education. In other words, journalism majors, even if their grades in every journalism subject are "particularly good", do not necessarily become the best product of journalism education in college. It can also be said that one hundred and thirty-six credits in four years of college, for a journalism student, each credit has equal weight. Therefore, the success or failure of journalism education, university education other than journalism education is responsible for three-quarters. [11]

Although due to the impact of the war and the shortage of teachers, Liu Huoxuan had no choice but to adjust the curriculum of the department to three categories: journalism, writing, and journalism, but the proportion of courses between journalism and other disciplines remained between 1:3.

Relying on the departments of Yenching University, the Department of Journalism of Yenching University implemented a combination of major majors in this department and minor and elective courses in other departments in the curriculum, and implemented professional education accounting for 1/4 and general education accounting for 3/4 of the proportion of educational content, and strictly required professional education and general education, so as to realize the reasonable combination of professional education and general education, so that the journalism talents cultivated by the Department of Journalism of Yenching University not only had solid professional theoretical knowledge, but also had a broad vision. The news events to be reported could not only be handled professionally and technically, but also rely on relevant professional knowledge for in-depth analysis, so that students' future development is full of stamina.

3. Paying Equal Attention to Theory and Practice

In the process of talent training, the Department of Journalism of Yenching University not only attaches importance to the theoretical learning of students, but also attaches great importance to the cultivation of students' practical ability. The department's academic rules clearly stipulate: "The curriculum of this department is equally important for theory and practice. There are three aspects of internship: (1) publications of the department, (2) newspaper and magazine submissions, and (3) internship in newspapers during holidays and after graduation." [10]

At the same time, the Department of Journalism of Yenching University also had strict requirements for students to obtain professional certificates in both theory and practice: First, "those who have completed 44 credits of courses in the Department, and their total average score at the time of graduation is above 6.2, and they have completed more than 150 credits stipulated by the Faculty of Arts, and have served in the newspaper industry or other related careers for at least one year and have excellent results, in addition to the graduation certificate issued by the University according to the regulations, and the Department of Economics will issue a vocational certificate to prove the student's journalism knowledge and internship experience." Secondly, "Majors in the Department of Studies, after completing various required courses, who have obtained a diploma from the University and have served in journalism for at least one year with excellent results, may

be issued a Certificate of Occupation B by the Department.” [10]

In order to enhance students' professional practical ability while carrying out theoretical study, the Department of Journalism of Yenching University had established various newspapers and magazines for students' practice, among which the publication of *Yenching News* was the most famous. The handling of the newspaper perfectly carried the clever combination of theoretical learning and practical application:

The first was the news interview and the writing. The interview department of *Yenching News* was composed of students from the news interview class. Two hours a week of classes, one hour to teach the theory and techniques of news interviewing, one hour to hold an interview meeting, the teacher to criticize the results of the previous period, and then plan the work to be carried out in the current period. First, the interview topics were proposed by the whole group to the best of their knowledge, and the teacher pointed out the points that should be paid attention to in each topic, and then assigned to all students for interviews. In addition, if there was news on an ad hoc basis, the teacher would assign the students in the class to interview at any time. The press release was written, first submitted to the faculty for registration, review, and then sent to the editor for editing. If students shared common mistakes or weaknesses in the process of news reporting and writing, the teacher would temporarily discuss the problem in the class and give a systematic explanation.

The second was news editing. The editorial office of *Yenching News* was made up of students from the newspaper editing class. The class held two hours a week, and each hour was spent giving lectures on the theory of newspaper editing and holding editorial meetings, discussing the editorial work of the previous issue of *Yenching News*, and preparing for the next issue of editing, in addition to one hour of internship. The work of the editorial office was determined according to the number of students in the class, if the number of students was less than five, all students worked for each term; If there were more than five people, work in groups to avoid wasting students' time. In order to give students the opportunity to practice overall planning, the editorial department had a director and a deputy director to practice editing under the guidance of teachers.

Third, newspaper editorials. After the teacher's theoretical explanation, the students began to practice writing. Writing could be divided into *Yenching News* to write editorials, and editorial class assignments. Writing an editorial for *Yenching News* first forms an editorial committee of the whole class, met once a week, under the leadership of the teacher, first raises the question that should be said last week or this week, determined the problem, discussed the outline and the materials that should be referenced, and then each student wrote one article according to the outline every week, and the teacher selected the better text to publish, which becomes the editorial of *Yenching News*. In addition, each person needed to write an editorial assignment, that was, each person should write a 3,000-word article on current affairs at home and abroad every week. This mainly exercised students' ability to collect, select, organize and express facts.

Fourth, newspaper business. The teacher would first spend one hour teaching theory, and then one hour each would be devoted to business meetings and practical exercises. In practice, it was mainly based on the principle of economic independence, and teachers were assigned to the positions of general manager, manager, sales director, issuance director, advertising director and accountant of *Yenching News* according to their personal ability, interests and talents. Students started working a month before the start of each school year, deciding on a budget, then advertising and preparing for sales. [11]

In addition to the internship using *Yenching News* as a platform, third-year students of the Department of Journalism of Yenching University were required to submit at least 15 articles to various newspapers outside the university each semester. At the same time, students above the third year of the Department of Journalism of Yenching University were required to go to major newspapers in Beijing and Tianjin for internship during the holidays. In their spare time, interns

could also visit other departments of the newspaper hall and quickly understand the newspaper production process. Through the internship at the newspaper house, students had enhanced their understanding of the newspaper world, broadened their horizons, developed their skills, and laid a solid foundation for quickly entering the workforce after graduation.

In addition to the above-mentioned forms, graduates of the Department of Journalism of Yenching University had traveled to the northwest to investigate the living standards of the people there, so that they could have a deeper observation of the living conditions of the local people before leaving school.

After various forms of practice, the students of the journalism department of Yenching University not only became proficient in theoretical knowledge, but also cultivated professional skills, and after leaving the school, they were well received by employers for their excellent work ability, so that later graduates of the journalism department of Yenching University "had newspapers to arrange for them to serve before they finished their school work." [12]

4. Simultaneous Development of Knowledge Learning and Academic Research

In the process of journalism education, in addition to combining professional education and general education, paying equal attention to theory and practice, so that students not only learned theoretical knowledge but also enhanced professional skills, Yenching University also attached great importance to the cultivation of students' academic research ability, so that students could carry out in-depth exploration of a certain issue in the future and promote the development of academic research. To this end, the Department of Journalism of Yenching University had taken a series of measures, mainly including the following aspects:

4.1. Vigorously Purchasing Book Reference Materials

Table 1: A List of Books and Reference Materials Purchased by the Department of Journalism, Yenching University (1924-1940)

Types of Book and Reference Materials	The Type of Quantity
About the principle of study	27 Species
About the nature of the newspaper industry	15 Species
About the newspaper moralists	23 Species
About news interviews and news-makers	23 Species
About the newspaper editor	12 Species
About the newspaper editorials	11 Species
About the local newspaper	11 Species
About the newspaper operators	28 Species
About advertising scholars	65 Species
About newspaper history	18 Species
Newspapers in various countries	62 Species
Journalists around the world	23 Species
About the editors and publishers of the journals	7 Species
About the propaganda and the public opinion person	51 Species
About the newspaper and the law	12 Species
About applying for school educators	4 Species
About the newspaper mechanical equipment person	12 Species

In order to increase students' knowledge and cultivate students' research ability, the Department

of Journalism of Yenching University had been purchasing various reference materials related to journalism since its establishment. By 1940, according to Liu Huoxuan's statistics, the Department of Journalism of Yenching University had purchased abundant books and reference materials. For details, see the following Table 1.

In addition, old and new journals on journalism including: *Editor and Publisher*; *Public Opinion Quarterly*; *Newspaper World*; *Journalism quarterly*; *Propaganda Analysis*; *Picture Post*; *Reader's Digest*; *Oriental Affairs*; *Fortune*; *Fortnightly Summary of International Events*.

In addition, there were four Chinese periodicals on current affairs, six daily newspapers, two news agency articles, and 50 papers for journalism graduates. [11]

4.2. Inviting Celebrities in the Press to Give Speeches and Regularly Holding News Discussion Weeks

In order to enrich students' knowledge of journalism, broaden students' academic horizons, and inspire students' interest in academic research, the Department of Journalism often invites celebrities from the newspaper industry to give lectures, such as Cheng Shewo, director of Beiping *World Daily*, Ge Gongzhen of Shanghai *Declaration*, Hu Zhengzhi of Tianjin *Ta Kung Pao*, Xu Xingkai of Beiping *Morning News* and so on. This activity continued until Yenching University was canceled. For the convenience of studying journalism, the Department of Journalism of Yenching University had held a seminar on journalism every year since 1931, "inviting advanced Chinese and foreign journalism circles to give speeches respectively." [13] It was not until 1937, after the July 7 Incident and the fall of Peiping, that the activity fell silent. These celebrity experts who came to the university either had rich experience in running newspapers, or had far-reaching knowledge, or profound knowledge, or had great social influence, and they took the podium of Yenching University, each with their own strengths, publicized their experience and insight one by one, and proposed discussions, so that Yenching University teachers and students could participate in the academic theories they had learned in the past, integrate them, increase their knowledge, inspire academic research, strengthen their ties with the newspaper circle, and become a great wealth of the journalism department of Yenching University.

4.3. Establishing Academic Communities

In order to connect with each other, study journalism and its practical applications, and unite journalists, the Department of Journalism of Yenching University established the Journalism Society in 1929, which includes current students, current faculty members, retired faculty members, and alumni. The highest body of the society was the General Assembly, which met twice a semester. At the end of the plenary, all matters were handled by the Executive Committee. The committee was divided into seven units, including clerical, publishing, speech, communication, visiting, accounting, and sports. In addition, the Executive Committee had a chairman to take charge of all matters. The Journalism Society made great efforts to carry out the committee affairs. The Publishing Unit had successively published a variety of periodicals and books such as the monthly magazine *New China*. The Speech Unit had invited Shao Yuanhong, Hu Zhengzhi, Huang Jie, Chen Bosheng, Sun Tonggang and other celebrities to give speeches at the school. The Visiting Unit often organized students to visit major newspapers, news agencies, printing bureaus, plate making bureaus, and printing offices in Beiping and Tianjin. In addition, as the head of the department, Liang Shichun also initiated the establishment of a chat meeting, which was held in groups once a week to achieve the effect of mutual learning.

4.4. Founding Academic Journals and Publishing Academic Works

In order to enable teachers and students of journalism to "pay attention to the discipline of journalism, in the hope that this infantile career will gradually evolve and reach adulthood" [13], the Department of Journalism published *Journalism Study* in 1932, including the lectures of experts and the work of students, up to hundreds of thousands of words. "In order to seek the Chinese people's understanding of the quality of domestic publications, and to pay attention to the future of China's publications" [14], the Department of Journalism of Yenching University also published *The Press Communication Record* in 1933, which listed the existing "newspapers, periodicals, and news agency names, editors, distribution offices, and the nature of content" in China at that time. [14] Anyone who wanted to get the information would read it, either for contact, for investigation, for subscription, for announcement, or for introduction. In 1935, the Department of Journalism of Yenching University founded the publication of *Newspaper World*, which mainly introduced the development of foreign journalism and the situation of famous newspapermen, newspapers, and news groups. After the fall of Beiping in 1937, the teachers and students of the journalism department of Yenching University immersed themselves in academic research, and there were nine students' academic research articles such as *Small Chinese Newspapers* and *Overview of the British Newspaper Industry* were published in the annual journal of *Newspaper Studies* in 1941.

In addition, the Department of Journalism had also compiled and printed lectures at journalism seminars, such as *Overview of Journalism*, *Journalism and National Difficulties*, and *The Mission of the Chinese Press Today*, so as to broaden the knowledge and enhance the discussion of journalism theory.

With the implementation of the above measures, the students of the Department of Journalism of Yenching University, after four years of journalism education, have submitted a graduation thesis of their own research when they are about to graduate. Judging from the 166 graduation thesis of the Department of Journalism of Yenching University that the author has collected in the libraries of Peking University and Renmin University of China, the content involves the principles of journalism, news ethics, comparative news, public opinion research, propaganda, news policy, newspaper history, magazine history, news education, news interviewing, news writing, editing, editorial, newspaper management, advertising, telecommunications, broadcasting, etc.. It can be said that the content involved almost all aspects of news research at that time, and provided suggestions for promoting the development of journalism at that time, and contributed to the development of journalism scholarship; At the same time, it also leaves valuable historical materials for us to understand the development of journalism education and journalism scholarship at that time.

5. Conclusions

If you want to observe the results of an education, the most convenient way is to look at its products. Since its establishment, the Department of Journalism of Yenching University has trained a large number of talents by combining professional education with general education, laying equal stress on theory and practice, and combining knowledge learning with academic research. During the War of Resistance against Japan, the Central News Agency reporters stationed in London, Paris, New York, Washington, San Francisco, New Delhi, Seoul, Manila, Australia and Tokyo were all born in Yenching University. They devoted themselves to propagating China's indomitable spirit of resistance, exposing the atrocities of Japanese aggressors, using pens as knives, defending the country and resisting aggression, and made remarkable achievements. In addition, Xiao Gan and Ma Tingdong, special correspondents of *Ta Kung Pao* in England, Li Xiushi and Zhu Qiping, military correspondents stationed in the Western European Front and the Pacific War Zone, and

Xiao Gan, Lu Qixin, Song Dehe and Tang Dechen, Chinese correspondents covering the San Francisco Conference, all graduated from Yenching University. They used their pens as knives and used sonorous words to fight against the enemy on the front of public opinion. In addition, there were as many as 78 graduates from the Department of Journalism of Yenching University who only worked in the head office of Xinhua News Agency. It can be said that Yenching University's three-pronged approach has made the training of journalism talents in Yenching University a great success.

By analyzing the causes of the implementation of the training approach of journalism talents in Yenching University, it is not difficult to find that it can't be separated from the high-minded talent training objectives of scholars. The presiding officers of the Department of Journalism of Yenching University all regard the cultivation of newspaper leaders and social improvement talents as their goal, rather than just the cultivation of journalists or editors who are good at technology. Secondly, it can't be separated from the grasp of the characteristics of journalism talents training by scholars. They can closely cooperate with the education of journalism department and other departments. Thirdly, it is necessary for scholars to combine the training of journalists with the needs of the press and society, and pay attention to the close interaction between schools and the press. Fourthly, it is inseparable from the spirit of persistent and searching education of scholars. They constantly sum up successful experience and failure lessons, so that educational initiatives continue to develop in a benign direction. Finally, it can't be separated from the unique development vision of scholars. They can be based on the needs of society and industry, and grasp the development trend of journalism from technical to academic. It is precisely because of the above five points that the Department of Journalism of Yenching University adopted the methods of talents training, which combined professional education with general education, paid equal attention to theory and practice, and paid equal attention to knowledge learning and academic research, and could make it well implemented. Therefore, in the development of a highly practical discipline education, Yenching University not only overcame the contradiction between professional education and general education, but also got rid of the dilemma of separating theory and practice, and also promoted the common development of knowledge learning and academic research. This made the journalism education of Yenching University in the forefront of the times, and cultivated a large number of outstanding talents.

Acknowledgements

This work is supported by Jiangsu Provincial Department of Education University Philosophy and Social Science Research Fund Project "Research on the Development Model of Journalism Education in Modern Chinese Universities and Its Modern Significance" (2018SJA1137)".

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