

Close Communication Between Home and School Is Beneficial to Student Learning

Wendi Hua^{1,a,*}

¹*University of York, York, YO10 5NB, the UK*

a. wh1157@york.ac.uk

**corresponding author*

Abstract: This paper provides an analysis of the strategies adopted to explore whether schools and families in China should enhance home-school communication and gives an analysis of the strategies adopted to enhance home-school communication in Chinese schools. Home-school communication is now an important issue in education due to the increasingly visible involvement of parents in education. Given that schools and families have different educational philosophies, there will inevitably be communication problems between parents and schools. This paper uses Behaviourism and Constructivism to analyse the ways in which families and schools in China should improve communication between home and school and can set up forms such as parent-teacher conferences.

Keywords: Behaviourism, Constructivism, communication problems between parents and schools

1. Introduction

Communication between schools and families has become a worry in the Internet era as a result of the advancement of society and the expansion of education. The family is now a significant role affecting how pupils develop, and educational delivery methods are getting more varied. Parental involvement in education is becoming more apparent, and home-school communication is now a significant issue in education. Parents are the major educators of their children's growth and are in charge of their development, particularly in terms of forming their character. A close line of contact between the family and the school is advantageous to student learning, according to numerous studies in education. There will unavoidably be communication issues between parents and schools because parents and teachers will approach students' education and growth from various beginning points and perspectives. According to 2020, the results of the survey and countermeasures study on the state of home-school communication in Jiangsu Province's primary and secondary schools, 51.24% of parents think it has a significant impact on their children's education. At the same time, the vast majority of parents think that improving communication between home and school is beneficial to students' education [1]. Therefore, communication between parents and schools should be strengthened to be able to better promote students' development [1]. Unfortunately, this rarely happens in China. In a study of parents of elementary and middle school students in Jiangsu Province, about 60% of parents communicate with their schools less frequently than once a month [1]. In this paper, I will investigate the theoretical arguments that support a strong call for home/school communication, and I will explore possible strategies that Chinese schools can adopt to enhance this communication.

2. Analysis from the Perspective of Behaviorist Theory

Educational approaches that lack home and school communication tend to view children learning as blank slates that can be filled with knowledge. From this perspective, context is not important to what and how a child learns. Schools that lack the practice of home/school communication are built on this foundation. This perspective is rooted in behaviorism. Behavior is the response of the learner to environmental stimuli. They view the environment as a stimulus and the resulting accompanying behavior as a response, and believe that all behavior is learned [2]. Behaviorist learning theory applied to schooling practices requires teachers to master methods of shaping and correcting student behavior, creating an environment that reinforces appropriate behavior and eliminates inappropriate behavior to the greatest extent possible.

3. Constructivist Perspective and Ecological Perspective Analysis

However, the environment has a significant impact on what and how kids learn from constructivist and ecological perspectives. From various angles, educators must contact parents in order to assist children's learning.

Students' perceptions of knowledge are based on a collaborative relationship between home and school. And the impact of this relationship on students can be analyzed using the constructivist learning theory of constructing knowledge. This theory asserts that students should not passively receive information in the learning process, but rather knowledge constructed for themselves in the process of learning based on their experience. Because knowledge cannot be 'directly transferred' to students, the goal of instruction is to provide experiences that contribute to the construction of knowledge [3]. According to University at Buffalo's pedagogical description of Constructivism on the Teaching and Learning webpage, when home and school do not establish a partnership, the learning environment in which students live is split apart. Because learning is essentially a social process, it is embedded in a social environment in which students and teachers co-construct knowledge [4]. Experience is important for students when they need to construct knowledge in their own learning system. However, school can only give a part of it and the experience given by family is equally important [5].

Furthermore, from an ecological perspective, it has been demonstrated that home-school communication can be beneficial for students. Research has found that children's interests fluctuate depending on their environment [6]. This means that children are not always interested in one activity. Thus from an ecological perspective, students' learning abilities are developed in a wide range of learning ecologies. From this perspective, establishing communication between home and school is giving students a diverse learning ecology. When a teacher realizes that a student is interested in a particular subject, he or she can make the student's parents aware of the subject-related activities. This gives the child more opportunities to learn.

4. Research Question

The above analysis shows that when communication is established between home and school, students have the experience to perceive knowledge and learn in a different learning ecology, allowing for diversity in student learning. Therefore, it is necessary to establish communication between home and school. However, there are many difficulties that make it difficult to do so. First of all, in China, parents usually do not have time to communicate with teachers about their students' performance because of the large population and the pressure of housing in China, which also leads to the pressure of people working, and usually parents only have some free time to pay attention in their children's work after work. The lack of time for parents becomes a barrier to communication with the school.

Second, parents do not know how to help their children improve. When parents do not know how

to help their child improve, it is an indication that the parents are willing to help their child. But, when parents show that they do not know how to teach their child, it shows that the parent is in an isolated state, and this is when communication between school and home needs to be established to give the parent the advice or support needed to help the child.

Third, when parents do not know how their students are doing in school, they tend to make wild guesses about their children's performance, such as being overly idealistic. All of these issues require families to establish communication with schools in order to keep track of their children's performance and also to work together to create a good learning ecology for their children, while contributing to improving students' learning opportunities. So, what strategies should Chinese schools adopt to support better home/school communication?

5. Different Strategies to Support Family/School Communication

First, Chinese schools can adopt a once-a-semester parent/teacher conference. When parents and teachers discuss their children face-to-face or by video, it blends the two learning ecologies of home and school. When parents do not have time to attend parent-teacher conferences because of work, it can be challenging to schedule a time that works for them. To stagger parents' work schedules, schools can schedule late conferences when parents are off work, and when available, teachers can make home visits to students' homes. Guidance from George Hall Elementary School in Mobile, Alabama, talks about how the school identified the phenomenon of parents not being able to have time to attend parent/teacher conferences, so it gave 4 to 6 p.m. as the time of the event to facilitate giving families time to go home after the conference [7].

In addition, regular school communication with parents by text message or email is an effective way. By communicating with families via SMS and email, teachers can achieve direct communication with parents about their child's health, academic performance, daily performance, and attendance at school, and parents can then keep abreast of their child's situation at school [8]. At the same time, parents can also communicate their students' situation at home with teachers through SMS, or ask teachers for advice at any time about confusions encountered in education, so as to form an educational synergy for the healthy growth of students and the formation of good character [8]. The communication can change the learning ecology at home and provide parents with the knowledge and ability they can need to help their children.

Furthermore, curriculum nights are a way to build communication between home and school. Curriculum nights are a time for parents to experience their child's schedule first hand. Teachers share a short lesson and participate in an overview of their child's curriculum. This type of communication allows families to understand their child's curriculum and can give parents the confidence to support and address their child's academic concerns at home [7]. According to Joanne Sallay and Shannon Kelly [9], when parents attend curriculum nights, they can use the opportunity to meet the parents of their child's peers and can learn a lot about teaching their child from the questions others ask. When curriculum nights are over and parents return to homeschooling, they will have new ways to teach their children, and thus the children will gain new experiences that will eventually show up when they learn in the classroom [9]. This uses constructivist theory and concludes that parent-school communication is beneficial for the child's learning opportunities.

6. Conclusion

Home-school communication means that children gain new experiences and benefits that will eventually become apparent when they are learning in the classroom and are beneficial to their learning opportunities. While schools create sufficient conditions to facilitate home-school communication, the reality is that parents' attention to their children remains uncontrolled and such

uncontrollable factors still have an impact on students. It is therefore important that society also continues to focus on the home-school relationship and that families become more aware of this relationship.

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