Scientific Research Publishing

Open Journal of Social Sciences, 2021, 9, 452-461
https://www.scirp.org/journal/jss
ISSN Online: 2327-5960
ISSN Print: 2327-5952

Perspective of the Relation between Subject and Object in Educational Activities for Innovative Education

Weidong Li[1], Jingjie Zhao[2]

[1]School of Education Science, Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing, China
[2]National Engineering Laboratory for Educational Big Data, Central China Normal University, Wuhan, China
Email: 396129976@qq.com

How to cite this paper: Li, W. D., & Zhao, J. J. (2021). Perspective of the Relation between Subject and Object in Educational Activities for Innovative Education. *Open Journal of Social Sciences, 9,* 452-461.
https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2021.97032

Received: June 24, 2021
Accepted: July 25, 2021
Published: July 28, 2021

Abstract

How to make full use of the advantages provided by new technology to construct a new teaching mode and organize innovative education activities effectively is a difficult problem at present. In view of the above problems, we start from the relationship between subject and object in educational activities, draw on the interaction between the subject and object, and add the ideas of "humanistic culture" and "cultural man" in cultural education, to propose a subject-object relationship model in innovative education activities. And then we discuss the mode and way of innovative education with the two educational processes of "culture" and "humanization".

Keywords

Subject, Object, Innovative Education

1. The Introduction

Since the 18th National Congress, the innovation-driven development strategy has become an important systematic project. General Secretary Xi Jinping has emphasized in many occasions that "development is the first priority and innovation the first driving force", and proposed the view of talents that talents are "the first resource", "the foundation" and "the core element" of the innovation (Wang & Wei, 2019). Innovation refers to the action under the guidance of the view proposed by the existing mode of thinking differing from the convention or thoughts of the average person, using the already known knowledge and material in a specific environment to promote or create new things for idealized needs or satisfaction of the social needs, including product, method, element, path, and

environment, resulting in beneficial outcomes (Wu, Cheng, Ding, & Gong, 2012). Innovative talents refer to talents with innovative spirit and ability (Wang, Shi, & Liu, 2014), which, as the key to building an innovation-oriented country, has also become one of the goals of education training. People's innovative spirit and innovative ability on the basis of the original knowledge and experience can be brought into play through a certain amount of knowledge accumulation and effective and reasonable training. Innovative education can cultivate innovative talents. Therefore, doing the innovative education well is the key to cultivating innovative talents, which is also of great significance.

The concept of innovative education put forward by the central institute of education in 1988 caused heated discussion in the education community and effectively promoted the development of innovative education in our country ("Innovative Education Research and Experiment" Group & Hua, 2007). Though the innovation of the teaching strategy, the organization and the specific measures made a great progress, the the innovative education was less investigated from the perspective of the relation between the subject and the object in educational activities. The view of Marxism holds that the subject is the person engaged in practical and cognitive activities and also the unity of the individual and human beings. The opposite relation of the object and the subject refers to the external objective things which together with the subject constitute the two poles of the activity and have interactive functional relations in the subject's objective activities. From the point of view that the subject has the subjective initiative, the subject in education includes the educator and the educated. The educational object, as the object directed by the educational subject in activities, includes instrumental educational object and objective educational object. In his Pan-Education Theory (Xiang, 1996), Professor Xiang Xianming gave the subject-object relationship in educational activities, believing that the relationship between people should be the relationship between subjects. In educational activities, teachers and students are the subjects of each other. Therefore, educational activities are communication between subjects but cannot be simply understood as the activities of the subject to transform the object. The process of innovative education teaching activities should also be the unified practice process of teachers and students, that is, under the guidance of teachers, students conduct cognitive activities to the existing knowledge and experience of human beings so as to transform the subjective world. Therefore, in the activities of innovative education, we should grasp the relationship between the subject and the object, weaken the controlling position of teachers in education, give full play to students' subjectivity, and create a good environment conducive to students' free exploration and creative potential.

2. Educational Paths in Educational Activities

In the educational practice, Professor Xiang Xianming rediscovered the com-

munication between subject in addition to the subject-object relationship for the first time, and re-examined the nature of education and the relationship between people in educational activities (Xiang, 1998). The framework of subject-object relationship he constructed consists of two educational subjects and two educational objects, among which the educational subject includes educators and educatees, and the educational object is divided into the instrumental educational object and the objective educational object. This relationship between the subject and the object is also the main logical framework of the theory of the generalized education.

2.1. Main Contents of the Framework of the Subject-Object Relationship

The theory of generalized education takes educators and educatees as the main body, takes teaching materials, teaching aids and other tools used in the process of education as well as "human developmental resources" as the object, and takes educational object as the intermediary to establish the interpersonal relationship between education subjects, as shown in **Figure 1**.

In this logical framework, instrumental object of education includes formal instrument object and substantial instrument object. Formal education object refers to the language itself in educational activities (excluding the text expressed by the language). Substantial objects include teaching materials, teaching aids, teaching equipment and so on. The object of objectivity education is the collection of all the realistic and possible external conditions that the subject needs to develop itself, that is, "human development resources". "Human development resource" can be divided into biogenic resource, communication resource and experience resource. The biogenic resource is a kind of material resource to meet the needs of human physical development; the communication resource is social resource, which can meet all social development needs of human beings. The experience resource mainly refers to the existing achievements of human cognition of the objective world and that of themselves (Xiang, 1998).

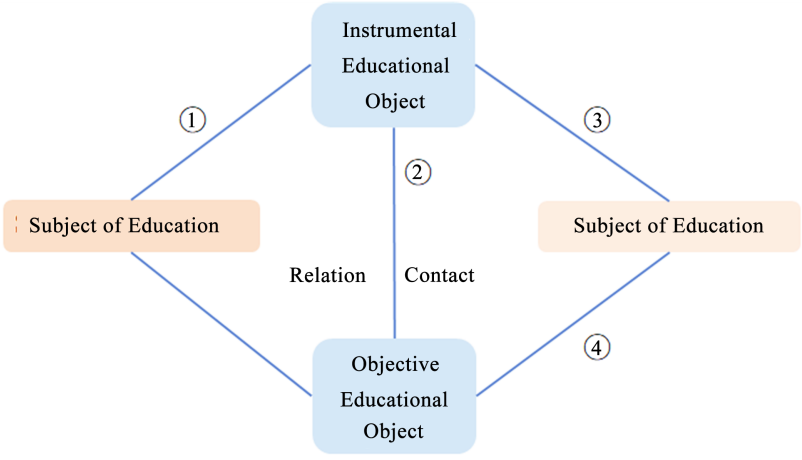

Figure 1. The relationship between subject and object in educational activities.

2.2. Analysis of the Framework of Subject-Object Relationship

It can be seen from Figure 1 that the process of education is the process of interaction between educational subjects. In general educational activities, educatees' approaches to knowledge acquisition can be divided into three categories:

1) Educational subject → instrumental educational object → educational subject

That is, the process of "① → ③". In this process, teachers teach students with textbooks and teaching aids, and students are the main users of textbooks and teaching aids. Educational activities are the process of teachers' "changing" students, a one-way transmission, in which teachers are the porters of knowledge, and students can "know how".

2) Educational subject (the educator) → instrumental educational object → objective educational object → educational subject (the educatees)

That is, in the process of "① → ② → ④" education, teachers and students take the object of instrumental education as the tool and the knowledge of subjects as the object of education to carry out the activities of intercommunication between educational subjects. In this activity, the teacher not only transmits knowledge, but also imparts the corresponding knowledge principle to the students, so that the students can not only "know how", but also "know why".

3) Educational subject (the educatees) → instrumental educational object → objective educational object → educational subject (the educatees)

That is, "③ → ② → ④" education process, which is the process of students' own exploration and acquisition of knowledge. As a subject of education with subjective initiative, students can acquire and learn knowledge with the help of teaching tools, discover its internal rules, and achieve the purpose of knowing why.

The main purpose of school education, here mainly referring to the process "① → ② → ④", is to impart knowledge, experience and wisdom of human to the educatees with the help of the educator, as well as learning methods and ways of thinking, inspiring educatees understanding to make it become a kind of ability of self-development, that is to enable the educatees to achieve self-learning and self-innovating, and then students can independently complete the process of "③ → ② → ④", laying a good foundation for innovation (Cong, 2011).

3. Approaches of Innotative Education

In the process of learning, for students' subjective initiative, they have different choices, reception, understanding and digestion of knowledge, so there are obvious individual differences, and the same educator will teach the educatees with different abilities and different development. In Figure 1 "① → ② → ④" in the process of school education, the students' subjectivity and creativity is not outstanding, which is not conducive to promoting the development of students' innovative ability. Aiming at this problem, this paper, according to the framework of the subject-object relationship proposed by Professor Xiang,

adds the thought that "while transforming culture, we are also educated by culture." and puts forward a kind of framework of the subject and the object in the innovative education in order to promote the development of innovative education.

In Philosophical Reflections on Cultural Education, Professor Meng Jianwei pointed out that the skopos theory and methodology contained in cultural education are the organic unity of "transforming culture" and "being educated by culture", in which "transforming culture" emphasizes human nature, especially human subjectivity and creativity. It can be understood that educators rely on their own creativity to clarify the knowledge structure, choose appropriate teaching methods, improve the interest of teaching, and spread knowledge more effectively. While "being educated by culture" emphasizes culture, and it pays attention to the function and the value of culture and pursues to cultivate a complete person with a complete and well-developed culture. Its core is "to educate people" (Meng, 2013), which is understood in this paper as the use of subject knowledge to promote the development of students' innovative ability.

The subject-object relationship framework of educational activities proposed in this paper is shown in **Figure 2**. This framework attributes the innovative education to the process of "culture-oriented" and "people-oriented", with specific explanations as follows:

"Culture transformation", namely, formal innovation, means to impart static prior knowledge to students and enable them to understand the relevant principles. It is the foundation of innovative education. Without the accumulation of certain prior knowledge, it is difficult to talk about innovation. The commonly said "teaching by words and deeds" is the simplest way of "transforming the culture". "Words" refers to language, which contains rich and diverse cultural elements (Wu, 2018), acting on subjects as an intermediary for mutual expression, acting between the subject and the object as a tool for understanding things, and acting on culture as the carrier of cultural information (Xu, 1991). At the same time, language able to carry a wealth of information, such as the way

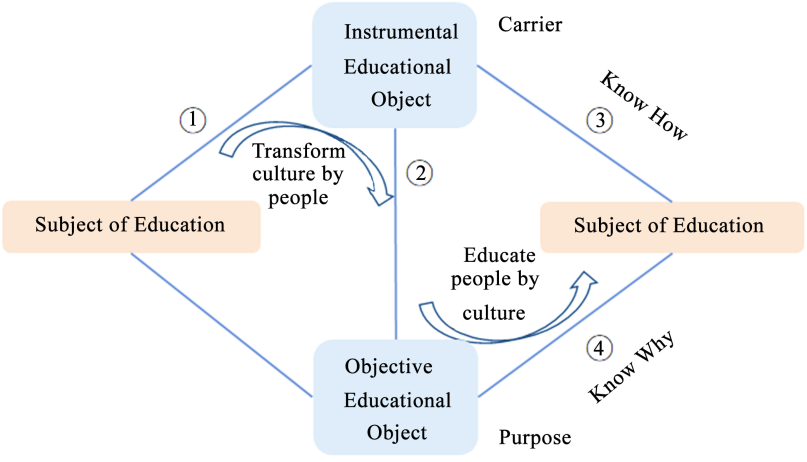

Figure 2. The subject-object relationship in school educational activities.

of thinking, values, traditional culture, etc., is an important means of "translation". "Body" referring to action is a constraint and guidance is the educator's behavior demonstration, standard demonstration and standard model, and is also the educator's imitation model, reference model and corresponding standard. The educator can express the rich educational implication through the action, which is another means of "transforming the culture". As an instrumental object in educational activities, "teaching by words" and "teaching by experience" are used by educators to clarify objective knowledge, which can either be principle of knowledge in textbooks or experience knowledge in life. These two behaviors belong to a kind of teaching means in essence, through which a special learning environment can be created in order to stimulate and mobilize the creative potential of learners.

To realize "transforming culture", we must firstly achieve the "transformation" of educational means, which means diversification and high efficiency. With the rapid development of science and technology, teaching methods have experienced five main stages: oral language stage, writing and books stage, printed textbooks stage, electronic audio-visual equipment and multimedia network technology stage. In this process, instrumental objects are no longer limited to "speech" and "body". The development of technology in education has given more ways to transfer knowledge, making "using technology to transform culture" become the trend of the times. Besides the traditional textbooks, modern teaching means have covered all kinds of audio-visual educational equipment including projector, slide projector, TV, white board, tablet, computer, VCD player, DVD player, tape recorder, video recorder, etc., these equipment, because of strong intuition, are widely used in the teaching of various subjects. Educators show teaching contents with lively and excellent texts and pictures pictures through courseware display and video playback, so that knowledge principle and structure can be more intuitively transmitted to the educatees. The use of educational equipment also indirectly changed the teaching mode, in the innovative education, making the classroom an effective means of teaching. The educators sort out the core teaching content and transmit it through the network to a dedicated network platform, make the educatees use these data to prepare their lessons before class. And the educator does not have to carry on the teaching content specially in the classroom for after class the educatees can use the network to carry on the discussion or to solve the doubt and problems. Different from the traditional teaching, the classroom initiative of this mode belongs to the educatees. In this mode, the educator is the instructor who pays more attention to the tutoring and communication of the educatees, so as to teach students in accordance with their aptitudes. In this way, learning interaction between the main body can be enhanced, and through rebuilding the learning time and space, the subjectivity of educators can be weakned in teaching activities, which provides the educatees with more choice of learning resources, and also makes teaching activities, learning testing and evaluation process more convenient and flexible. It is an effective measure to improve the efficiency of teaching in the classroom.

The second is the "transformation" of the learning environment in education, which refers to the construction. With the development of technology, the learning environment, in addition to the traditional classroom, derives the virtual education environment based on the network, as shown in Figure 3. This virtual educational environment is supported by advanced information technology and teaching theory, takes learners as the center, regards learners' experience as the core and supports and serves the environment of information-based teaching activities (Hu, 2005). In this environment, students can make full use of the learning resources provided by them to conduct independent exploration and independent learning, and various educational APPs are offered with many a distinguished teacher with their own characteristics, and students can choose to learn them according to their own needs. This process of independent exploration is conducive to the cultivation of students' innovative thinking and ability. Therefore, in order to create a good learning environment, in addition to the classroom and other real educational environments, there should be the support of virtual education environment based on information technology, that is, in the construction of learning environment, we should give full play not only to the advantages of information technology, but also to the function of campus culture. As learning environment serves the main body of education and is an important learning support system in teaching activities, we should pay attention to the fluency and harmony of the whole teaching activities while giving play to its service. It is necessary to combine the real educational environment with the virtual educational environment, select appropriate technical support and system support according to the specific learning content and learning objectives, and design teaching activities conducive to students' independent exploration (Lu & Jiang, 2016). In recent years, online classroom has become a popular network teaching mode under the "Internet + Education". It employs front-line teachers to record excellent courses by using the network, so as to maximize the sharing of high-quality resources. Compared with the traditional classroom, online classes keep the advantages of traditional teaching environment, and, through the network to transform the teaching content of information resources, meet the demand of the information-based teaching environment to make the students not be restricted by time and space to learn at anytime and

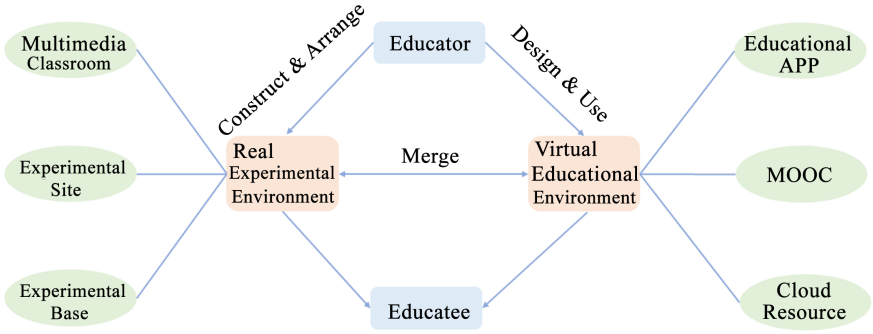

Figure 3. Modernized learning environment.

anywhere, and also give them a lot of space for the selection and use of resources. This mode has great flexibility, and if properly used in innovative education activities, it can promote students' vitality in acquiring knowledge to facilitate students' capability in exploration and discovery of things.

"Transforming or educating people" means to search for the root to know the source and trace the cause，just as the saying goes, "Teaching people to fish is better than treating him with fish", "fish" is static knowledge, while "fishing" is the root. "Teaching them to fish" is to explore the internal regularity of the development of things, and explain its essence clearly, so that students can fundamentally understand its development process and achieve the purpose of "transforming people". That, on the basis of formal innovation, is the pursuit of source innovation.

To achieve "transforming people", teachers are required to have a deep understanding of knowledge and grasp the ability. As the main body of knowledge dissemination, teachers can provide intellectual support for innovative education only if they can understand all the other knowledge related to the points. Secondly, the evaluation system should be changed. The evaluation system means the standard of education to cultivate talents. As the foundation of building an innovative country, innovative talents should be included in the evaluation system of education as an important index. In addition, the creation of innovative learning contexts is also an important way to "transform people". According to modern learning theories, knowledge is episodic and can be constructed, and individuals can get meaning in different contexts (Ping, 2008), which requires students not only to acquire knowledge, but also to use what they have learned in different situations to carry out specific thinking activities and solve practical problems. In this activity, students not only acquire specific knowledge, but also recreate it, gain experience and form skills. Therefore, the creation of situational teaching mode is conducive to "transforming people" and achieving the purpose of innovative education. The following aspects should be paid attention to in the creation of innovative learning scenarios:

1) Problem scenario: Just as Aristotle said, "thinking begins with surprise and questions", innovative thinking often begins with curiosity, which arouses interest and leads to innovative activities, therefore, the creation of problem situation is undoubtedly the source of students' thinking innovation, and is the premise and key of students' active learning.

2) Interest scenario: Mr. Lu Xun once said, "Where there is no interest, there is no wisdom and inspiration". Interest is where the inspiration is, and the creation of interest scenarios is more conducive to the cultivation of students' innovative thinking.

3) Advocate questioning: Einstein believed that "asking a problem is more important than solving one". Questioning is the key to opening the door of innovation (Zeng, 2010). Only when there is doubt can there be discovery. Questioning spirit is the spirit that an innovative person should possess, and it should be encouraged in the teaching process.

4) Reflective Situation: The Analects of Confucius says "to review the past and know the new", which advocates further exploration and discovery in the old knowledge. At this time, the instrumental objects used by students become the materials for students to reflect, criticize, apply and promote their re-understanding.

Finally, it is necessary to combine innovative thinking and practice closely. According to materialist dialectics, existence determines consciousness, and consciousness has subjective initiative. Thinking is the category of consciousness, which should be produced from practice and can react on practice. This is the final step and the most important part of "transforming people". In the process of practice, students, according to their needs, explore the nature of things and use the knowledge to have a further reform from the "thing in itself" into "things for us". In such activity, innovation is the product of the cooperation and communication between subject and subject inspired and is also the sublimation of subject learning activities with the object, therefore, innovative practice is the foundation and motive force of innovative education.

4. Conclusion

The innovative education emphasizes the cultivation of students' innovative consciousness and ability, and the effective way to cultivate students' innovative thinking is to highlight students' initiative in acquiring knowledge, no matter in the stage of "transforming culture" or "transforming people". In educational activities, teachers teach students by words and deeds, which is the basis of innovative education. Students, as the subject of acquiring knowledge, learn to use the object of education and give full play to their subjective initiative. Seeking for the root of knowledge and the source of knowledge is sublimation. Thus, the teaching process can be described as a journey for the educated to continuously understand, explore and improve themselves wherein the individual has independent learning, bold exploration and innovation ability. Therefore, in the teaching process, we should be committed to cultivating students' innovative consciousness, innovative ability and practical ability. At the same time, it is more conducive to the development of innovative education to fully understand the relationship between the subject and the object in educational activities, explore the appropriate approaches ("① → ② → ③", "③ → ② → ④" in **Figure 2**), and use appropriate technologies.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

Cong, H.-Q. (2011). Some Thoughts on the Basic Problems of Education: Promoting Innovation-Oriented Education. *Journal of Liaoning Administration College, 11,* 156-157+159.

Hu, X. G. (2005). Research on the Construction of Informationized Teaching Mode.

Journal of Modern Information, No. 7, 213-215.

Innovative Education Research and Experiment Group, & Hua, G. D. (2007). Promoting Innovation Education and Cultivating Innovative Talents. *Educational Research, No. 9,* 16-22.

Lu, Q. J., & Jiang, N. (2016). Research on the Construction of Digital Campus and Information-Based Learning Environment under the "Internet +" Innovative Education Environment. *Journal of Taiyuan Urban Vocational College, No. 12,* 181-183.

Meng, J.-W. (2013). Education and Culture: Philosophical Medication on Cultural Education. *Educational Research, No. 3,* 4-11+19.

Ping, J. (2008). *Scenario Creation of Chemistry Classroom Teaching under the Background of New Curriculum.* Master's Thesis. Central China Normal University. https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbname=CMFD2008&filename=2008116405.nh

Wang, L. G., & Wei, S. Y. (2019). The Foundation of an Innovative Country Lies in Cultivating Innovative Talents. *Way of Success, No. 15,* 3.

Wang, Y.-J., Shi, H., & Liu, M. (2014). Innovative Education: The Cradle of Innovative Talent. *Market Forum, No. 4,* 102-108.

Wu, C. (2018). Investigation into Intermediary of Nurturing People with Culture in Colleges. *Jiangsu Vocational Institute of Architectural Technology, No. 4,* 89-93.

Wu, H.-Y., Cheng, G.-W., Ding, Y., & Gong, Y. (2012). Exploration on Ways to Cultivate College Students' Innovation Ability. *Journal of Wuhan University of Science and Technology (Social Science Edition), No. 3,* 334-336.

Xiang, X. M. (1996). Out of the Traditional System of Pedagogy Theory: The Philosophical Construction of the Pan-Educational Theory. *Journal of East China Normal University (Educational Sciences), No. 2,* 17-29.

Xiang, X. M. (1998). An Outline on the Intersubject Communication Relations in Educational Activities. *Educational Research and Experiment, No. 3,* 19-22.

Xiang, X. M. (1998). An Outline on the Intersubject Communication Relations in Educational Activities. *Educational Research and Experiment, No. 3,* 19-22.

Xu, G. Z. (1991). *Xu Guozhang on Language.* Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.

Zeng, S. Y. (2010). Emphasis on "Questioning" in Primary Mathematics Teaching. *New Curriculum Comprehensive Edition, No. 8,* 83.