

Review of the Implementation of Project-Based Learning in Media Education from the Perspective of Media Convergence Policy

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Abstract: The convergence of traditional and new media has become a focal point of government initiatives, significantly influencing the future of media education. This review paper addresses the necessity to reconsider pedagogical strategies within Broadcasting and Hosting majors, aligning with the principles of the New Liberal Arts and responding to media convergence in China. With a focus on interdisciplinary learning and adaptability, it examines the intersection of technology and government initiatives in media education. Through policy analysis and literature review, the study aims to elucidate how Project-Based Learning (PBL) aligns with China's Media Convergence Policy in Broadcasting and Hosting Majors. The findings provide valuable insights for future research, aiding in the improvement of pedagogical practices in Media Education and furthering government policy objectives.

Keywords: Implementation of Project-Based Learning, Media Education, Media Convergence Policy,

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INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving realm of media, marked by dynamic technological advancements and evolving consumer preferences, the reassessment of pedagogical strategies within academic programs specializing in Broadcasting and Hosting has become imperative. This transformation not only responds to the demands of the contemporary media environment but also aligns seamlessly with the principles of the New Liberal Arts – an approach integrating traditional liberal arts values with the exigencies of the 21st century (Penprase, 2021).

In the Chinese context, a nation acclaimed for its forefront position in media innovation, the convergence of traditional and new media has emerged as a central focus of government initiatives, significantly shaping the trajectory of media education. This paradigm shift is propelled not only by technological advancements but also underscores a broader commitment to New Liberal Arts principles, emphasizing interdisciplinary learning, adaptability, and the integration of technological and humanistic perspectives (Yang & Lu, 2019).

As scholars astutely note, media convergence in China represents a multifaceted phenomenon, influenced by both technological advancements and strategic policy directives (Wang, 2016; China Media Project, 2021). Examined through the lens of New Liberal Arts, this phenomenon underscores the interconnectedness of disciplines, urging educational programs to cultivate a comprehensive skill set beyond traditional boundaries. Media convergence, acknowledged as a political strategy (Wang, 2016), was elevated to a national "strategic plan" by President Xi Jinping in August 2014. This strategic initiative aligns not only with the principles of media convergence but also resonates with the ethos of New Liberal Arts. The seamless blending of different media types into a unified system, as described by Wang (2023), involves combining the strengths of broadcasting, television, and the internet, reflecting the interdisciplinary approach championed by the New Liberal Arts.

In the era of media convergence, where traditional mass media undergoes significant changes to remain relevant, the New Liberal Arts philosophy encourages programs, especially those in Broadcasting and Hosting, to innovate by introducing new ideas, ideologies, and technologies. This innovation aligns

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not only with the requirements of the media convergence era but also with the adaptive and forward-thinking spirit of New Liberal Arts education (Zhang, 2022).

Simultaneously, as scholars underscore the multifaceted nature of media convergence driven by technological advancements and policy directives, the role of government policies, including the Media Convergence Policy, becomes crucial. Examined through the lens of New Liberal Arts, these policies emphasize the integration of traditional and digital media, highlighting the need for educational institutions to adapt and align with the evolving industry landscape (Zhang, 2022). Within this context, the imperative to assess pedagogical methods, such as Project-Based Learning (PBL), gains prominence. PBL, associated with John Dewey's philosophy of "learning by doing," embodies the spirit of hands-on, interdisciplinary education promoted by New Liberal Arts (Zhou, 2023). It involves extensive open exploration, aligning with the principles of inquiry-based learning advocated by the New Liberal Arts approach (Wang & Tian, 2019).

Building on this interdisciplinary and hands-on foundation, Project-Based Learning becomes a focal point for cultivating essential skills among students in media-related fields. As previous studies have indicated, PBL enhances critical thinking and problem-solving skills, attributes essential for navigating the complexities of media convergence. The collaborative nature of PBL, highlighted by Zhang and Ma (2023), resonates with the interdisciplinary demands of modern media production, reinforcing the New Liberal Arts emphasis on adaptability and collaboration.

Despite existing literature recognizing the importance of Project-Based Learning and the impact of media convergence policies, there exists a notable gap in understanding how these factors intersect within the specific context of Broadcasting and Hosting Majors in China. This study aims to bridge this gap by providing a comprehensive assessment of the synergies between pedagogical approaches and media convergence policy. Through this exploration, the study endeavors to contribute valuable insights to the field of media education, aligning with the principles of New Liberal Arts and informing both academic practices and policy considerations in the ever-evolving landscape of Chinese media.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This paper provides a thorough review of the implementation of Project-Based Learning in Media Education, focusing on the perspective of the Media Convergence Policy. The study begins with a policy analysis aimed at describing the context of China's New Liberal Arts and Media Convergence policies. Subsequently, it reviews relevant studies on the utilization of Project-Based Learning (PBL) to assess its current status and identify existing research gaps. Drawing from these gaps, the review paper offers insights into future research directions that warrant exploration.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

3.1. Introduction to Project-Based Learning (PBL) in Media Education

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is an instructional methodology rooted in hands-on, experiential learning that has gained prominence in media education due to its ability to enhance competencies and facilitate knowledge transfer (Thomas, 2000; Blumenfeld et al., 1991). PBL is characterized by students engaging in complex, real-world projects that require critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills (Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010). The underlying principles of PBL align with the constructivist approach to learning, emphasizing active involvement, inquiry, and the application of knowledge in practical contexts (Savery & Duffy, 1995).

The historical context and evolution of PBL in media education can be traced back to the mid-20th century when progressive educators like John Dewey advocated for experiential learning and the integration of real-world experiences into the curriculum (Thomas, 2000). Over the years, PBL has evolved to meet the demands of a dynamic media landscape, incorporating technology, collaboration, and interdisciplinary approaches to prepare students for the complexities of the industry (Johnson, 2002). PBL's significance in fostering competencies and knowledge transfer lies in its ability to bridge the gap between theory and practice, providing students with practical skills that are directly applicable to their future careers (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008).

PBL's relevance in media education is particularly evident in disciplines such as Broadcasting and Hosting, where the industry demands a combination of technical proficiency, creative expression, and adaptability to emerging technologies (Prince & Felder, 2007). The integration of PBL in these majors not

only enhances students' competency acquisition but also aligns with the changing landscape of media convergence, where traditional and new media forms intersect (Convergence Culture Consortium, 2021). Thus, understanding the historical roots, principles, and significance of PBL is essential for assessing its effectiveness in the context of Broadcasting and Hosting Majors within the framework of China's Media Convergence Policy.

3.2. Media Convergence Policy and New Liberal Arts Education in China

In understanding the landscape within which Project-Based Learning (PBL) is implemented for Broadcasting and Hosting Majors in China, it is crucial to delve into the foundational framework provided by China's Media Convergence Policy. The media landscape in China has undergone significant transformations, driven by technological advancements and strategic policy directives. The Media Convergence Policy, as a comprehensive strategy, plays a pivotal role in shaping the convergence of traditional and digital media.

China's Media Convergence Policy has evolved as a response to the changing media landscape, emphasizing the integration of traditional broadcasting, television, and the internet. According to Wang (2016), this policy marks a strategic initiative that was raised to a national level "strategic plan" by President Xi Jinping in August 2014. Media convergence, defined as the comprehensive integration of diverse media, consolidates various technologies and resources, promoting the rapid development of new media through the integration of content, manpower, and common interests (Wang, 2023). This integration is not an independent entity but a synergistic operational form that combines the strengths of broadcasting, television, and the internet. These components mutually reinforce each other, resulting in a substantial enhancement of their collective value, efficiency, and quality. The impact of convergence media on traditional mass media, especially radio programs, necessitates a shift in their development direction, requiring innovation in thinking, ideology, and technology to create products that align with the demands of the convergence media era.

The objectives of China's Media Convergence Policy are multi-faceted and align with the broader goals of the nation's development. The policy aims to enhance the value, efficiency, and quality of media by combining the strengths of traditional broadcasting, television, and the internet (Wang, 2016). This integration is not only seen as a means to consolidate resources, including content and personnel but also as a catalyst for the rapid growth of new media forms. Zhang (2022) emphasizes that the policy underscores the need for educational institutions to adapt and align with the evolving industry landscape, aligning with the principles of New Liberal Arts education.

The influence of China's Media Convergence Policy on media education is profound. Yang and Lu (2019) note that the policy has led to a paradigm shift in media education, emphasizing interdisciplinary learning, adaptability, and the integration of technological and humanistic perspectives – key tenets of the New Liberal Arts. New Liberal Arts in China reflects a commitment to holistic, interdisciplinary learning, emphasizing adaptability, critical thinking, and the integration of technological and humanistic perspectives. Rooted in the principles of the New Liberal Arts, this educational philosophy encourages innovation and forward-thinking, aligning with the requirements of the media convergence era (Zhang, 2022).

The Chinese context sees a concerted effort to break down traditional educational silos, encouraging a synthesis of knowledge domains. New Liberal Arts Education prioritizes a balance between technological proficiency and a broad understanding of societal and cultural contexts, creating well-rounded professionals equipped to navigate the complexities of the media industry. It aims to nurture individuals who can thrive in an interdisciplinary landscape, fostering creativity and adaptability, which are essential attributes for success in the media convergence environment (Wang & Tian, 2019). This innovation extends to pedagogical strategies, including the adoption of Project-Based Learning (PBL) as an instructional approach.

The interplay between China's Media Convergence Policy and New Liberal Arts plays a pivotal role in shaping the academic landscape. Media convergence, as both a policy-driven initiative and a reflection of technological advancements, aligns seamlessly with the ethos of New Liberal Arts. The interdisciplinary demands of media production find resonance in educational institutions striving to adapt and align with the evolving industry landscape dictated by the Media Convergence. This interplay not only impacts the curriculum but also influences pedagogical approaches, such as Project-Based Learning (PBL), which embodies the spirit of hands-on, interdisciplinary education promoted by New Liberal Arts (Zhou, 2023). As China strives to cultivate a generation of professionals equipped with a comprehensive

skill set, the dynamic interaction between media convergence policies and New Liberal Arts principles shapes an academic landscape that prioritizes adaptability, collaboration, and innovation.

3.3. Broadcasting and Hosting Major in the Era Media Convergence

Media convergence is an ongoing process of integrating different media forms, leading to the development of multifunctional and integrated media. The gradual progress of media convergence provides audiences with higher-quality information services, making it an inevitable requirement for social development. This evolution has brought significant changes to the media industry, posing both challenges and opportunities for the development of broadcasting hosting art. To remain competitive and dynamic, continuous innovation and adaptation are essential (Li, 2022).

Broadcasting and hosting are vital parts of traditional media, serving as the final link in broadcasting and television communication. It acts as a gatekeeper in the media, and its historical importance and professional value are highly valued by both the industry and the public. However, the industry is undergoing changes due to the new media environment brought by the Internet revolution. This shift poses challenges for those in the field. Determining the right position in the changing landscape, adapting to the shift from audience to users, and finding a balance between traditional practices and modern innovation in broadcast hosting are important issues that the industry must think about and explore (Xing, 2021).

According to Xing (2021) media convergence environment brought about changes and challenges for broadcasting and hosting majors. To navigate this landscape successfully, hosts and broadcasters must strengthen their political awareness, uphold regulatory awareness, adapt their discourse systems, enhance their hosting skills, and focus on personalized branding and content diversification. In doing so, they can effectively integrate the communication patterns of new media hosting and maintain their relevance and impact in the evolving media landscape. Moreover, by combining the communication patterns of new media, broadcasting and hosting majors should innovate by integrating advanced technologies and communication concepts of the era. This is to better provide the general public with outstanding broadcasting and hosting works.

Liang (2018, as cited in Li, 2022) emphasized the necessity for continuous innovation and adaptation to maintain competitiveness and vitality in this dynamic environment. He highlighted that content innovation is an imperative and the core for broadcasting and hosting art in the age of media convergence. Furthermore, he also accentuated that diverse landscape of content creation, encompassing innovative and top-notch materials are not only pertinent but also adaptive to societal changes. He underscored the crucial aspect of formal innovation, emphasizing the prioritization of audience-centric approaches. The evolution of broadcasting hosting art is deemed necessary to connect with the audience through narrative elements, interactive features, and a dual sensory experience of both auditory and visual enjoyment. Furthermore, the roles of talent and educational innovation are pivotal, acknowledging the increased demands placed on broadcasting and hosting art professionals during the era of media convergence.

Liu (2021) explored the evolving landscape of broadcasting hosting art in the context of media convergence, focusing on discourse expression influenced by technology and changing audience dynamics. He identified key practices shaping this transformation, including immersive scene-based communication, cross-screen dissemination, and humorous discourse expression in short-video broadcasting. The subjective drive of broadcasters is highlighted, emphasizing the significance of public opinion guidance, integrated communication awareness, and language transformation. He underscored the bilateral efforts of technology and subjective initiative in achieving in-depth integration, resulting in a diverse program environment that effectively connects with audiences in the era of media convergence.

Li (2022) examined the development of the broadcasting hosting profession in the context of the construction of first-class undergraduate majors at the Communication University of China over the past 60 years. Focusing on the book "Research on the Talent Training Model of Broadcasting Hosts" by Wang Wenyan, the study delved into the systematic exploration of the construction, practice, and improvement of the talent training model for the art of broadcasting hosting at the university's first batch of national first-class major construction points. Key insights include the imperative to adapt talent development strategies to the dynamic landscape of digital media. Despite challenges from new media and AI-driven hosts, the university consistently updates training objectives while upholding core educational principles. Additionally, the article underscored the integration of ideological and political education in the training of broadcasting hosts, emphasizing their role as the "voice" of radio and television media.

Zhang and Pei (2021) discussed the transformation of teaching methods in the field of broadcasting and hosting arts in the era of all-media communication. They emphasized the impact of changes in communication methods on education and outlines the new trends in teaching strategies. Their key points include the importance of integrating ideological and political education into courses, adapting to the evolving landscape of media through online teaching platforms, and cultivating students with a focus on news literacy and adaptability to different broadcasting formats. In their article, they also highlighted the emergence of new communication modes such as live streaming, short videos, and the "cloud program" model, emphasizing the need for students to develop cross-screen interaction skills. Additionally, it discussed the role of e-commerce live streaming in providing practical experiences for students. The article concluded by underlining the essential role of content in media education and the necessity for educators to balance knowledge and values education.

As presented in the previous studies in the field of broadcasting and hosting art, many scholars have explored the impact of media convergence on the broadcasting and hosting arts field. They have highlighted the ongoing process of integrating various media forms, presenting challenges and opportunities for development.

RESULTS

The era of media convergence and the incorporation of new liberal arts in Chinese higher education institutions have attracted many scholars in the field of broadcasting and hosting arts. Though these two concepts are new yet many have already explored and highlighted the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities that they have offered specifically for broadcasting and hosting majors. Despite being a well-received topic, gaps and limitations of previous research still exist specifically in terms of evaluation of teaching approaches. Firstly, the existing literature emphasizes the importance of Project-Based Learning (PBL) in media education but falls short in providing a detailed exploration of various PBL implementations and their specific effectiveness within the context of Broadcasting and Hosting Majors. Although the previous researches acknowledge the alignment of PBL with the constructivist approach, there is a notable gap in evaluating specific outcomes resulting from PBL implementation, such as students' skill acquisition, competency development, and their readiness for the dynamic media industry. Additionally, while many scholars are aware of the challenges and opportunities of media convergence in broadcasting and hosting, there is a research gap in terms of empirical evidence illustrating how certain approaches, such as the PBL, impacts the practices and strategies of educators and students in the broadcasting and hosting field. With all these, it is evident that there is a need to conduct a comprehensive study to assess the acquisition of competencies and knowledge transfer in PBL for broadcasting and hosting majors within the context of media convergence.

By doing so, this study can contribute in advancing the understanding of the practical implications of PBL within the realm of broadcasting and hosting majors in the era of media convergence. Addressing the identified gaps in the literature, this research aims to provide an examination of various PBL implementations, their specific effectiveness, and the tangible outcomes for students. By conducting a comprehensive evaluation of skill acquisition, competency development, and readiness for the dynamic media industry resulting from PBL, the study seeks to bridge the existing gap in empirical evidence. Furthermore, the research endeavors to shed light on how PBL approaches influence the practices and strategies of both educators and students in the broadcasting and hosting field. Through this investigation, the study aspires to contribute valuable insights that can inform curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and educational policies, ultimately enhancing the quality and relevance of broadcasting and hosting education in the context of media convergence.

LIMITATION AND EXPECTATION

This review paper examines the current status of implementing project-based learning in Media Education, considering the New Liberal Arts and Media Convergence policies. The researchers emphasize the context-specific nature of their findings and caution against generalizing them to other contexts. They suggest further exploration to bolster the study's findings.

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