

The Dilemmas and Solutions of Home-School Communication in the New Era

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Abstract: In the new era, profound changes are occurring in various fields of society, driving continuous updates in educational concepts and facilitating the renewal of the connotation of home-school co-education. However, issues such as parental participation, educational demands, parental trust, teacher credibility, and home-school interaction in the information age are emerging in home-school communication. This paper analyzes the problems and dilemmas of home-school communication from the perspectives of schools and parents, proposing paths to address these dilemmas through home-school activities, communication strategies, and communication platforms, aiming to establish a positive home-school communication mechanism.

Keywords: New Era; Home-School Communication; Trust; Pathways

As socialism with Chinese characteristics enters a new era, technological innovation drives high-quality development, the “Law on Promoting Family Education of the People’s Republic of China” is promulgated, and a new round of curriculum reform deepens, education enters an entirely new phase. The co-education model between home and school has also transformed: shifting from school-led to jointly led by both home and school; from “talks and meetings” to multi-channel communication; from communication focused on academic performance to a broader discussion including student character, social skills, and conflict resolution... With the arrival of a new home-school co-education model, the re-evaluation of home-school relationships and maximizing their effectiveness has become a societal focus.

1. The Significance and Value of Home-School Communication in the New Era

With the comprehensive promotion of “simultaneous development of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education” and the implementation of the “double reduction” policy, the partnership among the three educational stakeholders—schools, families, and society—has become increasingly close. Some scholars believe that during a child’s growth, the similar cultural values of home and school mutually reinforce and enhance positive influences on the child.

1.1 Home-School Communication Consolidates Consensus on the “Double Reduction” Policy

Under the “double reduction” background, while alleviating students’ academic burdens, the responsibilities of both schools and families remain. Jointly targeting and promoting students’ academic learning and overall development has become a new research focus for home-school collaboration. Teachers are the forefront information providers, and effective home-school communication is crucial in guiding parents to understand and engage with “double reduction” initiatives, thus creating a conducive growth environment for students.

1.2 Home-School Communication Promotes the Linkage of “Simultaneous Development of Five Educations”

The “simultaneous development of five educations” provides a new direction for educational reform, leading to a shift in parental educational perspectives, where academic scores are no longer the sole focus, and recognition of children’s holistic development and individual needs is emphasized. Schools serve as the primary arena for “five educations,” integrating with parental educational concepts to create more favorable conditions for student development, necessitating home-school communication to achieve collaborative co-education and foster an integrated educational approach.

1.3 Home-School Communication Enhances Guidance on “Family Education”

The implementation of the “Law on Promoting Family Education” in 2022 has elevated the importance of “family education” to new heights. Scholars argue that emphasizing family and family education cannot be separated from home-school cooperative education. Those engaged in teaching professions must pay attention to the significant role of family education in nurturing individuals, highlighting the importance of effective communication regarding promoting traditional Chinese virtues through family education practices.

2. Problems and Dilemmas Facing Home-School Communication in the New Era

As calls for educational reform grow stronger, the advent of the big data era presents numerous challenges for educational communication, practice, and development. Addressing these issues urgently requires active parental involvement to achieve a win-win scenario in home-school co-education.

2.1 Issues and Dilemmas Between Parental Participation and Educational Demand

Currently, many educational issues require smooth and effective home-school communication for resolution. The differences in educational stances between families and schools are significant barriers to communication. A key issue in contemporary home-school communication is the “degree” of parental involvement, which directly impacts educational outcomes. Some parents, influenced by cultural levels, educational awareness, exam-oriented education, and family structure, perceive the relationship between home and school as “subordinate,” fully attributing responsibility to schools, and thus are unwilling or passively participate in home-school communication, becoming “low-involvement parents”; others, equipped with higher knowledge levels and social status, scrutinize school education critically, becoming “high-involvement parents”; while some parents possess sufficient time and energy to share educational responsibilities with schools, categorizing them as “moderate-involvement parents.”

2.2 Issues and Dilemmas Between Parental Trust and Teacher Credibility

The trust relationship between teachers and parents is built upon relative alignment in thoughts, emotions, and values, where shared educational goals are essential for establishing mutual trust. Currently, some parents lack empathy and understanding in their communications with schools, evaluating educational initiatives from their family and child’s perspective. This distrust leaves teachers feeling powerless in managing students, creating a vicious cycle that leads to a crisis of trust. Additionally, deficiencies in teachers’ professional ethics, teaching abilities, and subject knowledge further diminish teacher credibility. With students positioned between parents and teachers, there is an urgent need for parents and teachers to achieve equality in information exchange, relying on “trust” as a foundation to foster harmonious home-school co-education through effective communication.

2.3 Issues and Dilemmas Between the Information Age and Home-School Interaction

In the information age, various fields are permeated by information technology, including education. The advancement of modern information technology facilitates home-school communication, breaking down temporal and spatial limitations, enabling real-time exchanges between the two parties. However, in this convenient information age, communication barriers between home and school are increasing. For instance, when teachers send notifications regarding traffic safety, fire safety, or student travel based on administrative orders, many parents choose to mute these messages or set group chats to “do not disturb.” Such choices lead parents to miss crucial information from teachers regarding students’ learning, resulting in ineffective communication, which becomes a limiting factor in home-school interactions.

3. The expected path to break through the communication dilemma between home and school in the new era

3.1 The theoretical foundation for resolving the communication dilemma between home and school

The ideal state of home-school co-education is that the education and management of schools can gain the understanding and support of families, the education of families can receive guidance and suggestions from schools, family education and school education complement each other, and the educational effectiveness of students reaches the best.

German sociologist and philosopher Georg Simmel, in his “Philosophy of Money,” centered on credit, proposed that in credit transactions, the immediacy of value exchange is replaced by a kind of distance, with trust supporting the two poles of this distance.^[1]

3.2 Relying on “home-school activities” to effectively balance educational needs

3.2.1 Project-based experiential activities

By designing home-school activities, the range of student activities can be expanded, the field of home-school communication can be enlarged, a good communication atmosphere can be created, and a balance point for home-school educational needs can be

found..

Based on the age characteristics of students, the actual situation of the school, and the needs of parents, design targeted project-based parent-child experiential activities, such as the “Growing Together Under the Same Blue Sky” project. The design of this activity can increase the frequency of home-school interaction and lay the foundation for a virtuous cycle of home-school communication.

3.2.2 Theme-based parent meetings

Parent meetings should not be confined to fixed formats. Taking a thematic approach can form direction-oriented meetings for academic guidance, family education training, and problem-solving for students. Schools need to prepare carefully, accurately analyze the educational concepts to be conveyed to parents, and the topics for communication. Through theme-based parent meetings, parental recognition can be achieved, forming educational synergy and paving the way for smooth follow-up home-school communication.

3.2.3 Specialized home-school forums

Parents need scientific education guidance from schools, enrich educational theory knowledge, enhance educational quality, improve practical abilities, and enhance parent-child relationships. Therefore, for issues encountered in student growth, such as habit cultivation, academic tasks, and values, etc., it is necessary for parents and schools to jointly participate in specialized parent forums to reach educational consensus through thematic lectures and dialogue consultations, and help students grow.

3.3 Relying on “communication strategies” to promote long-term trust between home and school

In the new era of education, home-school communication requires teachers to start with respecting parents, understand the students and their family backgrounds, and ensure patience in listening.

3.3.1 Respecting parents: the foundation of home-school communication

Respect is the foundation of communication between teachers and parents, reflected in the teacher’s attitude towards parents. Students come from different families with significant differences in parental cultural levels, occupations, family situations, and educational philosophies. Teachers should uphold the principle of fair treatment when communicating with parents.

3.3.2 Understanding backgrounds: the premise of home-school communication

Mutual understanding is the basis for achieving harmonious home-school communication. Before home-school communication, one should understand the personal background of students, such as ethnicity, family economic conditions, family structure, parents’ occupations and cultural levels (whether single-parent, living with which parent), grades in various subjects, learning attitudes, classroom performance, relationships with classmates and teachers, presence of bad habits or congenital diseases, etc. It is also necessary to moderately understand whether individual parents have encountered sudden problems in a short period.

3.3.3 Patient listening: the guarantee of home-school communication

As educators, teachers have richer educational theories and practical experience than parents. If not careful, it may lead to a situation where teachers “lecture” parents, resulting in disharmony in home-school communication, deviation in problem discussions, and difficulty in reaching educational consensus. Therefore, when communicating with parents, teachers should listen to parents’ suggestions more, set aside educational authority, humbly discuss issues related to students and class management.

3.4 Relying on “communication carriers” to efficiently implement effective communication

Communication carriers can be divided into self-carriers and external carriers. Language, actions, expressions, etc., are all self-carriers in communication. In addition to self-carriers, all external factors related to communication are external carriers, including static items like pen and paper, tools, and communication platforms such as online platforms. The immediacy, interactivity, and diversity of online platforms have brought about entirely new changes in the content, methods, and characteristics of home-school communication.^[2] The immediacy, interactivity, and diversity of online platforms allow home-school communication to present new changes in content, methods, and characteristics.

In conclusion, home-school communication is an important means and method for win-win and co-education between home and school. With the development of education reform, the content, means, and paths of home-school communication will also continue to face new challenges. As long as educators keep pace with the pulse of the times, they will certainly become the best support for students’ growth and achieve the best educational results.

References:

[1] Georg Simmel, *Philosophy of Money* [M]. Nanchang: Jiangxi Education Press, 2014. p.503.

[2] Liu Lingling. Integrating Traditional and Modern Communication Methods to Achieve Home-School Co-construction [J]. *Jilin Education*, 2021(25): 78-79.