

# Reconstruct the Teacher-Student Relationship Based on Intersubjectivity Theory

Fanqin Meng<sup>1,\*</sup>, Ruiyi Wu<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Marxism, Guangxi University of Chinese Medicine, Nanning, China

<sup>2</sup>Education Science College, Luoyang Normal University, Luoyang, China

## Email address:

mfanqin001@163.com (Fanqin Meng)

\*Corresponding author

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**Abstract:** Human beings are a relational existence, and the order of relations between teachers and students is the reflection of subject-object philosophical concepts in educational life, and is the logical premise of "student-centered" education and teaching reform. The first nature of teacher-student relationship is interpersonal relationship, which not only has the commonality of general relationships, but also has its own particularity because of its unique position in the field of education and teaching. The regulations on the order of teacher-student relations directly restrict the effectiveness of educational and teaching activities. The traditional paradigm of teacher-student relationship order highlights "teacher-centeredness" or "child-centeredness", which places teachers and students in a one-way model of duality and opposition, which often breeds disadvantages such as confrontation, conflict, and hegemony. At present, under the background of "student-centered" education and teaching reform, due to the lack of effective balance between students' subjective status and teachers' rational authority, the teacher-student relationship order still has drawbacks such as one-way interaction, behavioral utilitarianism, emotional indifference, and inter-interpersonal antagonism. This study attempts to take the theory of intersubjectivity as the logical starting point and attempts to reconstruct a new paradigm of teacher-student relationship order with equality as the primary premise, understanding as the core connotation, dialogue as the path, respect as the fundamental guarantee, and empathy as the value implication, in order to provide guidance for the "student-centered" education and teaching reform in the new era of China.

**Keywords:** Teacher-Student Relationship, Intersubjectivity, Student-Centered

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## 1. Introduction

Whether the relationship between teachers and students is harmonious is closely related to the quality of talent training and teaching level. Human beings are a relational existence, and the order of relations between teachers and students is the concrete embodiment of subject-object philosophical concepts in the field of education, which directly restricts the effectiveness of teaching activities. The traditional paradigm of teacher-student relationship order highlights "teacher-centeredness" or "child-centeredness", and places teachers and students in the teacher-student relationship paradigm of dualistic one-dimensional mode, which often breeds disadvantages such as confrontation and conflict [1]. In this

context, the concept of "student-centered" teaching was born in the United States. The United States began to reform the "student-centered" teaching model in the 1990s, but it is still struggling today, and its resistance mainly comes from the path dependence of traditional habits [2]. In order to realize the transformation from teacher-centered teaching to student-centered teaching, we must correctly understand and grasp two basic issues: the essence of teaching and the purpose of teaching [3]. The essence of teaching is to enable students to learn, and the purpose of teaching is to enable students to learn. The teacher-student relationship is the concrete expression of the relationship between teaching and learning in teaching activities. A good teacher-student relationship is conducive to promoting the formation of a normal teaching atmosphere, and plays an important role in the cultivation of

students' creativity, the improvement of the quality of educational activities, and the leap of teaching level. The traditional teaching mode is mainly based on teachers imparting knowledge, while the "student-centered" teaching mode is mainly based on students' learning of knowledge. The role of the teacher needs to change from "preacher" to "designer" and "solver". In the "student-centered" teaching mode, due to the lack of effective balance tension between students' subjective status and teachers' rational authority, the teacher-student relationship still has drawbacks such as one-way interaction [4] and inter-interdisciplinary opposition [5]. Therefore, this study attempts to take the theory of intersubjectivity as the logical basis, and based on the theory of intersubjectivity, we try to reconstruct a new paradigm of teacher-student relationship, and form a teacher-student community in which teachers and students grow together, seeking common ground and reserving differences, and coexistence and symbiosis, in order to provide guidance for the practice of "student-centered" education and teaching reform in the new era in China.

## 2. The Methodological Implications of the Theory of Intersubjectivity

The theory of intersubjectivity stems from the fact that modern subjectivism is the product of the abandonment and transcendence of the philosophy of subjectivity. Different from the traditional relationship paradigm of subject-object dichotomy in subject philosophy, intersubjectivity theory is a mode of interaction between subject and subject (that is, object subjectivization). Under the perspective of intersubjectivity theory, subjective people shift from self-concern to other attention, from the self-world to the other world, put the self and the other under the same framework, and reconstruct the natural connection, interactive status and value system between the self and the surrounding world.

The concept of intersubjectivity was first proposed by the German philosopher Husserl (1859-1938) in the early 20th century. Under the care of modern subjectivism, the traditional subject-object philosophy holds that everything other than the subject is possessed as "me", and this possessive epistemology not only regards the natural world as an object, but even people other than the subject as objects. Traditional subject-object philosophical epistemology actually causes the separation, fragmentation and dislocation of the relationship between man and man, man and society, and man and nature. In this philosophical cultural context, Western philosophy began to spontaneously turn ontology and ontology, and put forward the concept of "intersubjectivity". Since its birth, there have been two major factions of intersubjectivity theory, namely the epistemological paradigm of intersubjectivity theory represented by Husserl and the existential paradigm of intersubjectivity theory represented by Heidegger M (1889-1976) and Habermas J (1929-). Under the epistemological paradigm, Husserl emphasized that "intersubjectivity" refers

to the overcoming of "I" and reflection on subjectivity. Husserl's epistemological philosophy of intersubjectivity does not deal with the subject and the objective world. Under the ontological paradigm, Heidegger pays more attention to the symbiosis, communion, and commonality of "I" and the other, regards the subject as "here-and-being", believes that the world of "here-and-now" inherently covers the world and the other, and bluntly claims the ontological groundlessness of Husserl's phenomenological transcendental subjectivity [6]. Since then, Habermas has inherited and developed the theory of intersubjectivity under Heidegger's ontological paradigm. Habermas argues that a self with subjective consciousness is not a personal matter, because the subjectivity of this existence is already an intersubjectivity from the moment it arises. [7] In short, although different schools of thought have made different definitions and interpretations of the theory of intersubjectivity, the basic consensus reached is that the basic connotation of intersubjectivity is the communication, dialogue, communication, understanding and integration between subjects, and it is believed that subjects can coexist and share commonality. The influence of intersubjectivity theory far exceeds the philosophical community itself, and it has important methodological significance for us to discuss the theory of teacher-student relationship in the field of education. The methodological implication of the theory of intersubjectivity lies in its transcendence of subjectivism to altruism, emphasizing that the meaning of self-existence is based on the existence of the other, that is, the existence of the subject is based on the subjectivization of the object as the logical premise.

## 3. The Limiting Characteristics of the Current Teacher-Student Relationship

The theory of teacher-student relationship in China has a long history. As early as the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, the scholars and doctors at that time thought and explored the relationship between teachers and students, and gave the answer to this question as participants of the times 5,000 years ago, which laid a rich theoretical foundation for the current research on the relationship between teachers and students in China. The early intellectuals represented by Confucius shaped the prototype of the teacher-student relationship paradigm in China, that is, the absolute power of teachers as knowledge holders and managers to the recipients and sharers of knowledge. Due to the influence of this authoritative paradigm, the paradigm of teacher-student relationship theory in China has undergone several changes, and has generally experienced the evolution of "teacher-centered", "child-centered" and "teacher-led, student-subjective".

The first stage (antiquity-imperial end): teacher-centered paradigm of teacher-student relationship. The traditional teacher-student relationship, rooted in thousands of years of Confucian culture, is fundamentally an intergenerational

ethical relationship [8]. Confucian culture mainly takes "propriety" as the core category, and the absolute obedience to teachers and heartfelt admiration are intrinsically contained in the ethical culture of Shangli, so respecting teachers and respecting the way has naturally become the theoretical core of Confucian educational philosophy. However, this teacher-centered value paradigm quietly forms an insurmountable barrier between teachers and students, that is, the status of teachers as teaching subjects is highlighted, but the status of students as learning subjects is declining. The paradigm of "teacher-centeredness" is mainly characterized by the duality of subject and object, that is, one side adheres to the supremacy of the teacher's way and demonstrates the absolute authority of the teacher; On the other hand, alienating the respect for the teacher, highlighting the absolute obedience of the students. Therefore, the role positioning of teacher-student relationship under the teacher-centered paradigm makes the traditional teacher-student relationship in China trapped in the one-way mode of teacher absolute center.

The second stage (early Republic of China-late 70s of the 20th century): child-centered teacher-student relationship paradigm. Since the Republic of China, ideological changes have been caused by changes in the political system, changes in social production relations and the influx of Western educational thought, especially by the "child-centered" ideology represented by Dewey, and the traditional teacher-student relationship paradigm rooted in traditional Confucian culture - teacher-centeredness has declined. Then, it turns to the "tailor-made" model of formulating the school system and setting up the curriculum system that emphasizes following the physical and mental characteristics of children, and reconstructs the new paradigm of teacher-student relationship, that is, "child-centered". The subjectivity of students has been highlighted under the child-centered teacher-student relationship paradigm, which is undoubtedly a great change in the paradigm shift of teacher-student relationship in the history of Chinese education. However, the role positioning of teacher-student relationship under the child-centered paradigm makes the traditional teacher-student relationship in China shift from the absolute center of teachers to the one-way mode of absolute center of children.

The third stage (early 80s of the 20th century-present): teacher-led, student-subjectivist teacher-student relationship paradigm. Since the 80s of the 20th century, with the advent of the great development opportunity period of reform and opening up, the traditional one-way model of teacher-student relationship (whether teacher-centered or child-centered) of subject-object dichotomy under the dominance of human subjectivity and "kind" self-perception has begun to decline. At the same time, the intersubjective trend of thought is deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, thereby replacing the discourse power of the philosophy of subjectivity. A new educational value concept should also emerge, that is, a new paradigm of teacher-student relationship of "teacher-led, student-subjective", in order to avoid the drawbacks of the one-way model of "teacher-centered" and "child-centered".

However, due to the path dependence of the system, the traditional one-way model of teacher-student relationship paradigm is deeply rooted, and the composite intersubjective teacher-student relationship paradigm of "teacher-led, student-subjective" has not yet played its due effect. Therefore, the limitation of the relationship between teachers and students in China is that there is a lack of effective balance tension between students' subjective status and teachers' rational authority, which is characterized by one-way interaction, utilitarian behavior, emotional indifference, and inter-personal antagonism.

#### *I. One-way interaction*

The natural pattern of teacher-student relationship is a two-way interactive relationship reached by teachers and students in education and teaching activities, which should be preset on the logical premise of dynamic interaction between teachers and students. However, in the current education and teaching, due to the influence of the subject-object education trend, teachers and students play the role of social norms and etiquette, that is, teachers always play the image of "preaching, teaching, and solving confusion", and students play the image of the recipient accordingly. The society, on the other hand, responds to and affirms the behavior of teachers and students in the form of praise and praise. Under the influence of this cultural concept, the dynamic interaction between teachers and students is out of place, presenting a one-way indoctrination of teachers to students and lack of student subjectivity.

#### *II. Utilitarian behavior*

The interaction between teachers and students should be based on mutual growth, promoting self-growth and self-realization. However, under the current educational evaluation system, teachers' concern for students is alienated into a focus on student achievement. Grades become the only link that creates a sense of identity between teachers and students, and teachers' work performance is closely related to students' academic performance. In essence, students are divided from a complete living body into a learning body, a cognitive body, and an emotional body, in which the development of learning and cognition becomes the focus of teacher-student relationship, while the growth of students as emotional bodies needs to be selectively ignored by utilitarian teacher-student relationship.

#### *III. Emotional apathy*

The heavy academic burden, heavy pressure for further education, and excessive workload are the lack of trust and recognition between teachers and students, and the communication between teachers and students is characterized by indifference. "There is no real and direct spiritual communication between teachers and students, teachers and students are by no means empty-bodied into the classroom, teachers and students are emotional complete beings, teachers have the perception of life and work as teachers, students have cognition of the surrounding world as students, teachers and students are not mechanical, numb people, but full of feelings, passionate people, but there is a lack of serious emotional interaction between teachers and

students, and indifference has become a clear imprint of this teacher-student relationship."

#### *IV. Inter-interpersonal antagonism*

The one-way indoctrination interaction mode between teachers and students, utilitarian practical behavior, lack of emotional communication, etc. make the current performance of teachers and students as opposition, confrontation and conflict. On the one hand, students as minors have their own limitations in their understanding of knowledge, experience, others and society, and this limitation is undoubtedly normal and common, and we cannot require minors to have adult thinking, but teachers are too harsh on students, and require students by adult standards, making the teacher-student relationship go to a dead end. On the other hand, students lack trust in teachers and deliberately keep a distance from teachers, which deepens the gap between teachers and students, and it is more difficult to establish teachers' credibility and authority in students' hearts. This traditional model of teacher-student relationship has shown signs of incompatibility with new teaching practices.

In the perspective of subject-object philosophy, the subject has a very high position of power, correspondingly, the object is in the position of being dominated and occupied, and the subject-object philosophical thought is reflected in the field of education, which solidifies the authoritative image of teachers. "Teacher-centered", "child-centered", "teacher-led, student-subjective" and "dual-subjective", etc., although the forms are different, we can still see the concepts of "subject" and "object", that is, in essence, they are still in the philosophical vision of subject-object duality, so we have reason to make the assumption that if the theoretical basis of the teacher-student relationship represented by subject-object philosophy does not change, there will still be different degrees and different nature of opposition between teachers and students.

In this context, a new paradigm of "subject-subject" interactive teacher-student relationship is proposed based on the theoretical philosophy of intersubjectivity, and a new teacher-student relationship model with dialogue, understanding, empathy and commonality is constructed to surpass the one-way paradigm of traditional teacher-student relationship of dualistic opposition of subjectivity philosophy.

## **4. The Strategy of Constructing Teacher-Student Relationship**

The theory of intersubjective sex education is to correct the subjectivity education that was obsessed with one-way subject-object orientation in the past, and provides a new philosophical paradigm and methodological principle for education theory, so as to restore the true nature of education on a new basis [9]. Traditional philosophical theories of subjectivity often emphasize the binary opposition of subject to object, and believe that the meaning of object existence is based on the existence of subject. Under the philosophical care of this subject-object duality differentiation, whether it is the teacher-student relationship paradigm or the child-

centered teacher-student relationship paradigm, the teacher-student relationship is actually placed in the dominant-obedient position, showing a disregard for the objectification of practical philosophy. The theory of intersubjective sex education emphasizes that harmonious teacher-student relationship should be based on dialogue, interaction and communication as the logical premise, and the subjective status of teacher and student is highlighted in the field of teacher-student relationship, which is a rejection of the subject-object dualistic opposition under the guidance of subjective education in the past.

### **4.1. The Essential Characteristics of Intersubjective Sex Education Theory**

#### **4.1.1. Equality**

William Doerr's definition of the role of the teacher is "the chief of equality", and "the role of the teacher has not been abandoned, but has been reconstructed, moving from being external to the student's situation to coexisting with the situation." Authority also shifts into context, and the teacher is the leader of the situation, not the external autocracy. Under the intersubjective relationship between teachers and students, both teachers and students are in such a norm that teachers and students, that is, both parties must abide by common norms, and teachers and students respect each other, understand each other, equality and recognize each other. However, this equality refers to the equality of the personality level of teachers and students participating in interaction, not the absolute state of undifferentiated equality. This equality of personality guarantees the dignity of students' independent personality, enables students to actively and equally communicate with teachers, and develops themselves in cooperation and respect with teachers.

#### **4.1.2. Interactivity**

Because the subject and the object are unidirectional and heterogeneous, they cannot form interaction, and because of the homogeneity and two-way, because of coexistence, interactivity is formed. [10] Under the theory of intersubjective sex education, teachers and students are both subjects, and they are the subjects in interaction, and interaction and dialogue occur all the time. The phenomenon of binary opposition between teachers and students no longer exists, teachers and students recognize their differences, replace confrontation and conflict with openness and communication, teachers and students no longer have to cater to the needs of society and play their own roles, truly treat each other as complete individuals, open themselves above the recognition of each other's differences, accept each other frankly, and truly achieve communication between personalities.

#### **4.1.3. Commonality**

Interaction is Habermas's main philosophical thought, which refers to the behavior of two or more subjects with the capacity to speak or act to achieve mutual understanding. [11] Teachers and students participate in communication as

independent subjects, participate in teaching together, and feel themselves in it. In the perspective of intersubjectivity, teachers regard students as part of classroom resources, students include teachers in their own psychological scope, teacher-student interaction has become a native classroom resource, in the interaction, teachers and students jointly create results, and create results while teachers and students share results with each other, teachers and students create in this interaction, share in creation, and share has become an important link between teachers and students. Teachers become a growth community, and promote self-growth with the growth of each other.

#### **4.1.4. Proactive**

Effective teacher-student interaction must be achieved through the active participation of both teachers and students. If either of the parties is passive or passive, the interaction will be interrupted by lack of necessary motivation and meaning. Therefore, teachers and students on both sides of the interaction should actively communicate with each other, and persistently maintain this driving force, teachers guide, encourage, stimulate students to participate in interaction, students consciously, automatically and enthusiastically substitute into it, in order to enhance mutual understanding, form a benign educational atmosphere in this understanding, and improve the quality and level of teaching.

### **4.2. Strategies for Constructing Teacher-Student Relationships from the Perspective of Intersubjective Sex Education Theory**

#### **4.2.1. Equality: The Primary Prerequisite for Building a New Teacher-Student Relationship**

The teacher-student relationship under the intersubjective perspective is guided by the concept of intersubjectivity education, with equality as the primary premise. The intersubjectivity of teachers and students means that teachers and students are equal in terms of human characteristics. Teachers and students form a relationship in equality, in an equal relationship, students from passive learning recipients to active learning resource providers, into equal knowledge explorers with teachers, changes in students' status will cause deep changes in their psychology, students will walk out of their inner "little black room", open themselves, and in this process teachers and students infect each other, virtuous circle.

#### **4.2.2. Understand: Build the Core Connotation of the New Teacher-Student Relationship**

The structure of teacher-student relationship under the intersubjective threshold is supported by understanding. Understanding is the purpose of interaction, non-understanding interaction is meaningless interaction, the two parties to the interaction have a dialogue but do not understand each other's expression, and understanding not only includes the understanding of the semantics of the other party's expression, but also refers to the understanding of the other party's unspoken meaning and emotions, such an

understanding is the understanding under the intersubjectivity. The teacher-student relationship also needs to be understood, teachers think about students' coursework, academic pressure and growing troubles, and students understand the dilemma and social responsibility of teachers. Understanding is an essential element of good teacher and student, and teachers and students need to interact on the basis of understanding.

#### **4.2.3. Dialogue: The Realization Path of Building a New Teacher-Student Relationship**

The new teacher-student relationship under the perspective of intersubjectivity theory takes dialogue as the path, in which both parties see each other as the person who is talking to "me", a person in the complete sense, and his emotions and reason, intuition and feelings, thoughts and actions all participate in the dialogue between "I" and "you". Dialogue is the dialogue between teachers and students, which is different from the dialogue in the traditional sense, it is a dialogue between teachers and students with full feelings, whole heart, full emotion, and all rationality, and this dialogue mode is not only a dialogue at the general level, but a dialogue based on equality, which is a correction of the one-way communication mode of teachers in the past, and completes the education of teachers to students through dialogue.

#### **4.2.4. Respect: The Fundamental Guarantee for Building a New Type of Teacher-Student Relationship**

The teacher-student relationship under the intersubjective sexual threshold is fundamentally guaranteed by respect. "True interaction is intersubjective sexual relations based on equality and mutual respect" [12]. The teacher-student relationship has become a strong party in communication because of the absolute advantage of innate teachers' knowledge, and students have become a weak party, but a person cannot do everything, when values are divergent, teachers can only maintain teaching if they respect students' opinions and students' views respect teachers. Similarly, teachers treat students as social beings, so that teachers will respect the personality of students, and respect is the driving force for maintaining equal dialogue between teachers and students.

#### **4.2.5. Empathy: The Value of Building a New Teacher-Student Relationship**

The teacher-student relationship under the intersubjective threshold is the equal and lively coexistence of life between the subject, which is a state of "coexistence". [13] The new teacher-student relationship takes empathy as the value implication, and the ideal teacher-student relationship takes equality as the premise, understanding as the core, dialogue as the path, respect as the guarantee, and empathy as the value implication. Empathy refers to the empathy between teachers and students, teachers experience the process of student growth, students experience the efforts of teachers, teachers and students share their feelings with each other, open communication and dialogue, and truly form a community of teacher growth.

## 5. Conclusion

In summary, based on the theory of intersubjectivity, the current teacher-student relationship order is reconstructed to dissolve the relationship paradigm of the duality between teacher and student from the perspective of traditional subject-object philosophy. Man is a relational being, and according to Marx's theory of relations, class consciousness is the highest paradigm of all relations of human existence. The teacher-student relationship order from the perspective of intersubjectivity theory emphasizes multi-interactive subject collaborative participation [14], equal dialogue, multi-integration and dynamic management [15], which belongs to the category of self-organization mode. The paradigm of teacher-student relationship order under the care of intersubjectivity theory will inevitably abandon the subject-object separation and move towards a new paradigm of self-conscious integration.

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