

# Effective Approaches and Suggestions for Communication between University Teachers and Students

Zihan Xiong<sup>1,\*</sup> and Jingxian Hu<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Hainan, 571126, China

\* Correspondence: Zihan Xiong, Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Hainan, 571126, China

**Abstract:** With the continuous advancement of the universalization of compulsory education and the popularization of higher education in our country, a large number of students enter colleges and universities through the college entrance examination every year. The scale of college student enrollment continues to expand, and the structure becomes increasingly diverse. Under such circumstances, it is particularly important to establish a harmonious, efficient, and sustainable teacher-student relationship, as it directly affects the teaching quality, academic atmosphere construction, talent cultivation outcomes, and campus culture atmosphere of higher education. However, in reality, communication between teachers and students often faces many obstacles, which leads to many problems, such as students being unable to receive timely notification information and teachers finding it difficult to receive feedback. This severely restricts the optimization of the educational process and the realization of educational goals. Therefore, it is particularly important to study how teachers and students communicate with each other and what methods and approaches to adopt. This article aims to deeply analyze the main problems existing in the current communication between teachers and students in higher education and their causes, systematically explore feasible paths for building an effective teacher-student communication relationship, and propose operational countermeasures and suggestions, with the aim of providing reference for improving the quality of teacher-student interaction, promoting mutual learning in teaching, and fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue and cultivating talents.

**Keywords:** teacher-student relationship in universities; effective communication; university enrollment expansion; communication strategies

Published: 31 December 2025



**Copyright:** © 2025 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

## 1. Introduction

In the academic landscape of higher education, the pedagogical process is fundamentally rooted in the complex interplay between teaching and learning, which manifests through the continuous interaction between faculty members and students. Within this educational framework, neither party operates in isolation; rather, the acquisition of knowledge is realized and deepened through a dynamic and iterative communicative process. A harmonious teacher-student relationship serves as the foundational pillar for institutional quality and the broader construction of campus culture. It functions not only as the primary conduit for the dissemination of academic knowledge and the clarification of complex theoretical inquiries but also as the essential environment for stimulating intrinsic learning motivation, fostering critical thinking, and shaping well-rounded personalities among the student body.

Furthermore, the quality of these interpersonal dynamics directly influences the overall instructional standards of universities and the cultivation of an environment conducive to academic innovation and intellectual vitality. In the contemporary era, the necessity for in-depth research into how educators and students can transcend existing communication barriers-and the specific methodologies they should adopt for high-efficiency engagement-has become increasingly profound. Constructing a modernized teacher-student relationship is vital for the development of high-quality talents who possess superior skills and comprehensive capabilities. Consequently, this research is predicated on these considerations and seeks to provide a systematic and rigorous discussion on the mechanisms of effective communication within the university setting, aiming to offer theoretical insights and practical strategies for optimizing these crucial academic interactions.

## **2. The Current Communication Problems among Teachers and Students in Universities**

### *2.1. Psychological Barriers in Communication Caused by Differences in Traditional Role Positioning*

In the long-established educational culture and traditional pedagogical concepts, particularly within the specific context of higher education, a rigid hierarchical structure regarding role positioning has persisted. Teachers have historically been cast in the roles of authoritative knowledge transmitters and academic guides, with their institutional identity leaning heavily toward being educators and administrative managers. Conversely, students are traditionally positioned as passive knowledge receivers and subjects of management, with their roles primarily defined as learners and individuals being educated. This inherent disparity in status and functional identity often leads faculty members to unconsciously adopt the persona of a superior leader. Consequently, teachers frequently approach issues from a top-down perspective, prioritizing their own professional viewpoints while seldom considering the psychological or academic needs of the students [1].

Many educators are accustomed to delivering content based solely on their established professional knowledge reserves and prior management experiences. Due to this entrenched role perception, students often approach interactions with a sense of awe, which frequently translates into passivity [2]. During communicative exchanges, students may feel hesitant to express their authentic thoughts or intellectual doubts actively. This hesitation makes it difficult for the dialogue to transcend superficial academic discourse and delve into deeper emotional resonance or ideological innovation. As a result, the communication remains at a surface level, failing to achieve the profound intellectual synergy required for high-level university education [3].

### *2.2. Limited Communication Conditions under Scale Expansion and Resource Constraints*

The strategic expansion of university enrollment has significantly promoted the popularization of higher education, yet it has simultaneously disrupted the equilibrium between institutional resources and the student population. In the contemporary network era, the transformation of the educational environment has introduced multifaceted obstacles to effective interaction. These challenges can be systematically analyzed through the lenses of resource contradiction and ability matching [4,5].

At the level of resource contradiction, the rapid increase in student numbers has directly weakened the fundamental physical conditions necessary for meaningful engagement. For instance, a shortage of dedicated instructional space often necessitates the merging of multiple classes into a single lecture hall, forcing a single instructor to manage dozens or even hundreds of students simultaneously. Furthermore, the adoption of mobile or floating class schedules means that students frequently lack fixed home classrooms, which reduces the probability of spontaneous or informal encounters with

faculty members. Additionally, the increasing distance between newly established suburban campuses and traditional main campuses creates an objective physical barrier. This geographic dispersion increases the time and economic costs associated with offline, face-to-face communication, further compressing the opportunities for students to seek guidance outside of formal lecture hours.

Regarding the level of ability matching, the digital environment imposes significantly higher demands on the communicative competencies of university teachers. On one hand, the diversification of information dissemination channels allows students to access vast amounts of data independently. If a teacher's knowledge reserve remains static or lags behind contemporary developments, they may find themselves unable to respond effectively to the cutting-edge information or unconventional inquiries brought forward by students. This gap diminishes the teacher's perceived authority and the overall appeal of the communication. On the other hand, there are noticeable shortcomings in the soft skills of some educators [6]. Many faculty members have not undergone systematic communication training and may struggle with active listening or identifying student needs. When their linguistic expressions are overly obscure or pedantic, they fail to stimulate the students' interest in dialogue. Traditional spoon-feeding teaching methods still prevail in many departments, and without proper pedagogical guidance, interactive teaching sessions often degenerate into mere formalities without substantive engagement [7].

### *2.3. The Communication Skills of Teachers and Their Teaching Styles Have an Impact on the Communication Effectiveness*

As the primary facilitators of the educational process, the communication awareness, technical ability, and personal style of teachers exert a decisive influence on the quality of interpersonal outcomes. Currently, a significant portion of university faculty members exhibits deficiencies in specialized communication techniques. Many of these individuals are recruited from research-intensive backgrounds or non-teacher education institutions, meaning they may not have received formal training in educational psychology or instructional methodology. Consequently, their communication styles are often formed spontaneously or based on limited personal experience rather than scientific pedagogical principles.

For instance, educators who possess the ability to deliver lectures in an engaging, information-rich manner while maintaining a vibrant classroom atmosphere are far more likely to build rapport with their students. Students are naturally more inclined to initiate contact and sustain dialogue with teachers who demonstrate such openness. Conversely, if a teacher adopts an overly rigid, strictly academic, or dictatorial style, students often develop a defensive psychological stance, leading to a reluctance to participate in verbal exchanges. Furthermore, the personal charismatic traits of an educator play a vital role; those who are perceived as outgoing, humorous, and approachable tend to attract student interest and foster a supportive learning environment. In contrast, teachers who appear overly serious, emotionally cold, or prone to displays of intellectual superiority often inadvertently create a hostile or intimidating atmosphere. These negative perceptions act as invisible barriers, causing communication channels to be blocked and preventing the establishment of a constructive academic partnership.

## **3. Suggestions for Improving the Communication between Teachers and Students**

### *3.1. Tailored Teaching Approach*

Under the prevailing large-class teaching model in higher education, significant individual differences among students are inevitable. To address this complexity, a personalized teaching system based on individual characteristics should be constructed to achieve precise and effective communication. Educators must move beyond a "one-size-fits-all" approach and instead systematically seek to understand each student's

unique knowledge foundation, cognitive style, and learning preferences. This can be achieved through diverse methodologies, such as meticulous classroom observation, structured post-class interviews, and the use of digital feedback tools. By dynamically recording communication strengths, weaknesses, and individualized needs, teachers can create a comprehensive profile for their student body.

For students who are naturally introverted or possess relatively weak verbal expression abilities, a progressive communication strategy is highly effective. This involves initiating contact with simple, life-related topics to gradually build a foundation of mutual trust before delving into more complex academic theories or psychological inquiries. Conversely, for students who are proactive and demonstrate active, divergent thinking, teachers should establish open communication scenarios. These students should be encouraged to participate in high-level academic discussions and innovative practical projects, thereby deepening the quality of interaction and stimulating innovative thinking. Furthermore, for those experiencing academic difficulties or significant psychological pressure, educators should provide timely, caring, and supportive communication. Such interventions help students regulate their emotions and collaborate with faculty to find constructive solutions to their challenges.

### *3.2. Fairness and Justice*

Fairness and justice constitute the core foundation for maintaining trust between teachers and students and are essential for building a sustainable communication framework. Through the consistent application of equal treatment, transparent rules, and objective handling of academic matters, it is possible to bridge the psychological gap between faculty and the student body. In practice, this requires teachers to consciously abandon any discriminatory treatment based on a student's academic performance, socioeconomic background, or personality traits. Fairness must be integrated into every facet of the educational experience, including the distribution of classroom questions, the availability of after-class tutoring, and the selection of participants for departmental activities. Ensuring an equal distribution of communication opportunities allows every student to feel respected and valued within the academic community.

In addition to procedural fairness, teachers should maintain a neutral and objective communication stance. This involves refraining from imposing personal values or subjective biases on students. Instead, educators should model intellectual tolerance by accepting diverse viewpoints and avoiding prejudices that may arise from cognitive or generational differences. In particular, proactive efforts should be made to provide additional opportunities for classroom performance to students who are struggling academically. By creating a safe space for these students to demonstrate their progress, teachers can help them rebuild their confidence, which in turn stimulates their interest in both the subject matter and further communication with the faculty.

### *3.3. Be Honest with Others*

Sincerity is a vital component of effective pedagogy; teachers should maintain an authentic attitude and demonstrate genuine concern for the holistic growth of their students. In actual daily interactions, faculty members should strive to lower their professional "defensive barriers" and present their true selves to the class. This can be effectively achieved by sharing personal learning journeys, including research setbacks, professional challenges, and life insights, at appropriate times. Such "self-disclosure" serves to humanize the educator and rapidly shortens the psychological distance between the two parties. When students encounter obstacles, they need more than simple preaching or administrative management; they require empathy and a teacher who can put themselves in the student's position to jointly explore solutions.

Furthermore, when addressing a student's shortcomings, teachers should offer sincere criticism paired with patient guidance for improvement. It is essential that

students perceive the teacher's honesty as a tool for their personal and professional development rather than a means of blame. Most importantly, the integrity of the teacher-student relationship depends on the consistency between a teacher's words and deeds. By keeping promises and maintaining stable, sincere behavior over the long term, educators can accumulate a solid reservoir of trust. This trust acts as a lubricant for all future interactions, ensuring that communication remains fluid, honest, and productive throughout the students' academic careers.

#### **4. Practical Approaches to Efficient Communication**

##### *4.1. Establishing an Appropriate Teacher Evaluation Mechanism*

To fundamentally prioritize interaction within the academic environment, it is essential to reconstruct the existing teacher evaluation system by incorporating teacher-student communication into the core dimensions of professional assessment. The development of scientific communication evaluation indicators is necessary to ensure that this qualitative aspect of teaching is measured with precision. Such a system should move beyond a single administrative viewpoint and instead establish multiple evaluation entities. In addition to the traditional oversight by teaching management departments, the introduction of student-led evaluations and peer reviews will render the assessment process more comprehensive and objective. Students should be empowered to rate and provide detailed qualitative comments on a teacher's communicative performance through anonymous questionnaires and specialized feedback platforms. Meanwhile, academic peers can evaluate the effectiveness of these interactions from the perspective of professional communication techniques and the successful integration of modern educational philosophies.

Furthermore, the results of these communication evaluations should be substantively linked to professional advancement, including teacher promotion, performance-based financial rewards, and selection for honorary titles or excellence awards. By assigning these metrics a reasonable weight within the overall performance portfolio, universities can provide a strong institutional incentive for faculty to actively enhance their interpersonal skills. This shift ensures that effective communication is recognized not merely as a supplementary skill but as a core task in the contemporary education and teaching process. Such systemic reforms are vital for promoting a long-term, sustainable improvement in the quality of teacher-student interactions across the institution.

##### *4.2. Establishing Course Communication Groups*

To mitigate the inherent limitations of large-class teaching models-where individualized interaction is often sacrificed for the sake of comprehensive knowledge dissemination-universities should widely implement a hybridized model characterized by "large-class instruction supplemented by small-group discussion." Under this framework, students are organized into small communication groups, ideally consisting of approximately five members each. These groups are designed to facilitate regular engagement through both offline and online modalities. Offline activities should prioritize the exploration of key course concepts, difficult theoretical nodes, practical applications, and broader academic expansions. During these sessions, teachers act as facilitators, guiding students to independently explore topics, share divergent viewpoints, and engage in academic debates that stimulate intellectual collisions.

Simultaneously, the establishment of online communication communities, utilizing platforms such as the discussion areas of Xuexitong or Yuketang, allows for real-time question-answering and the continuous sharing of academic materials. Educators must participate deeply in these group activities by providing timely guidance, professional commentary, and intellectual deepening of the topics discussed. By assigning collaborative tasks-such as course project designs, complex case analyses, or literature review reports-teachers create natural opportunities for students to seek professional

support and collaborate closely with faculty. This narrowing of the communication scope increases the frequency of meaningful contact and ensures that interactions remain focused on course objectives. Ultimately, these groups help cultivate teamwork and communication skills in students while enabling teachers to accurately identify learning obstacles and optimize their instructional strategies accordingly.

#### *4.3. Selecting the Appropriate Communication Platform*

The selection of communication platforms must be strategically aligned with modern network technology and the specific interpersonal needs of the university community. Leveraging popular social networking tools such as WeChat and QQ allows for the creation of dedicated course groups and professional communities. These platforms facilitate the daily sharing of academic information and support "lightweight" interactions, such as voting on specific knowledge points or providing short video explanations of complex concepts. Such an approach fosters a relaxed and accessible communication atmosphere, effectively addressing the traditional problem of faculty unavailability outside of office hours. Furthermore, digital platforms provide a more subtle and less intimidating medium for introverted or shy students to engage with their instructors compared to traditional face-to-face encounters.

In addition to general social tools, institutions should promote the use of specialized academic research communication platforms, including academic forums and research collaboration software. Within these spaces, teachers can post current research topics, provide updates on ongoing projects, and share cutting-edge developments in their respective fields. Students, in turn, are given the opportunity to participate in high-level academic discussions and apply for positions within research teams. This enables a transition from basic instructional interaction to in-depth communication centered on professional research and scholarly inquiry. By integrating these diverse platforms, universities can create a multi-layered communication network that bridges the gap between formal classroom teaching and the collaborative nature of advanced scientific research.

### **5. Conclusion**

Effective communication between teachers and students is a crucial link for the high-quality development of education and teaching, and it is related to the quality of talent cultivation, the growth and success of students, and the realization of educational value by teachers. Currently, the challenges faced by communication between teachers and students are structural and multi-faceted. There are the inertia of historical roles, the practical constraints brought about by scale expansion, and the deep influence of evaluation systems and resource allocation. In the face of these challenges, we not only need a return and update of concepts, reaffirming the value of traditional wisdom such as "tailored teaching" in the modern educational context, but also through the guiding principles of tailored teaching, fairness and justice, and treating others sincerely, relying on the construction of a scientific evaluation mechanism, course exchange groups, and diverse communication platforms as practical paths, we can gradually improve the current situation of communication between teachers and students.

In the future, we need to continuously deepen the research on the laws of communication between teachers and students, combine with the development of the times to make communication truly become a bridge connecting knowledge, emotions and thoughts, achieving mutual growth of teachers and students, promoting university education to provide society with high-quality talents with professional qualities and communication and collaboration abilities, and allowing university education to demonstrate more vigorous vitality and educational vitality through effective communication.

## References

1. R. Sensenbaugh, "How effective communication can enhance teaching at the college level," *ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication*, 1995.
2. M. Gleason, "Better communication in large courses," *\*College Teaching\**, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 20–24, Jan. 1986.
3. H. Albalawi, and M. Nadeem, "Exploring the Impact of Ineffective Formal Communication between Teachers and Students: A Case Study of Mustaqbal University and Jubail University College, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," *English Language Teaching*, vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 68-76, 2020.
4. H. L. Merdian, and J. K. Warrior, "Effective Communication between Students and Lecturers: Improving Student-Led Communication in Educational Settings," *Psychology Teaching Review*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 25-38, 2015. doi: 10.53841/bpsptr.2015.21.1.25
5. R. Serra, C. Martinez, C. J. Vertegaal, P. Sundaramoorthy, and M. J. Bentum, "Using student-led tutorials to improve student performance in challenging courses," *\*IEEE Trans. Educ.\**, vol. 66, no. 4, pp. 339–349, Nov. 2023.
6. G. Hagenauer, F. Muehlbacher, and M. Ivanova, "It's where learning and teaching begins this relationship"-insights on the teacher-student relationship at university from the teachers' perspective," *Higher Education*, vol. 85, no. 4, pp. 819-835, 2023.
7. N. Mocanasu, "The teacher-student relationship-changes in university education," *\*Curentul Juridic\**, vol. 76, no. 1, pp. 32-44, 2019.

**Disclaimer/Publisher's Note:** The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of the publisher and/or the editor(s). The publisher and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.