Symbiotic Harmony: The Realistic Way to Develop Teacher-Student Relationship in University

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ABSTRACT

Today, universities still focus on the development of teachers in human resources, for believing that teachers’ development will promote both students and education quality; yet ignoring the role of students which should also have an important impact on teachers’ improvement. However, this thesis considers that education is the process teachers and students will grow together, so the role of students must be taken into account during education. And measures such as eliminating the traditional thought barriers, establishing effective systems, and achieving the spiritual union between teachers and students can be taken to construct teacher-student relationship based on symbiosis and harmoniousness. So that teachers and students will complement and reinforce each other. Then we could realize the common development of teachers and students; eventually achieve the comprehensive improvement of education quality.

To enhance the quality of education, almost all colleges in China focus on teachers’ development but neglects students’ positive role to teachers, just as Weber ever said that “no teachers, no students and vice versa” [1]. Additionally, as the idea of symbiosis entering education field, people more clearly realize that the teachers and students are indivisible symbiosis. Thus, colleges should not only pay attention to teachers’ effect on students, but also value students’ promotion to teachers, and try their best to building symbiotic harmony teacher-student relationship, and then they could achieve a continuous improvement of education.

SYMBIOTIC HARMONY RELATIONSHIP WILL HELP TO PROMOTE COMMON DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Symbiotic Harmony is a Kind of Positive Interaction

The word “symbiosis” first appeared in biology, and the interpretation in the concise biology dictionary which written by D. Feng in China is “two organisms live together because of the two or one of the two cannot live without the other one, or one organism live in another one’s body so as to benefit each other.” Then the thought of “symbiosis” is introduced into anthropology, sociology, economics, management, education, and other fields. For example, J. Lu who is one of the famous educators in
China said that the idea of symbiosis is just recognizing that people of different lifestyles could build a positive relationship by mutual open based on the confirmation of heterogeneous coexistence [2]. As for “harmony”, we all know that it means live together in a friendly way.

Generally, differences always exist in different persons. It is noted that, in the perspective of human development, the existence of differences means that the human can utilize it to learn from each other, which is termed as complementarity. Hence, it can be inferred from the complementarity that the development between persons and persons is symbiotic. In this situation, converting differences into complementarity is the key to realize the human symbiotic development, thus the communication is considered as one of the effective ways. During communication, by the interaction between different individuals, the relationships of influencing and supplementing each other can be established, resulting in a promotion for human relationships. Therefore, to the university, the communication between the teachers and students is important to improve teacher-student relationships. By positive interaction between the teachers and students, the differences of them can be effectively transformed into the complementarity, indicating the importance of common development [3].

**Symbiotic Harmony is the Essential Requirement of both Teaching and Learning**

In the view of postmodernism, the teachers and students are equal rather than the opposite, in other words, neither the teachers nor the students are the center during education. In this kind of relationship, teachers are not only the instructor but also the learner, that is to say, when teachers with their own knowledge and experience help students to grow fast, they will be inspired from students who with diverse characteristics at the same time. So that, the teachers and students will benefit each other and achieve common grown eventually, that is, both teaching and learning.

The educational philosophy insists that the teachers and students are symbiotic, which means the education cannot put into practice without them either. It’s not advisable to make education evaluation just only from teachers or students, or try to enhancing education just by improving one of the two. On the contrary, we should take a comprehensive consideration of the two, that is, attaching importance to the supervision teachers to students as well as the promotion students to teachers. Undoubtedly, teachers are superior to students from teachers’ experience, and in this respect we may say students are not self-sufficient. Yet, as an independent individual everyone has his own gift just as the saying goes “two heads are always better than one”, students at New Time are more no exception. Especially, today, the information and science highly developed, maybe students are superior to teachers in the sensitivity to new things, and from this point teachers are not self-sufficient. Now that teachers and students are all self-sufficient, the establishment of symbiotic harmony relationship between the two by benefiting each other becomes an inevitable trend.

**Symbiotic Harmony is the Assistor to Common Development between Teachers and Students**

When “symbiotic harmony” introduced into teacher-student relationship, it is meaning the fusion of heterogeneity between teachers and students, and achieving common development under this kind of fusion. Generally, the teachers and students are regarded as a whole during education. However, the teachers and students are also
independent element in society essentially, differences between them because of different personality, and even multiple differences between them due to different roles, which just make an interpretation of heterogeneity. The educational philosophy considers that finiteness and generation of man are based on they are symbiotic, but the development of man is confluent and heterogeneous. Human born different, yet just because of those differences human could develop and progress all the time, what’s more, the greater the differences, the more wonderful the life. Although different, people can fuse these differences by diversified ways, then reach the unity of commonality and heterogeneity. Reflecting the teacher-student relationship in colleges, the differences between teachers and students can also be fused, which signifies the two could complement and reinforce each other, and realize the common development.

SYMBIOTIC HARMONY IS THE VALUE PURSUIT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The dualistic and opposite view of teacher-student relationship has been challenged in the perspective of postmodernism undoubtedly. However, whether the superficial equality would truly realize the harmoniousness between teachers and students, and how to improve the current education quality under this new kind of teacher-student relationship, maybe require to make a further analysis and understanding.

Whether the equality between teachers and students is the status of equality which means the two will communicate and research on the same platform and pursuit the path to knowledge together, or is the equality of trading which signifies students gain useful science knowledge from teachers and teachers get remuneration from students by selling knowledge simultaneously [4]. Perhaps only to dig the internal connection between teachers and students deeply that can we obtain accurate cognition. Look at the present situation of teacher-student relationship in colleges, seemingly, the status of students has been improved as well as the students gain more respect from teachers. However, what’s the other side of the harmonious is that many teachers treat classroom teaching as the step-by-step task, considering that they will reach corresponding workload after finishing classes arranged by school [5]. As to students, gaining available knowledge and requested credit become their largest goal, by which they could gain certain professional skills and then graduate smoothly. Obviously, during the process, teachers are unable to make spiritual exchange with students too much, likewise, students have no intention of turning to teachers for profound knowledge and social virtues. As a result, teachers become the tool of imparting knowledge while students become the purchaser of knowledge. Thus, it is spiritual alienation behind equal teacher-student relationship in colleges and this kind of alienation tend to deteriorate with the increase of students and teachers’ scientific research pressure.

On the other hand, if at the cost of spiritual alienation can really realize the equal teacher-student relationship remains to be confirmed. Actually, spiritual agreement and equal status can be traced to the same origin in a sense, if the teachers and students cannot get real spiritual communication, mutual respect between the two would be superficial rather than from the heart, which means the equality between teachers and students cannot be realized easily. Meanwhile, the higher education still put emphasis on the role of teachers for insisting that teachers’ function and status are irreplaceable, and students will be developed as long as teachers progress. So that, in the view of many colleges in China, to enhance the education quality must depend on the
cultivation and promotion of teachers. Thus, it’s not difficult to understand why most of the reformation and funding are used for promoting teachers in colleges. However, in this way, the positive role of students to teachers and to the whole education has been ignored, which deviating from common development advocated by postmodernism and even becomes the catalyst of alienation between teachers and students.

Teachers are the key factor in education, so do students. It’s difficult to enhance education quality largely if the teacher-student relationship got in the status of alienation all the time [6]. Teachers and students is interactional symbiont essentially, the growth and improvement of either one would promote the other one as well as the negativity of either one would restrict and bate the positivity of the other one [7]. Only if we got a correct understanding of the essence of symbiotic relationship between teachers and students as well as let this symbiotic relationship got strengthened, that can we really realize the both teaching and learning. Establishing symbiotic harmony teacher-student relationship, not only means teachers and students is the common destiny to advance and retreat together, but also could accelerates the fusion of spirit between the two. In this way, teachers are the companions of students to swim in the ocean of knowledge rather than the seller of knowledge, and students are knowledge seekers who explore learning together with teachers rather than the buyer of knowledge. What’s more, it is the fusion of teachers and students which stimulate the potential of teachers’ teaching and students’ passion for learning. So that, the teachers are more enjoyable in teaching as well as students are more willing to enter the kingdom of knowledge. Only if under the strong sense of symbiotic harmony relationship between teachers and students, that we can really realize the complementation and reinforce between the two, eventually achieving the qualitative leap for education quality.

REALISTIC PATH OF CONSTRUCTING SYMBIOTIC HARMONY

Eliminate Conventional Thought in Teacher-Student Relationship

The key of improving teacher-student relationship is to free thoughts. In China, the formation of teacher-student relationship is greatly influenced by traditional cultures, such as teacher dignity and heaven-earth-sovereign-parent-teacher. These thoughts have been deeply injected into the people minds. Generally, the teachers always exhibits a strong superiority, thus the mentality of the students is daunting. To establish the symbiotic harmony between teachers and students, it is necessary to break traditional concepts manacle to offer a freedom platform. In this situation, the teachers need to avoid forced irrigation knowledge and focus on honest communication, which can make the students feel gracious and confident. Additionally, in information era, students’ horizons are extended significantly due to the fact that the sources and ways of acquiring knowledge are increasing greatly, thus the teachers can enrich their knowledge by the eyes of students. To the students, they need to eliminate the concept of hierarchy and actively discuss problem with the teachers. Therefore, only the cooperative efforts of the teachers and students can eliminate the traditional thinking, achieving coexistence and mutual fusion between them.
Establishment of Management System

In the university, creating a good management system contributes to promoting the favorable development of education quality. When an advanced management system is utilized reasonably, the harmonious development in teacher-student relationship can be achieved. First, in the traditional university management system, teacher-student relationship is seldom served as an evaluation indicator in the process of education evaluation. When the teacher-student relationship is attached great importance to year-end assessment, they will not be ignored any longer in colleges. Then, such action can effectively promote the communication between the teachers and students. Secondly, effective safeguard mechanism should be built for teachers and students in colleges. An exclusive network platform is a better choice, which can guarantee the convenience and fluency in internet communication [8]. On the one hand, the teachers cannot refuse a visit of student without cause, and the emails of students are required to be responded in time for keeping motivation. On the other hand, the class quality should be improved, avoiding students’ absenteeism and formalized lessons of teachers [9]. With these improvements of management system, the communication space is enlarged significantly, and further reinforces the assessment of teacher-student relationship. In addition, to alleviate the pressures of teaching tasks and scientific research, teaching and researching team is preferable, which consists of veteran teachers and young teachers, thus leading to a positive reaction of mutual promotion and common improvement. In this situation, more times and energies of teachers can be allocated to students, resulting in the enhancement of education quality.

Realizing Spiritual Agreement between Teachers and Students by Understanding and Care

If consider that the management system is the external cause of the fusion development of teacher-student relationship, the spiritual emotion is the internal reason of reaching correlation dependence of them [10]. German existentialist philosopher, Karl Theodora Jaspers, regards that education is different from training; training is a kind of activity of spiritual isolation, while the education is the activity of spiritual agreement and cultural transmission. Since the deep form of symbiotic harmony in education is the spiritual agreement, the understanding and care is the source. To achieve the understanding, transposition thinking is an effective way. For college students, when face with actual things many unique thinking will arise. In this moment, the teacher needs to analyze the psychological characteristics and inherent requirements in the position of students, effectively guaranteeing the rationality of education process. Meanwhile, the student is necessary to feel the experience of teacher, contributing to knowing the complexity and integrity of the education process. Based on these, the initial knowing between the teachers and students can sublimate to understanding. Furthermore, as the main formation in the communication, dialogue is an activity for teachers and students to ex-change thinking, which is different from talking. Both in academic discussion and daily life, a real understanding between the teachers and students can be realized by communication of heart. Only standing the level of mutual understanding, the mutual fusion can be achieved.

Nell Nodding considers that the care is a kind of relationship. The completion of care relationship can be expressed as follows: a. X cares about Y; b. Y admits and accepts the care of X; c. the feedback of Y is admitted by X. It can be seen that the
effective care is not unidirectional, which not only depends on the people who gives the care, but also hinges on the feedback of the people who is cared. Therefore, some efforts should be paid to the establishment of care relationship between teachers and students [11]. When the teachers care about students but the latter do not feel the care from the former, the care in this moment is no value. Only if the care from the teachers obtains the students’ resonance, the care is effective which could even generate mutual care between teachers and students. It is the bi-directional characteristic of care relationship just reveals the necessity of symbiotic harmony, and the mode of mutual care which constitutes a spiritual bridge to the symbiotic harmony.

CONCLUSIONS

Findings from this investigation indicate that the achievements of high education quality are associated with favorable establishment of teacher-student relationships. And the symbiotic harmony between teachers and students is the key to obtain the high education quality. On the one hand, the investigations in this paper are respectively conducted in three perspectives for teachers and students, involving common development, value pursuit, and implementation approach. Since the teachers in nowadays forms a close relationship with the students by depending on and influencing each other, more efforts should be paid to them simultaneously for enhancing the education quality. On the other hand, analyzing the substantive characteristics of teacher-student relationships, three improved schemes are proposed to achieve the symbiotic harmony between them effectively, consisting of eliminating conventional thinking, establishing rational management system, and realizing spiritual agreement. Finally, the study results reveal that the development of symbiotic harmony between the teachers and students contributes to obtaining desirable teacher-student relationships, providing a new path for improving the education quality.

REFERENCES