

# The study of teacher-student Relationship under the Perspective of Whitehead's Process Philosophy

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**ABSTRACT.** *In the great tree of philosophy, promoting the transformation of western philosophy to modern times, process philosophy based on process turn is undoubtedly an important branch. As the founder of the theoretical system of process philosophy, whitehead was called by the image “The wine of modern metaphysics”, “The Thinker with Seven Faces”. And undoubtedly, he is one of the most famous philosophers. This paper explores the relationship between teachers and students from the perspective of Whitehead's process philosophy..*

**KEYWORDS:** *Whitehead; Process Philosophy; Teacher-student Relationship*

## 1. Whitehead and His Process Philosophy

Alfred North Whitehead, for the rest of his life, whether as a British mathematician, educator, or as a well-known philosopher, logician. His theories have influenced and guided the practice of different disciplines with their academic achievements. Whitehead received a good education from childhood and taught at the university after graduation. However, he is not confined to a specific field of study, but has a wide range of interests. He has dabbled in various disciplines and made remarkable achievements. He has made great achievements in many disciplines and he is a really master figure. Whitehead wrote many books in his life, and his works covered many fields and had a great influence on these fields. The so-called situation makes heroes. At the beginning of the 20th century, the largest scientific revolution in Western science took place in history. As a result, some scientific circles and philosophers took place the Copernican Revolution in their thoughts, and gradually began to study the process philosophy based on process-relationship. Process philosophy can also be called organic philosophy or organism philosophy. The thought of process in this paper is embodied in Whitehead's masterpiece Process and Reality. The general characteristics of process philosophy are process and relationship. Whitehead's process philosophy holds that the world can not be reduced to material entity or spiritual entity in essence, but a dynamic process, a process of continuous generation. Not only the world is like this, but also everything in the world is like this. All existence will become reality and process. Whitehead's process philosophy has subverted the traditional philosophy characterized by static entity

and structure in the West, which has occupied an absolute position in modern times, by means of criticism, and at the same time, it has continued the views of organic connection and endless growth in the eastern and western philosophies by means of inheritance and development. The internal motive force of process philosophy is the way to study the change of human experience and the fundamental nature of things in the dynamic universe. As a revolutionary change in the history of Western philosophy, we believe that we will be able to find a new cosmology and world outlook from Whitehead's process philosophy, which is different from other philosophical schools.

## **2. Teacher-student relationship in the perspective of Whitehead's process philosophy**

A healthy teacher-student relationship can not only make the value of life of teachers and students better presented, but also promote education and teaching activities to be carried out more smoothly, so as to achieve a win-win situation in which students are trained and teachers are trained. Whitehead's process philosophy emphasizes the dynamic development, process and relationship of the world, and inspects the world with relational thinking. At the same time, it has certain theoretical research value to study the new teacher-student relationship with Whitehead's process philosophy.

Whitehead regards reality as the fundamental composition of the world, and the set of such composition is called the combination. This combination not only has order on the outside, but also on the inside, the various components are tolerant of each other and related to each other. From the perspective of Whitehead's process philosophy, teachers and students form a small world of teacher-student relationship. As the constitutive elements in the small world of teacher-student relationship, teachers and students are tolerant of each other, contact each other, and form a set or combination to achieve the common purpose of teaching and educating people.

In this kind of teacher-student relationship, teacher-student relationship can produce different meanings. First of all, the relationship between teachers and students is not a simple superposition, but a relationship formed by each other through internal interaction. The relationship between teachers and students is not a relationship that assumes both teachers and students as an entity and presupposes the relationship between teachers and students as an attribute and attaches to the external entity of teachers and students. Thus, the presupposition first has the entity of teacher and student, and then has the relationship between teacher and student. In fact, the relationship between teachers and students in the perspective of Whitehead's process philosophy can not be separated, but is a relationship of interdependence and mutual perfection. Secondly, teacher-student relationship is also in this process, in this process, teacher-student relationship generates each other. Whitehead's process philosophy emphasizes that all things are in constant motion, change and generation, existence is a kind of generation, and if there is no generation, there will be no existence. Similarly, due to continuous interaction, the

relationship between teachers and students is also constantly generated. Although there will be some differences in the interaction between teachers and students, they can finally get a generated unity. In the communication between teachers and students, every moment and stage is novel rather than old, and the relationship between teachers and students also shows a vibrant state. Finally, due to the particularity of pedagogy, teachers and students need to work together to complete, so the relationship between teachers and students is fundamentally an educational relationship, teachers and students constitute the combination of teachers and students. In the relationship between teachers and students, teachers and students are components, that is, reality. If we want to better understand the relationship between teachers and students, we should not only understand what it is, but also understand what it is and where it is, only by truly achieving the unity of value and facts, can we study the relationship between teachers and students more thoroughly.

### **3. The basic characteristics of Teacher-student Relationship in the Perspective of Whitehead's Process Philosophy**

Under the entity thinking, because the relationship between teachers and students has certain particularity, using Whitehead's process philosophy of criticizing entity thinking to take care of the relationship between teachers and students, it shows that the relationship between teachers and students must have its own unique characteristics, which can be shown from the following aspects

#### ***3.1 The relationship between teachers and students is rhythmic.***

Rhythm of education is the basic point of view of Whitehead on the development of human intelligence. Whitehead believes that life is cyclical in nature, and the cycle of intellectual development in life occurs in a bad way, but each cycle is different, and there will be a subordinate stage again. Therefore, Whitehead believes that the learner's intelligence can be divided into three stages: romantic, accurate, summary, these three stages are rhythmic, will alternate in the different stages of intellectual development dominant. The teacher-student relationship under Whitehead's process philosophy also has this rhythm, and what the teacher needs to do is to promote students to conform to the development and change of the mind and coordinate the freedom and discipline in education. Therefore, teachers should implement corresponding courses at different stages of students' mental development, adopt different educational methods and means, and give full play to their abilities for different disciplines and different teaching objects. If there are problems such as ineffective teaching in the teaching process, it is likely that the teacher does not grasp the rhythm of education and the rhythm of students' intellectual development accurately enough. In different stages of intellectual development, the focus of the relationship between teachers and students is also different, and the relationship between teachers and students under the philosophy of process is the same. In today's society, the harmonious and equal relationship between teachers and students has become a theme, which is also a general summary of the relationship between

teachers and students, but many of them lack the grasp of rhythm, which is actually the entity thinking. In the perspective of Whitehead's process philosophy, the relationship between teachers and students is always changing. Therefore, teachers should adopt different education and teaching methods in different stages of students' education, do a good job in teaching activities, achieve a definite goal in teaching activities, grasp the rhythm of students' intellectual development, and grasp students' intellectual development.

### ***3.2 The relationship between teachers and students is constantly changing and creative.***

In Whitehead's process philosophy, there are three concepts that can be called his ultimate category, namely one, many and creativity. One enhances more, more generates one, and the motive force in their process is creativity. The world is such a diverse entity, experiencing the process from many to one. It is precisely because of this creativity that we can create one after another endless process of activity. Therefore, in the relationship between teachers and students, the relationship between teachers and students is a combination of diversity and unity, because of the daily exchanges between teachers and students, the relationship between teachers and students is also in the process of continuous generation. There is no eternal and unchangeable ultimate teacher-student relationship, but there is a teacher-student relationship with the characteristics of change and development.

Creativity, as an internal driving force, runs through the interaction between teachers and students, so the relationship between teachers and students has been in the process of generation, and any view that shows that it is complete is one-sided, because the relationship between teachers and students is always developing, changing and incomplete.

Creativity is also an important concept in Whitehead's process philosophy, which introduces diversity into the unified organism (combination). However, the organism here is in an unfinished production process, it is not static. Therefore, for the existing things, under the influence of creativity, it will form a process of inclusion-generation-inclusion. Similarly, under the impetus of creativity, the relationship between teachers and students as an organism will gradually expose the essence of constant exploration. Through rich content and various forms of communication, teachers and students constantly generate and absorb resources conducive to their own development to improve and construct themselves and each other. Of course, this kind of teacher-student relationship is in an unfinished production process, it constantly generates, every moment is novel, the so-called completion state and stereotyped teacher-student relationship does not exist. In order to make the relationship between teachers and students develop in a better direction, so that teachers and students in the interaction better generation and value-added, strengthening the interaction between teachers and students is particularly important. Teachers should accept and understand students' feelings with a more open and inclusive attitude and learn to think differently. In addition, we should strengthen the diversity of forms in communication and constantly enrich the

content of communication, so that teachers can understand students and listen to their experiences and voices. At the same time, we should creatively change the relationship between teachers and students in the light of the new situation of education. If the relationship between teachers and students can not be dealt with dialectically, it may bring adverse consequences. Teachers should also carry out creative practice, give full play to each student's inherent creativity and abandon their prejudices.

### ***3.3 The relationship between teachers and students has the characteristics of subject-superbody.***

In process philosophy, reality is described by Whitehead as subject-superbody, which also shows that subject has been represented by subject-superbody. Whitehead believes that in the process of the generation of all things in the world, reality as the main body and superbody exist. On the one hand, in the process of its own generation, reality exists as the main body and gives full play to its initiative; On the other hand, in the process of the creation of other things, the reality exists as a superbody, participates in the process of the creation of other realities, and gives full play to its creativity. Similarly, teachers and students can also show this subject-superbody characteristics in the teaching interaction.

First of all, on the one hand, teachers and students can be regarded as the main body and super-body existence. As an important part of the teacher-student relationship, teachers will take the initiative to care about students' academic status and physical and mental development in teaching activities and daily life, and at the same time, they can also learn more new and interesting ideas and different ways of thinking in their interaction with students, so as to improve their skills and literacy and promote their own generation, which is a positive achievement. At the same time, by participating in the generation process of students, teachers will give full play to their functions and roles to promote students' more perfect and comprehensive development, which is actually the embodiment of creativity. Thus, from the teacher's point of view, the teacher has the dual identity and role of subject-superbody. On the other hand, students, as the other side of the teacher-student relationship, are undoubtedly very important. Although as a subject, students have not reached a very mature stage, as a unique individual full of vitality and vitality, they are actively promoting their own development with various factors. At the same time, students also actively participate in the teacher's generation process and play its unique creative value. Students will use their growth and development as well as full of enthusiasm and positive vitality and vitality to infect and influence teachers. This is why teachers are always willing to stay with students, because students can feel endless vitality and vitality, so that they feel younger and more energetic.

Secondly, teachers and students should be responsible for each other. In Whitehead's process philosophy, reality and reality are interrelated and interdependent, and can not be separated, especially in the process of participating in the generation of oneself and other things. This kind of mutual connection and

inseparability is manifested in the relationship between teachers and students as both sides are responsible for each other. On the one hand, if teachers are not responsible to students, they will be strongly condemned by parents and all sectors of society, such as teachers beating and abusing students, university professors taking water lessons, are irresponsible to students. This will not only lead to the decreasing social image and recognition of teachers, but also lead to mental damage to themselves. Of course, if a teacher is not responsible for himself, he can not improve his academic level and accomplishment. On the other hand, students should also be responsible for themselves and teachers. In the process of students' growth and development, teachers must be important participants, but teachers' participation is always external, there is a stage and process. Therefore, at this time, it is particularly important for students to be responsible for themselves. What kind of responsible attitude students take towards themselves will lead to corresponding future development. At the same time, students must also be responsible to teachers, because teachers play an important role and influence in the growth of students. The irresponsibility of students to teachers is reflected in the gradual decline of the value of respecting teachers or the occurrence of improper acts such as students' abuse, beating and insulting teachers. If students are not responsible for teachers, it will eventually affect the generation of students themselves.

#### **4. The Practical Requirement of Teacher-student Relationship in the View of Whitehead's Process Philosophy.**

Teachers and students should grasp the emotional ties between teachers and students to enhance the emotional identity between teachers and students. In the view of Whitehead's process philosophy, teachers and students embody the characteristics of subject-superbody in the teaching interaction. Teachers and students are responsible for each other and fulfill each other. Not only teachers, but also students, should clearly understand their functions and responsibilities, and recognize their identity. Teachers should know that their identity is to teach and educate people, to teach and teach people to solve puzzles, and to recognize this identity from the heart; Students should know that their identity is educatee. If teachers and students can not correctly understand their own identity and keep their own duties, they will reduce the sense of social morality to a certain extent, thus affecting the establishment and operation of a good teacher-student relationship. At the same time, teachers and students need to increase the sense of trust to strengthen emotional identity, if the lack of trust will lead to indifference between teachers and students, which will be detrimental to the development of teacher-student relationship. From the perspective of Whitehead's process philosophy, the relationship between teachers and students must strengthen their trust in each other. If teachers trust students, they will put aside their prejudices and understand students from a more comprehensive perspective and vision, reflecting responsibility and trust. When students feel the trust of teachers, they will also choose to believe in their teachers, believing that as their beacon and guide, they will lead themselves to a brighter and hopeful road.

Teachers and students should respect differences, encourage them to communicate in a variety of ways, and give full play to the creativity and subjective initiative of teachers and students. Whitehead's process philosophy tells us that any reality in the world itself will never be completed, but is constantly changing and developing. In the process of change and development, there will inevitably be various differences and disharmonious factors, there will always be some contradictions and antagonisms in the relationship between teachers and students, at this time, teachers need to do is to treat these contradictions correctly, neither magnify nor smooth. In the communication between teachers and students, we should respect the differences between teachers and students in age, psychological state, life experience, cognitive ability, interests and hobbies, and integrate the differences according to the needs of both sides to promote the common development of both sides in a better direction. Teachers and students also need to interact in many ways. In daily teaching activities, teachers should stimulate students' creativity and subjective initiative, encourage students to think positively and put forward their own views, regard students as active rather than passive, and give full play to the subjective initiative of different types of students in all educational activities. Only when students' subjective initiative is brought into full play, can we achieve the greatest practical effect of encouraging students to learn and think in teaching.

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