



A Comparative Study of Graduate Education Talent Training Models in Journalism between China and the United States

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Abstract. This study aims to delve into a comparative analysis of the talent training models for graduate journalism education between China and the United States, encompassing aspects such as training objectives, course design, and assessment methods. Through a detailed examination of the models in both countries, it identifies their unique characteristics and areas where they complement each other. Drawing on the experiences from American graduate journalism education, the study suggests improvements for China's approach, including optimizing curriculum structure to better train journalism professionals, strengthening faculty development to enhance educational quality, and introducing a multi-dimensional assessment system to evaluate students' abilities more comprehensively. These recommendations are expected to provide valuable guidance for the further development of graduate journalism education in China.

Keywords: Journalism major; graduate education; talent training model; comparison between China and the United States

1 Introduction

In the era of knowledge and technology, globalization has profoundly impacted higher education, especially in the training of journalism professionals. This trend necessitates that education systems worldwide adapt to international dynamics and socio-economic changes, meeting the demand for talents with global perspectives and innovative capabilities. Against this backdrop, the comparative analysis of graduate journalism education in China and the United States, as major economies, becomes particularly significant.

Since the reform and opening up in 1979, China's graduate journalism education has undergone significant development and transformation, enhanced educational quality, and has become an important part of the education system. However, as globalization deepens, this system faces challenges in adapting to international media environments and market demands (Qi Xinghua, 2022) [1]. China is regarded as one of the countries where journalism and communication education are developing most rapidly [1]. This

rapid expansion has led to a shortage of qualified teachers in Chinese journalism education, inconsistent teaching quality, and strained academic resources.

In contrast, with a longer history, the US journalism education system has a more mature training model. The United States is the first country in the world to launch journalism education. For instance, in 1869, Washington College established the Press Scholars, used to cultivate printing and editing talents (Douglas, 1934, p. 425) [2]. The United States places a greater emphasis on maintaining educational quality, raising admission standards, and promoting educational equity. "The United States is one of the birthplaces of journalism and communication and is also recognized as the

The country with the most developed research and education." (Wu Jing, Liu Haigui, 2006) [3] Learning from each other's strengths and weaknesses could facilitate deeper reflection and reform in graduate journalism education in both countries. Therefore, engaging in open discussions about journalism education with the United States will become a crucial force in advancing the development of China's journalism industry.

Especially at this stage, in our country, with the rapid development of the media industry and the continuous growth of internationalization demands, journalism education is facing the challenge of transitioning from traditional teaching models to more modern, practice-focused models. This requires Chinese journalism education not only to lay a solid theoretical foundation but also to strengthen training in new media technologies, international news reporting capabilities, and cross-cultural communication skills.

In addition, in mainland China, journalism education is facing issues such as difficulties in student employment and mismatches in specialization. The model of talent cultivation directly affects the training of talents (Wang Fang, 2019) [4]. More experts are emphasizing the need for journalism education to cultivate high-level talents who can integrate theory and practice (Sun Qingfeng, 2022) [5]. These highlights not only the limitations of China's traditional journalism talent training model (Yang Chengxi, 2020) [6] but also points to the necessity and urgency for reform.

American journalism talent training has been trial and error for hundreds of years, emphasizing critical thinking, multicultural understanding, and adaptability to emerging media technologies, which can provide valuable lessons for Chinese journalism education. The "China-US Talent Training Program" 121 Project and the successful convening of the China-US University Presidents Forum in 2023, emphasized the significance of education as a bridge between Chinese and American people and suggested a continuous, innovative, and mutually beneficial approach to China-US educational exchange. [7]

But this does not mean that the development of American news is not faced with challenges (Wei Lu and Li Jiarui, 2020) [8]. Sarah Bartlett, dean of the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at the City University of New York, pointed out, "Do our (educational) structures and systems, including respect for tenure and professional certification, allow us to Are we responding enough to changes in the industry to train the next generation of journalists?" (Knight Foundation, 2015) [9] US journalism education faces challenges such as adapting to digital transformation, addressing media ethics issues, and cultivating students' sensitivity to multiculturalism. This is also one of the challenges of Chinese journalism. Therefore, behind the development of global

journalism is the common pursuit of solutions to problems and mutual learning and understanding between countries.

As Wu Jing and Liu Haigui (2006) [3] said, "Although (China and the United States) have different national conditions, they share many common laws in the development of disciplines and education and have a basis for mutual dialogue." (Wei Lu, Li Jiarui, 2020) [8]

All in all, from an international perspective, the comparative study of journalism education between China and the US not only offers crucial insights into understanding each country's educational model but also provides valuable references and inspiration for journalism education reforms globally (Shu Yachun, 2020) [10]. As globalization deepens and the media industry continually evolves, journalism education in both countries must continuously adapt to new challenges, exploring and cultivating journalism talents capable of playing significant roles in the future media landscape. Chinese journalism education still has a long way to go.

2 Comparison of Specific Training Strategies in Graduate Journalism Education Between China and the United States

2.1 Comparative Analysis of Training Objectives

"The cultivation objective serves as the standard and requirement for talent training, forming the core of the talent training model construction. It plays a regulatory, normative, and guiding role in talent cultivation activities (Zhang Xiangle, 2004)." [11]

There are notable differences in the goals of graduate journalism education between China and the United States, such as in educational philosophy and career orientation. In the U.S., there's an emphasis on a free media environment and the social responsibility of journalism. The training goals typically include developing independent thinkers, investigative journalists, analysts, and professionals with a strong sense of journalistic ethics. In contrast, Chinese journalism education may focus more on government and social stability, leaning towards traditional media, editing, and propaganda roles.

Moreover, U.S. universities, except for vocational ones like some community colleges, are generally classified into research, educational, and vocational training institutions, with a core emphasis on liberal humanistic education. Chinese higher education, on the other hand, is often criticized for being more job-oriented than life-oriented.

Interdisciplinary and diverse professional choices are also prominent in the U.S., encouraging journalism students to undertake cross-disciplinary studies. Chinese journalism education is comparatively conservative, focusing more on the transmission of professional knowledge.

Regarding internationalization, U.S. journalism graduate programs are typically more globalized, aiming to cultivate talents with international perspectives and communication skills (Jiang, L., 2020) [12]. In China, there's a need for enhancement in this area. In terms of technology and innovation, as digital media evolves, U.S. pro-

grams focus on developing technical skills and innovation, adapting to the digital transformation of journalism. China is gradually strengthening in this aspect but still lags behind the U.S. in comparison. [13]

2.2 Comparative Analysis of the Training Process

“The cultivation process is the critical intermediary that allows the implementation of educational ideals and the realization of training objectives. It comprises a series of strategically orchestrated activities aimed at reaching specific goals in talent development.” The efficacy of this cultivation process is instrumental in achieving the desired outcomes and ensuring the success of talent development efforts (Jiang Shiwei, 2008) [14].

Table 1 provides a comparative analysis of course settings, types, and content in graduate journalism programs in the USA and China.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Course Settings, Types, and Content in Graduate Journalism Programs

	USA	China
Curriculum Philosophy	Emphasizes diversity and flexibility; encourages interdisciplinary studies and broadening of knowledge areas.	Relatively fixed, focusing on core courses; limited choice in course selection.
Types of Courses	Includes journalism writing, multimedia production, data journalism, journalistic ethics, law, editing, research methods; encourages internship projects.	Courses typically include journalism writing, editing, theory, practice, media management; more traditional fields.
Course Content	More diverse and practice-oriented; in-depth news reporting, interviewing skills, multimedia production, data analysis; includes ethics, law, and multicultural issues.	More traditional, focusing on basic journalistic skills; writing, editing, interviewing techniques; includes political theory and party newspaper theory.

(1) Course Setting Philosophy: U.S. graduate journalism programs often emphasize diversity and flexibility. Students have opportunities to select various courses aligning with their interests and career goals, encouraging interdisciplinary studies and knowledge expansion. Conversely, Chinese programs may be more rigid, focusing on core courses, limiting elective options, and ensuring foundational knowledge in journalism. Refer to Table 1 for more details on the comparative analysis of course settings.

(2) Types of Courses: In the U.S., students can choose from courses like journalism writing, multimedia production, data journalism, ethics, law, editing, and research methods, with opportunities for practical internships. In China, courses typically cover traditional areas like journalism writing, editing, theory, practice, and media management, often lacking newer journalistic forms and technologies.

(3) **Course Content:** In the U.S., courses frequently use materials compiled by instructors instead of fixed textbooks, leading to more diversified and practice-oriented content. Chinese programs usually require specific textbooks for each course, focusing more on traditional journalism skills and foundational knowledge, along with political theory and party publication courses. In American graduate journalism education, students might study in-depth reporting, interviewing skills, multimedia production, data analysis, and journalism communication research. Ethical, legal, and multicultural issues are often integral parts of the curriculum. In contrast, Chinese journalism graduate courses are more traditional, emphasizing basic journalism skills such as writing, editing, interviewing, and foundational communication knowledge. Additionally, political theory and the theory of party newspapers and magazines might also be included in the curriculum.

2.3 Comparative Analysis of Course Assessments

The course assessments for graduate journalism students in China and the United States share similarities, such as diversity in assessment methods, incorporating written assignments, project reports, exams, and classroom participation. Both countries emphasize independent research, often requiring students to complete research projects or theses and prioritize practical application in assessments.

However, notable differences exist. In the U.S., class participation is often a significant component of grading, fostering communication and teamwork skills. Chinese education might focus more on traditional knowledge transfer with less emphasis on class interaction. U.S. programs typically offer more flexibility and personalization in course selection and assessment methods, whereas Chinese courses tend to be more rigid. In the U.S., internships and projects are integral to the curriculum, while Chinese programs might place less emphasis on practical experience outside the classroom. Finally, the approach to thesis requirements also differs, with some U.S. programs not mandating a thesis, focusing instead on other forms of assessment like active participation in seminars.

3 Comparative Analysis of Educational Experiences

This research conducted an extensive survey targeting 275 students from top Chinese universities in the "Double First-Class" initiative (985 and 211 programs) and 281 students from the top 50 ranked universities in the United States (US). The survey aimed to delve into the differences between Chinese and American graduate journalism education. It covered various aspects including course content, teaching methods, and internship opportunities, and sought to comprehensively understand students' perspectives on their journalism education.

Table 2. Student Experience and Outcomes in Graduate Journalism Education

Aspect	U.S. Students	Chinese Students
Education Experience Evaluation	85% believe they excel in independent thinking, critical analysis, and innovation skills	78% prioritize theoretical knowledge, especially in the study of journalism ethics and media regulations
Course Design	84% are satisfied with the diversity and practicality of courses, including news writing, multimedia production, theory and traditional skills and data journalism	60% indicate their courses focus more on journalism
International Education	81% have participated in international journalism projects or collaborated with international students 72% have regular one-on-one interactions with professors, including academic discussions and career development guidance	47% state they have similar opportunities
Teacher-Student Relationships	67% typically establish their own news websites or digital portfolios during their academic tenure	53% have regular one-on-one interactions
Student Projects		40% engage in similar projects

In terms of evaluating their educational experiences, 85% of American students believe their education excels in fostering independent thinking, critical analysis, and innovation skills. Conversely, 78% of Chinese students place a higher emphasis on theoretical knowledge, especially in areas like journalism ethics and media regulations. See Table 2 for a comprehensive comparison of student experiences and outcomes in graduate journalism education.

Regarding curriculum design, 84% of American students express satisfaction with the diversity and practicality of their courses, which encompass practical skills like news writing, multimedia production, and data journalism. In contrast, 60% of Chinese students indicate that their curriculum leans towards journalism theory and traditional skills, with less focus on emerging media technologies and practical projects.

In the realm of international education, 81% of American students report participating in international news reporting projects or collaborating with international students, while only 47% of Chinese students report similar opportunities. These activities enhance cross-cultural communication skills and deepen understanding of global news events for American students.

Concerning teacher-student relationships, 72% of American university students engage in regular one-on-one interactions with professors, including weekly meetings and informal discussions, extending beyond academic topics to career guidance and industry trends. In contrast, this ratio is 53% in China, reflecting fewer interactions between students and professors, highlighting cultural and educational system differences.

Additionally, 67% of American journalism students typically create their own news websites or digital portfolios during their studies, serving as showcases of their learning achievements and an integral part of their skill development. These projects encompass various skills like news gathering, editing, visual design, and website management. In China, this percentage is 40%, indicating fewer opportunities for personal branding and skill display among Chinese students.

However, Chinese students excel in the depth of theoretical education, with 85% believing that their theoretical education is comprehensive and profound. This strong theoretical foundation equips Chinese students with advantages in tackling complex news topics and comprehending political and international news reporting.

Moreover, Chinese students emphasize a profound understanding of the domestic journalism industry, possessing in-depth knowledge of domestic media policies, audience preferences, and media development trends. This knowledge provides a solid foundation for their work in China's rapidly changing media landscape.

In summary, the American journalism education model excels in curriculum diversity, practical teaching, and international perspectives, whereas Chinese journalism education possesses unique strengths in theoretical depth, political and international reporting education, and understanding the domestic media environment. Understanding these differences and strengths is crucial for the improvement and development of journalism education in both countries.

4 Conclusion

In the process of in-depth comparison of talent training models for graduate journalism majors in China and the United States, this study revealed a series of valuable findings, but there are also certain limitations. First, limitations in sample selection may have affected the breadth and generalizability of the study. Although the sample covers top universities in China and the United States, it may not fully represent the overall situation of journalism education in the two countries. In addition, limitations in data collection are an issue that cannot be ignored. Although the questionnaire provided certain basic data, the lack of long-term tracking and in-depth analysis of educational outcomes may have affected the comprehensiveness of the research results.

Cultural factors were also insufficiently considered in this study. Differences in educational models largely stem from differences in cultural backgrounds and values, which have not been fully reflected in research. At the same time, the lack of industry feedback also limits the in-depth understanding of the connection between education models and industry needs. Future research should strengthen ties with the industry and collect more opinions and suggestions from news industry practitioners.

Despite the above shortcomings, this study provides important enlightenment for the development of journalism education systems in China and the United States. First of all, the successful experience of American journalism education in practical skills training and curriculum diversity provides important reference for the reform of China's journalism education system. China should pay more attention to the cultivation of

practical skills and the diversification of course content to adapt to the rapid development of the media industry.

Secondly, the international elements in the American education model are crucial to the development of journalism education in China. China's journalism education should strengthen international cooperation projects to improve students' international news reporting capabilities and cross-cultural communication skills. In addition, the internationalization and diversification of the teaching staff are also aspects that China's journalism education still needs to pay attention to. China should strengthen the internationalization and diversification of professional backgrounds of its teaching staff to improve the quality and vision of education.

At the same time, the balance between theory and practice is also the focus of Chinese journalism education. China's advantages in theoretical education should be combined with practical teaching to form a more balanced education model. In addition, while Chinese journalism education has a deep understanding of the local media environment, it should also strengthen its understanding and adaptation to the international media environment in order to cultivate more internationally competitive journalism professionals.

Overall, this study provides valuable inspiration for the improvement and development of the journalism education systems of the two countries through a comparative analysis of the talent training models of journalism graduate education in China and the United States. Today, facing the challenges of globalization and rapid changes in the media industry, both China and the United States need to innovate and adjust their training models to adapt to new education and industry needs. Through continuous comparative analysis and learning, the two countries can achieve more effective and high-quality talent training in the field of journalism education.

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