

Research on the Construction of New Teacher-Student Relationships in Private Universities Empowered by AIGC from the Knowledge-Power Perspective

Peng Chen

Yangtze University of Arts and Sciences, Jingzhou, Hubei, China

Copyright: © 2026 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: Against the backdrop of the rapid penetration of Artificial Intelligence Generated Content (AIGC) into higher education, teacher-student relationships in private universities are undergoing profound transformations. Based on Foucault's theory of knowledge and power, this paper takes private universities as a specific research field, focuses on the interactive dimension between teachers, students and AIGC technology, explores the two-way logic of knowledge-power between teachers and students as well as between human subjects and technology with the intervention of AIGC, and analyzes practical dilemmas including power imbalance, communication alienation and excessive technological discipline arising in the process of AIGC empowering teacher-student relationships in private universities.

Keywords: Knowledge-power; AIGC; Private universities; Teacher-student relationship

Online publication: August 5, 2026

1. Introduction

As the core bond of educational activities in universities, teacher-student relationships constitute a crucial carrier for realizing educational objectives. Influenced by teaching modes, cognitive gaps between teachers and students, and inherent student characteristics, traditional teacher-student relationships in private universities feature rigid one-way dominance by teachers: knowledge-power is highly centralized in teachers while students remain in a passive and disadvantaged position in knowledge reception. The intervention of Artificial Intelligence Generated Content (AIGC) breaks the monopoly of traditional knowledge dissemination. Students can quickly acquire knowledge and solve academic problems via AIGC, which challenges teachers' absolute authority over knowledge. Knowledge-power begins to flow bidirectionally between teachers and students as well as between humans and technology, disrupting the traditional power balance in teacher-student relations and propelling such relations into a stage of restructuring and

transformation.

Foucault's theory of knowledge and power holds that knowledge and power are symbiotic and mutually productive, and the field of education is essentially a space for the operation of knowledge-power. Against the backdrop of AIGC empowerment, the logic of knowledge-power between teachers and students in private universities has undergone profound changes. While such changes create new opportunities for equalized and diversified development of teacher-student relationships, they also bring multiple challenges such as unbalanced power between teachers and students, substitution of humanistic communication by human-machine interaction, and excessive technological discipline. Against this context, it has become an urgent issue for teaching reform in private universities to resolve practical dilemmas in AIGC-empowered teacher-student relations and construct new teacher-student relationships compatible with the AIGC era and matching the traits of teachers and students in private universities from a knowledge-power perspective.

2. Theoretical foundation: Foucault's theory of knowledge and power

Michel Foucault, an influential Western thinker of the 20th century, put forward the theory of knowledge and power, which serves as the core theoretical support for this research. Foucault argued that knowledge and power are not independent of each other but exist in a symbiotic and mutually generative relationship encapsulated in the proposition that "knowledge is power"^[1]. The production, dissemination, and application of knowledge are essentially processes of power operation. In modern society, power no longer relies on traditional violent domination; instead, it evolves into refined and technical disciplinary power that penetrates various fields through mechanisms of surveillance, normative judgment and examination to dominate and regulate individuals^[2].

Foucault pointed out that the production and dissemination of knowledge rely on the support of power, while the operation of power is also dependent on knowledge production. In educational contexts, teachers gain core power in guiding students' learning, judging knowledge, and cultivating thinking by virtue of systematic professional knowledge, teaching experience, and knowledge interpretation capabilities, which forms the fundamental basis for teachers' dominant position in traditional teacher-student relationships. In conventional education scenarios, students have limited channels to access knowledge and are fully dependent on knowledge output from teachers, further consolidating teachers' intellectual authority and power advantages. Nevertheless, the intervention of AIGC dismantles this traditional knowledge monopoly. With diversified and autonomous access to knowledge, students' reliance on teachers for knowledge acquisition has declined sharply, directly challenging teachers' established intellectual authority. The dynamic flow of knowledge-power between teachers and students as well as between humans and technology triggers in-depth restructuring of the power structure between teachers and students.

Foucault's Panopticon theory reveals the operational mechanism of modern disciplinary power. Designed with one-way surveillance, the Panopticon keeps monitored subjects under constant uncertain supervision, eventually leading to self-discipline. In private university education empowered by AIGC, AIGC technology functions as a new digital disciplinary tool. It constructs a two-way digital panoptic disciplinary mechanism for teachers and students through learning data monitoring, AI-based assignment plagiarism checking, and quantitative evaluation of learning effectiveness, exerting profound impacts on learning behaviors and interaction patterns of both sides.

3. Current situation of AIGC empowering teacher-student relationships in private universities

3.1. AIGC evolves into a vital carrier for knowledge interaction between teachers and students

In teaching practice, teachers in private universities extensively adopt AIGC products such as AI-assisted lesson preparation systems and intelligent courseware generation tools to efficiently integrate teaching resources, enrich teaching content, and optimize instructional design, effectively compensating for individual shortages in teaching resource reserves. Meanwhile, AIGC tools including AI Q&A assistants, intelligent tutoring systems, and knowledge retrieval models have become core channels for students to acquire knowledge independently, tackle academic difficulties, and expand knowledge boundaries. Breaking the time and space constraints of traditional classrooms, knowledge interaction between teachers and students is no longer confined to offline in-class scenarios but extends to all-time fragmented online contexts, markedly raising the frequency, efficiency and coverage of knowledge exchange between the two sides. For instance, some private universities build online teacher-student interaction platforms relying on AI teaching assistants. Students may raise questions about course knowledge points and exercise difficulties at any time, with AI teaching assistants responding to basic inquiries rapidly. Freed from repetitive Q&A work, teachers can focus on interpreting key and difficult points, providing personalized guidance and conducting thinking-oriented and value-based cultivation, making teacher-student knowledge interaction more targeted and in-depth.

3.2. Ongoing transformation of the power structure between teachers and students

In traditional teacher-student relationships within private universities, closed and single-channel knowledge dissemination grants teachers exclusive dominance over knowledge output, positioning them as absolute “authorities” of knowledge, whereas students only passively receive knowledge conveyed by teachers in a fully dependent and submissive status, forming a one-way centralized pattern of knowledge-power between teachers and students. The introduction of AIGC dismantles such a knowledge monopoly. Students can access massive fragmented and systematic knowledge promptly via generative AI tools, independently formulate learning plans, expand learning content, and analyze difficult knowledge points, substantially reducing their reliance on teachers for knowledge delivery. This transformation directly drives knowledge-power to shift from one-way teacher output toward two-way flow between teachers and students, weakening teachers’ absolute intellectual authority ^[3]. The hierarchical “authority-obedience” power structure is gradually evolving into a flat structure featuring equal dialogue and two-way interaction.

3.3. Declining humanistic nature of teacher-student relationships

The prevalence of AIGC renders teacher-student interaction prominently instrumental and data-oriented. The core focus of communication gradually tilts toward knowledge transmission, task completion, and data achievement, while humanistic interactions embedded in teaching, including emotional communication, ideological exchange, value guidance, and personality cultivation, keep diminishing. In technology-empowered scenarios, most teacher-student interactions revolve around utilitarian goals such as assignment fulfillment, exercise consultation, and learning data improvement. Some teachers over-rely on AIGC to finish lesson preparation, Q&A, and evaluation, drastically reducing voluntary face-to-face talks, ideological communication, and growth-oriented guidance for students. Accustomed to solving academic problems with AI tools, students become less willing to initiate in-depth communication with teachers, weakening

emotional bonds and spiritual resonance between teachers and students. The lack of a humanistic dimension has become a bottleneck restricting the development of current teacher-student relationships.

4. Dilemmas of AIGC empowering teacher-student relationships in private universities from a knowledge-power perspective

4.1. Imbalanced knowledge-power: Coexistence of eroded teacher authority and abuse of power by students

The flow of knowledge-power from teachers to students and from humans to technology triggered by AIGC disrupts the stable traditional power structure between teachers and students and gives rise to a new power imbalance, constituting a core obstacle to the sound development of teacher-student relations. On the one hand, teachers' traditional intellectual authority is significantly undermined. Compared with the massive, instant, and intuitive knowledge output of AI tools, the merits of teachers' progressive and systematic teaching model are diminished. Some students one-sidedly believe that teachers' knowledge transmission function can be fully replaced by AI, lacking respect and recognition for teachers' instructional design, classroom lectures and experience sharing, and even exhibiting inattentive listening, resistance to teaching and blind questioning, which impacts teachers' dominant role in instruction. On the other hand, students tend to abuse power after gaining autonomy in knowledge acquisition. Over-dependent on AIGC, some students treat AI as a shortcut for finishing homework, writing papers and coping with assessments, generating all content and solving problems entirely through AI. Such behavior deprives them of abilities in independent thinking, exploratory learning, and logical reasoning, weakening learning initiative and critical thinking. Furthermore, armed with fragmented knowledge obtained from AI, certain students arbitrarily deny systematic teaching content, educational experience, and value guidance from teachers, overstating their own discourse power over knowledge, triggering cognitive divergences and interactive conflicts, and disrupting the balanced order of teacher-student communication.

4.2. Alienated interpersonal communication: Instrumental rationality suppressing humanistic rationality

Against the deep integration of AIGC into teaching, the continuous expansion of instrumental rationality suppresses the inherent humanistic rationality of education, leading to profound alienation in teacher-student communication in private universities. First, teacher-student interaction scenarios and content are highly instrumentalized. Current exchanges mostly center on utilitarian aims including knowledge consultation, task completion, and grade improvement, while humanistic communication focusing on emotional exchange, ideological guidance, personality cultivation, and growth companionship is severely insufficient. Teacher-student relations are degenerating into superficial "technology service matching" connections, losing the warmth and essence of educational nurturing^[4]. Second, standardized technology results in mechanized and homogenized teacher-student communication. Generating standardized answers and templated content based on algorithms and data, AIGC fails to address personalized cognitive confusion, emotional demands, and growth puzzles of individual students or deliver targeted humanistic care. Long-term reliance of teachers on AI-generated templated courseware and standardized Q&A responses may erode their personalized teaching styles and humanistic educational characteristics, resulting in less appeal and warmth in classroom teaching and teacher-student interaction. Prolonged mechanized technological interaction gradually dissolves sincere

communication and emotional resonance between teachers and students, making interpersonal relations indifferent and estranged.

4.3. Excessive technological discipline: Digital restraints impeding subjective initiative of teachers and students

In line with Foucault's Panoptic disciplinary theory, the digital monitoring and evaluation system constructed by AIGC forms an all-round technological disciplinary context. Excessive technological discipline constrains the subjective initiative of both teachers and students, hindering the sound construction of new teacher-student relationships. For students, technological tools such as AI learning data tracking, assignment plagiarism detection, and quantitative statistics of learning duration digitize and visualize all learning behaviors. Exposed to one-way technological surveillance over a long period, students tend to learn passively and cope with tasks perfunctorily, suppressing their enthusiasm for exploratory learning, proactive questioning, and innovative thinking, and discouraging their willingness to communicate with teachers voluntarily ^[5]. For teachers, quantitative teaching evaluation and standardized teaching templates set by AIGC to some extent restrict personalized teaching innovation. To meet technical criteria and quantitative indicators, some teachers solidify teaching modes and mechanically adopt AI-generated teaching content, losing autonomy and creativity in instruction. They struggle to conduct personalized education tailored to student characteristics, ultimately diluting the subjective value of both teachers and students and trapping teacher-student interaction in passivity and rigidity.

5. Construction paths for new teacher-student relationships empowered by AIGC in private universities from a knowledge-power perspective

Guided by Foucault's theory of knowledge and power, this section addresses the aforementioned practical dilemmas centering on the core logic of knowledge-power and the teaching characteristics of teachers and students in private universities. Construction paths for new teacher-student relationships are proposed from four dimensions: regulating the flow of knowledge- power between teachers and students, balancing technological rationality and humanistic rationality, eliminating excessive technological discipline, and strengthening dual subject consciousness of teachers and students, facilitating the transformation of teacher-student relationships from the traditional "authority-obedience" mode to an "equal, interactive and co-growth" model adapted to the AIGC era ^[6].

5.1. Regulating the flow of knowledge-power to construct a balanced and healthy power structure between teachers and students

First, reshape teachers' core power to consolidate their dominant role in education. Confronted with knowledge-power and authority shocks brought by AIGC, teachers should take the initiative in role transformation and rebuild core knowledge-power and educational authority irreplaceable by technology to secure their leading position in nurturing students. For one thing, teachers shall improve their AIGC literacy proactively, proficiently applying AIGC tools to integrate teaching resources, optimize instructional design, and streamline repetitive teaching work, defining AIGC as an auxiliary teaching tool rather than a substitute for teaching subjects. Teachers should concentrate on educational links beyond technological capacity, including in-depth interpretation of knowledge, construction of logical systems, cultivation of thinking

methodologies, guidance of values, and delivery of life experience to rebuild authority rooted in professional competence and educational capability. For another, teachers should abandon the indoctrination-style teaching model, identify personalized learning pain points of students via AIGC, implement differentiated teaching and targeted tutoring, and restore power balance through professional, personalized, and in-depth instructional services to consolidate their principal status in education.

Second, guide students to exercise power rationally and cultivate independent learning and critical thinking capabilities. To tackle students' abuse of knowledge-power and over-reliance on AI, positive guidance should be provided to define boundaries for students' exercise of knowledge- power and foster their independent learning ability and critical thinking. In daily instruction, teachers shall integrate guidance on rational AIGC application, clarify the auxiliary attribute of AIGC, help students distinguish the boundary between technological tools and autonomous learning, curb undesirable practices such as AI-written assignments, AI-replaced learning and blind technological dependence, and establish a learning philosophy that "technology serves as an assistant while independent learning remains fundamental." Additionally, classroom teaching modes can be innovated with inquiry-based, project-based and interactive teaching, alongside open-ended and critical learning tasks. Such design motivates students to conduct independent exploration, group discussion and teacher-student dialogue, developing their capabilities in independent thinking, critical questioning and innovative creation during active knowledge construction. Students can thereby exercise their autonomous learning power rationally, recognize the value of teachers' instruction and professional experience, and form a positive interactive pattern of balanced power between teachers and students.

5.2. Balancing technological and humanistic rationality to rebuild warm teacher-student communication

First, anchor the essence of education and tap the humanistic empowerment value of AIGC. To reverse the monopoly of instrumental rationality in technology application, it is essential to return to the essence of educational nurturing, reorient the application of AIGC, and strengthen its humanistic empowering attribute. Both teachers and students shall develop correct perceptions of technology, abandon utilitarian "omnipotent technology" ideology, and clarify that AIGC exists to serve educational nurturing and all-round student development. Leveraging the big data analysis capacity of AIGC, teachers can accurately diagnose students' academic weaknesses, cognitive traits and growth puzzles, taking technological data as evidence for humanistic care to deliver targeted personalized tutoring, psychological counseling and career guidance. Meanwhile, teachers should avoid the drawbacks of standardized and templated AIGC output, integrating personal teaching styles and humanistic attainment into instructional design, classroom interaction and after-class tutoring to ensure technology facilitates humanistic education instead of replacing interpersonal communication. Targeted technological empowerment can remedy deficiencies in traditional education and position AIGC as an auxiliary carrier for humanistic exchanges between teachers and students.

Second, enrich offline interaction scenarios to consolidate emotional bonds between teachers and students. To address communication alienation caused by human-machine interaction displacing teacher-student humanistic communication, institutions need to balance online technological interaction and offline interpersonal communication and diversify face-to-face communication scenarios to reconstruct emotional ties between teachers and students. Teachers shall reduce excessive reliance on AI Q&A and

online interaction, and increase face-to-face communication frequency, including in-class interaction, after-school talks, academic tutoring, and ideological exchanges. Through diversified scenarios such as classroom seminars, after-class tutoring, practical activities and academic sharing, in-depth face-to-face communication can be realized. During interactions, teachers are supposed to pay attention to students' emotional demands, psychological conditions and growth confusions, respect individual differences, and build equal, trusting and warm teacher-student relations through sincere communication, positive guidance and inclusive attitudes, eliminating estrangement induced by technology and returning teacher-student relationships to the humanistic essence of education.

5.3. Alleviating excessive technological discipline to stimulate subjective initiative of teachers and students

To counter restraints on subjective development arising from the digital panoptic discipline of AIGC, institutions need to moderate technology application, weaken the disciplinary attribute of technology while highlighting its empowering attribute, and create room for independent development and positive interaction between teachers and students. In technology practice, teachers shall break the evaluation mindset centered solely on data and quantification, refusing to take AI-generated indicators including learning duration, answer statistics, and attendance data as the exclusive criteria for student assessment. Evaluation should take full account of learning processes, thinking development and individual growth to mitigate one-way monitoring and judgmental discipline imposed by technology. Moreover, teachers shall break free from the constraints of standardized AI teaching templates, pursue personalized teaching innovation aligned with curriculum characteristics and student learning situations, and preserve autonomy and flexibility in instruction. Students should also be encouraged to transcend passivity under technological discipline, conduct independent exploration and rational questioning based on AI learning outcomes, and initiate dialogues with teachers. These measures give full play to the subjective initiative of both sides, turning technology into an empowering tool for education rather than shackles restricting the development of teachers and students.

5.4. Strengthening dual subject consciousness of teachers and students to forge a co-growth pattern

First, consolidate teachers' subject consciousness and continuously upgrade professional competence in education. As core subjects constructing teacher-student relationships, teachers should proactively adapt to educational transformations in the AIGC era and establish subject consciousness for self-improvement and instructional innovation. On one hand, teachers need to update educational philosophies, abandon traditional authoritarian teaching mindsets, embrace a new educational philosophy featuring equal interaction and mutual growth, respect students' discourse power over knowledge and learning autonomy, and adapt to the transformation of power structures between teachers and students. On the other hand, teachers shall pursue all-round competence improvement covering AIGC literacy, classroom innovation, humanistic education and thinking guidance. While proficiently utilizing technology to empower instruction, teachers should deepen professional knowledge reserves, accumulate educational experience and elevate humanistic attainment, consolidating their principal status in education with comprehensive strengths and taking initiative in optimizing and reconstructing new teacher-student relationships.

Second, enhance students' subject consciousness and cultivate a proactive growth mentality. As vital subjects in teacher-student relations, students need to break the mindset of passive learning and

dependence, and strengthen subject consciousness for self-driven growth and voluntary communication. First, students should establish correct outlooks on learning and teacher-student relations, clearly recognize the instrumental attribute of AIGC and the educational value of teachers, balance AI-assisted learning and teacher communication rationally, abandon extreme attitudes of blind skepticism and over-dependence, respect professional guidance from teachers, and cooperate with teaching activities actively. Second, students should take initiative in knowledge construction and teacher-student interaction, speaking up in classroom discussions, consulting teachers after class, and conducting independent research in learning. They are encouraged to provide feedback on learning demands and instructional suggestions to teachers, facilitating positive two-way communication during self-development and forming a sound ecosystem featuring complementary strengths, mutual progress through teaching and learning, and joint growth for teachers and students.

6. Conclusion

Taking teacher-student interaction in private universities as the research object and adopting Foucault's theory of knowledge and power, this paper investigates knowledge and power and the reconstruction of teacher-student relations empowered by AIGC, reaching the following core conclusions:

First, the in-depth intervention of AIGC thoroughly reshapes the logic of knowledge-power between teachers and students in private universities. It disrupts the traditional one-way dominant power balance held by teachers, creating new opportunities for equalized and interactive teacher-student relations while triggering multiple educational dilemmas.

Second, from the knowledge-power perspective, AIGC-empowered teacher-student relationships in private universities face four core dilemmas: imbalanced power between teachers and students, humanistic alienation of communication driven by human-machine interaction, excessive digital technological discipline, and weakened subjective initiative of teachers and students. Fundamentally, these problems stem from excessive expansion of instrumental rationality, ambiguous boundaries of teacher-student power, and insufficient dual subject consciousness of both parties.

Third, the construction of new teacher-student relationships adapted to the AIGC era in private universities should be centered on balancing technological and humanistic rationality, guaranteed by mitigating excessive technological discipline, and rooted in strengthened dual subject consciousness of teachers and students. Comprehensive optimization of teacher-student interaction modes helps break away from the traditional authority-obedience model and realize a benign transformation toward equal interaction, mutual progress through teaching and learning, and joint growth.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Foucault M, 1980, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, Edited by Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon Books; Brighton: The Harvester Press.

- [2] Foucault M, 1979, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Vintage Books.
- [3] Xing W, Kim T, Song Y, et al., 2026, Unveiling Interaction Patterns Between Students and Generative AI Teachable Agent: Focusing on Students' Agency and AI Agents' Authority. *British Journal of Educational Technology*.
- [4] Su L, Xu R, Cui Y, The Study on the Types of Teacher-Student Relationship in University Classroom Based on Interactive Ritual Chains. *Heilongjiang Researches on Higher Education*. 2023(2): 13–21.
- [5] Bearman M, Ajjawi R, 2023, Learning to Work with the Black Box: Pedagogy for a World with Artificial Intelligence. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 54(5): 1160–1173.
- [6] Wang Y, 2020, College Faculty-Student Relationship: Concept, Characteristics and Dimensions. *Journal of Hebei University (Philosophy and Social Science)*, (5): 73–80.

Publisher's note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.