

## Pure Inspiration – the Rejuvenation of the Intellect

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What differentiated the Academy from a regular class at our home university is not merely about meeting students and faculty members from around the world; it is about challenging our boundaries to be more critical of our own thoughts and more appreciative of others' thoughts.

The Salzburg Academy is friendly learning environment in which mutual sharing and collaboration is vehemently cultivated. Based on the broad theme of "global media literacy", the program could be summarized into three parts: the seminars, the assignments and the activities. The seminars involved lectures delivered by scholars and journalists from different countries followed by an engaging discussion session. I recalled discussing with Charlie Sennott, founder of Global Post, and Stephen Salyer, CEO of the Salzburg Global Seminar, the issues that we currently face in media entrepreneurship. To contribute to the promotion of global media literacy, each student was to submit a case study which would be adopted by secondary schools in enhancing students' knowledge about the media, produce a public service announcement and participate in a research project. Together with an Iraqi student, I submitted a case about illegal drug testing using which we invited students to make critical assessments about their views on the media by imagining the roles of the different actors involved: the pharmaceutical company, the government, the journalists and the audience. My public service announcement is a video in which my fellow classmates said "thank you" in their mother tongues to convey the message "many thank yous a day keep the hatred away". The most memorable experience I had was the visit to the concentration camp in Germany, after which we were to reflect upon how we were currently repeating history.

Having been actively in search of an abundant amount of inspiration, for me, the Salzburg Academy has not ended. It has given me a new beginning by challenging me to rejuvenate my intellect to ask myself once again: how does what I do as communication scholar contribute to the creation of a better community? As we learn in the Academy that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter", how could international communication be used as a stage for the contestation of different views while generating mutual understanding? It may sound like a cliché promoting a utopian view that is more idealistic than realistic. Education on global media literacy, stressing access to media, awareness of media power, assessment of how media cover international issues, appreciation of the role of media in creating civil societies and action of encouraging communication across cultural, social and political divides, has nonetheless motivated me to re-conceptualize my role, as a communication researcher, in promoting global media literacy in Hong Kong.

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