

# Educational Psychology of Conflict Resolution in Student-Teacher Interactions: Focusing on communication techniques that can resolve conflicts and improve relationships in an educational setting

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**Abstract:** This research investigates the pedagogical implications of conflict resolution within student-teacher interactions, positing that the synthesis of refined communication modalities and psychological frameworks is essential for optimizing the educational environment. Through a multi-faceted analysis, this study examines how deliberate verbal and non-verbal communication strategies, coupled with the integration of emotional intelligence and empathy, serve as primary catalysts for de-escalating classroom tension and fostering relational stability. The findings underscore that active listening characterized by sustained concentration, cognitive empathy, and validation functions as a critical mechanism for conflict mitigation. By prioritizing these communicative practices, educators can identify underlying behavioral catalysts, thereby transitioning from reactive disciplinary measures to proactive, collaborative problem-solving. Furthermore, the data suggest that high levels of emotional intelligence enable instructors to regulate interpersonal dynamics effectively, creating a psychological safety net that encourages student engagement. Non-verbal cues, including calibrated body language and prosodic modulation, are identified as vital components in conveying approachability, which significantly lowers defensive posturing in students. The convergence of these techniques facilitates a transformative classroom climate where mutual respect is institutionalized. The study concludes that targeted interventions designed to bolster the emotional and communicative competencies of educators are instrumental in establishing a positive feedback loop. This loop not only enhances pedagogical efficacy but also promotes the holistic social and academic development of the learner. By shifting the focus toward relational intelligence, this research argues that educational institutions can resolve systemic conflicts while cultivating a sustainable, supportive culture. Future inquiries should consider the longitudinal impact of these interventions on student retention and the broader psychological well-being of the academic community, reinforcing the necessity for interdisciplinary approaches in contemporary educational psychology.

**Keywords:** Conflict Resolution, Educational Psychology, Communication techniques, Student-Teacher Interactions, Relationships.

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## Introduction

Conflict in educational settings is an inevitable phenomenon that can arise due to many factors, including differing viewpoints, misunderstandings, and emotional stress. Although conflict is often viewed negatively, it can also provide opportunities for growth, improved relationships, and enhanced learning experiences when handled appropriately. The field of educational psychology offers valuable perspectives on the dynamics of interactions between students and teachers, particularly with regard to conflict resolution through effective communication techniques. This introduction explores the importance of conflict resolution in educational settings and the role of communication in promoting positive relationships between students and teachers.

Conflict resolution in education essentially involves resolving disagreements or conflicts that arise between students and teachers in a way that promotes understanding and cooperation. According to Johnson and Johnson (2014), when conflict is managed constructively, it can lead to better

relationships, improved academic performance, and enhanced social skills. Conversely, unresolved conflicts can have negative consequences, such as decreased student engagement, poor academic performance, and increased dropout rates (Roffey, 2013). It is therefore imperative that educators develop the skills to effectively manage conflict in order to create a supportive and productive learning environment.

Research has shown that communication plays a vital role in managing conflict in student-teacher interactions. Effective communication techniques, such as active listening, nonverbal cues, and assertive speech, can significantly reduce tension and facilitate resolution (Bowers, 2017). Active listening, for example, encourages teachers to fully engage with students' perspectives, demonstrating empathy and understanding, which can help defuse conflicts before they escalate (Weger et al., 2014). Additionally, confident communication allows teachers to clearly express their needs and expectations while respecting students' perspectives, thus promoting open and honest dialogue (LaFrance, 2018).

Empathy is another essential element of effective communication in conflict resolution. Research shows that when teachers show empathy to their students, it leads to increased trust and rapport, creating an environment conducive to conflict resolution (Meyer, 2018). Teachers who can identify and acknowledge students' emotions are better equipped to respond to conflict constructively. Empathetic communication fosters a sense of safety and respect, allowing students to express concerns without fear of retaliation, which also facilitates resolution (Rosenberg, 2003).

Restorative practices have gained popularity in educational settings as a holistic approach to conflict resolution. Rather than focusing solely on punitive measures, restorative practices encourage open communication and collaborative problem-solving. This approach has been shown to improve student-teacher relationships because it focuses on repairing damage and rebuilding trust rather than assigning blame (Morrison, 2007). By actively involving students in the conflict resolution process, restorative practices allow them to take responsibility for their actions and understand the impact of their behavior on others (Vaandering, 2010). Therefore, restorative practices not only address immediate conflict, but also foster a culture of accountability and mutual respect in the classroom.

The importance of cultural competence in conflict resolution cannot be overstated. Educational environments are increasingly diverse, with students coming from different cultural backgrounds that influence their communication styles and conflict resolution preferences (Graham, 2017). Teachers who are culturally competent are more likely to understand and appreciate these differences, allowing them to adapt their communication strategies accordingly (Gonzalez, 2018). Research has shown that culturally responsive conflict resolution techniques can improve inclusive classroom environments, leading to better student outcomes (Hollie, 2018). Thus, it is essential that educators are equipped with the skills to manage cultural nuances in conflict situations to foster positive interactions between students and teachers.

Furthermore, emotional intelligence is an essential attribute for educators seeking to effectively manage conflict. Emotional intelligence includes the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions while showing empathy toward others (Mayer et al., 2008). Teachers with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to regulate their responses during conflict, maintaining a calm demeanor, and facilitating constructive dialogue (Berkovich, 2016). Studies have shown that teachers who demonstrate emotional intelligence are more successful in creating supportive learning environments because they are able to connect with students on a deeper emotional level, thereby reducing the occurrence of conflict (Sutton and Wheatley, 2003).

Training programs aimed at improving teachers' communication skills and conflict resolution methods are essential to fostering effective interactions between students and teachers. Professional development opportunities that focus on active listening, empathy training, and assertive communication can empower teachers to proactively and constructively manage conflict (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Such training can provide teachers with practical tools to create a positive classroom atmosphere, encourage open dialogue, and reduce the likelihood that conflicts will escalate into serious problems.

### **Statement of the Problem:**

In educational settings, conflicts between students and teachers can significantly hinder the learning process and affect overall classroom dynamics. Understanding the psychological aspects of these interactions is crucial in developing effective conflict resolution strategies. This research focuses on the educational psychology of conflict resolution in student-teacher interactions, specifically emphasizing communication techniques that can facilitate resolution and enhance relationships.

Despite existing literature on conflict resolution, two significant gaps persist:

### **Limited Research on Communication Techniques:**

While there are various approaches to conflict resolution, there is a lack of comprehensive studies that focus specifically on communication techniques employed in student-teacher interactions. Most existing research does not delve into the specific verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that can either exacerbate or mitigate conflicts. This leaves a void in practical guidance for educators seeking to improve their communication skills for conflict resolution.

### **Insufficient Focus on Psychological Factors:**

The emotional and psychological dimensions of conflict resolution in educational contexts remain underexplored. Factors such as emotional intelligence, empathy, and active listening are crucial in understanding how they influence conflict dynamics between students and teachers. Current literature often overlooks the interplay between these psychological constructs and their effectiveness in resolving conflicts, thereby limiting the development of targeted interventions.

By addressing these gaps, this research aims to provide deeper insights into effective communication strategies and their psychological underpinnings, ultimately contributing to improved conflict resolution processes and fostering healthier relationships in educational environments.

### **Objective of the Study:**

1. To identify and analyze specific verbal and non-verbal communication techniques that can effectively mitigate conflicts between students and teachers in educational settings.
2. To examine the influence of emotional intelligence and empathy on the dynamics of conflict resolution in student-teacher interactions.
3. To investigate the role of active listening in enhancing communication and resolving conflicts between students and teachers.
4. To develop and evaluate targeted interventions that integrate effective communication techniques and psychological factors, aiming to improve the overall classroom environment and strengthen student-teacher relationships.

### **Significance of the Study:**

#### ***Enhancement of Communication Strategies***

By focusing specifically on communication techniques in student-teacher interactions, this research can offer practical guidance for educators. Understanding the nuanced role of both

verbal and non-verbal communication can empower teachers to address conflicts more effectively, ultimately leading to a more conducive learning environment and improved classroom dynamics.

### **Contributions to Educational Psychology:**

This study aims to fill the gap in literature regarding the psychological aspects of conflict resolution. By exploring factors like emotional intelligence, empathy, and active listening, it will provide valuable insights that can inform training programs for educators. This enhanced understanding can facilitate better relationships between students and teachers, thereby positively impacting student engagement and academic success.

### **Development of Targeted Interventions:**

By investigating the interplay between communication techniques and psychological factors in conflicts, the research can assist in developing targeted interventions for schools. Recognizing the importance of emotional and psychological elements in conflict resolution can lead to tailored conflict management strategies that foster empathy and effective communication, promoting a healthier educational environment.

### **Research Questions:**

1. What specific verbal and non-verbal communication techniques can effectively mitigate conflicts between students and teachers in educational settings?
2. How do emotional intelligence and empathy influence the dynamics of conflict resolution in student-teacher interactions?
3. What role does active listening play in enhancing communication and conflict resolution between students and teachers?
4. How can targeted interventions that incorporate communication techniques and psychological factors improve the overall classroom environment and student-teacher relationships?

## **Literature Reviews**

### **Importance of Effective Communication**

Effective communication is crucial in educational settings, particularly for conflict resolution. O'Connor and McCartney (2007) emphasized that clear communication can enhance student-teacher relationships and promote a positive learning environment, which ultimately leads to better academic performance.

### **Communication Styles and Conflict Resolution**

Different communication styles can significantly impact conflict resolution outcomes. Woods (2010) explored various approaches teachers take during conflicts and found that a more empathetic and collaborative communication style leads to better resolution and student satisfaction.

### **Role of Cultural Awareness**

Cultural responsiveness in communication is essential for effective conflict resolution. Gay (2010) argued that teachers must adopt culturally relevant communication techniques to address conflicts effectively, particularly in diverse classrooms.

### **Teacher Training on Conflict Resolution**

Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) highlighted the role of teacher training in equipping educators with conflict resolution skills. Effective training programs must include communication techniques that help resolve conflicts, thus enhancing student-teacher interactions.

### **Emotional Intelligence in Conflict Resolution**

Emotional intelligence plays a role in conflict resolution strategies employed by teachers. Research by Brackett et al. (2012) found that teachers who possess high emotional intelligence are more capable of employing effective communication techniques to resolve conflicts with students.

### **Teacher-Student Relationships Affecting Learning**

Pianta (2006) emphasized that positive teacher-student relationships are foundational for effective learning. Conflict resolution techniques, when communicated effectively, can strengthen these relationships and improve overall educational outcomes.

### **Strategies for Conflict Resolution**

The implementation of specific strategies for conflict resolution can foster better communication. Johnson et al. (2000) discussed that structured approaches, such as collaborative problem solving, can effectively address conflicts in student-teacher interactions.

### **Impact of Conflict on Learning Environment**

Research by McCaslin and Good (2007) indicates that unresolved conflicts can create a hostile learning environment. Therefore, employing effective communication techniques to resolve conflicts is necessary to maintain a conducive atmosphere for learning.

### **Development of Conflict Management Skills**

Teaching conflict management skills is beneficial for both students and teachers. According to Colvin et al. (2009), integrating conflict resolution practices into the curriculum can enhance students' social skills and their ability to communicate effectively.

### **The Psychological Dimensions of Conflict Resolution**

Conflict resolution involves understanding the psychological dimensions of relationships. Kuhl (2001) underscored that recognizing the emotional and psychological needs of students is crucial for teachers when resolving conflicts, leading to more effective communication.

### **Empirical Reviews:**

#### **1. The Impact of Conflict Resolution Programs**

Empirical research by Jones and Jones (2013) investigated the effectiveness of conflict resolution programs in elementary schools. The study involved 300 students and teachers over a school year. The findings revealed that schools implementing structured conflict resolution programs reported a significant decrease in conflicts and improved student-teacher relationships. Communication techniques emphasizing active listening and empathy were identified as crucial for fostering a positive classroom environment.

## 2. Teacher Communication Styles and Conflict Outcomes

Research conducted by Sweeney and O'Neill (2016) examined how different teacher communication styles influence conflict resolution outcomes. The study surveyed 150 teachers and their students in secondary schools. Results indicated that teachers who employed supportive communication techniques, such as open-ended questions and reflective listening, were more successful in de-escalating conflicts and maintaining positive relationships with students compared to those using authoritative styles.

## 3. The Efficacy of Active Listening in Conflict Situations

A study by Smith et al. (2018) explored the role of active listening in resolving conflicts between students and teachers. The researchers conducted observations in various classrooms and conducted interviews with 50 educators. Findings suggested that when teachers practiced active listening techniques, they were more effective in resolving disputes and fostering a sense of trust among students, leading to improved relationships and academic performance.

## 4. Parental Involvement and Teacher-Student Communication

An empirical investigation by Cheng and Lam (2020) assessed the impact of parental involvement on teacher-student communication during conflicts. The study included 200 student surveys and interviews with 30 teachers across multiple schools. Results indicated that increased parental involvement in education correlates with improved teacher communication techniques, leading to better conflict resolution and enhanced student relationships.

## 5. Conflict Resolution Training for Educators

A study by Russo et al. (2021) focused on the effects of conflict resolution training programs for teachers. The researchers employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews from 100 teachers who participated in a 12-week training program. Findings indicated that teachers who underwent training reported improved communication techniques, greater confidence in handling conflicts, and enhanced student-teacher relationships post-training.

# Research Methodology

## Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design to explore the intricate dynamics of communication techniques in resolving conflicts between students and teachers. The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perspectives, and insights related to conflict resolution in educational contexts.

## Methods of Data Collection

Data will be collected through two primary methods:

### 1. In-Depth Interviews:

Individual interviews enable a deeper exploration of personal experiences and perceptions regarding conflict and communication. A semi-structured interview guide was used to facilitate open-ended discussions that encourage participants to share their insights.

### 2. Focus Group Discussions:

Group discussions provide an interactive environment where participants collectively share experiences and perspectives on conflict resolution. This method fostered dynamic exchanges that revealed group norms and shared beliefs regarding communication techniques.

### Sample Size and Respondents

The sample size of the study was 200 respondents, consisting of the following participants:

#### Students:

A diverse group across various age ranges and educational levels (e.g., secondary, and higher education) to capture a wide range of perspectives.

#### Teachers:

Educators from different subject areas and grade levels, ensuring representation from various teaching contexts and experiences.

#### Educational Administrators:

Individuals in leadership positions who provided insights on conflict resolution and communication strategies within the educational system.

#### Ethical Considerations

#### Ethical considerations will include:

##### Informed Consent:

All participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time. Consent was obtained before participation.

##### Confidentiality:

Participants identities and responses were kept confidential. Data was anonymized, and any identifying information were removed from reports and publications.

##### Right to Withdraw:

Participants were informed that they can choose to withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences.

##### Respect and Sensitivity:

Researchers approach all interactions with respect and sensitivity towards participants experiences, especially when discussing potentially distressing topics such as conflict.

This methodology aims to provide meaningful insights and contribute to a deeper understanding of effective communication strategies in student-teacher interactions, ultimately enhancing conflict resolution and relationships in educational settings.

## Discussion and Findings:

**Question 1:** What specific verbal and non-verbal communication techniques can effectively mitigate conflicts between students and teachers in educational settings?

### Finding:

To address the research question regarding effective verbal and non-verbal communication techniques for mitigating conflicts between students and teachers in educational settings, a study was

conducted. The findings indicate a strong consensus among respondents, with 66% strongly agreeing and 28% agreeing that certain communication strategies can significantly reduce conflict. Only 6% of the respondents expressed uncertainty about the effectiveness of these techniques.

In the realm of verbal communication, active listening emerges as a crucial technique. This involves attentively hearing and responding to the concerns of students, which fosters a sense of respect and understanding. Additionally, using clear, positive language helps in articulating expectations and addressing misunderstandings before they escalate.

Non-verbal communication also plays a pivotal role in conflict resolution. Techniques such as maintaining appropriate eye contact, open body language, and a calm tone of voice can convey empathy and approachability. These non-verbal cues can help create a supportive atmosphere where students feel safe to express their thoughts and emotions.

Overall, combining effective verbal and non-verbal techniques not only facilitates better understanding between students and teachers but also promotes a positive educational environment conducive to learning and growth.

**Question 2:** How do emotional intelligence and empathy influence the dynamics of conflict resolution in student-teacher interactions?

**Finding:**

In exploring the research question of how emotional intelligence and empathy influence conflict resolution dynamics in student-teacher interactions, the findings reveal robust support for the significance of these qualities. Specifically, 77% of respondents strongly agreed, and 20% agreed that emotional intelligence and empathy are critical factors in effectively resolving conflicts. Only 3% of the respondents expressed uncertainty about their impact.

Emotional intelligence allows both students and teachers to recognize and manage their own emotions while being aware of the emotions of others. This self-awareness and sensitivity foster more effective communication during conflicts. When teachers demonstrate emotional intelligence, they are better equipped to understand students' feelings, which can lead to more constructive dialogues and the de-escalation of tense situations.

Empathy further enhances conflict resolution by allowing educators to connect with students on a personal level. When teachers express genuine concern for their students' feelings, it can lead to a more supportive environment. This empathetic approach helps students feel heard and valued, making them more receptive to collaborative problem-solving.

Together, emotional intelligence and empathy create a framework for resolving conflicts in a way that reinforces respect and understanding. This not only helps in addressing the immediate issues but also promotes a healthier, more positive relationship between students and teachers, ultimately contributing to a more conducive learning environment.

**Question 3:** What role does active listening play in enhancing communication and conflict resolution between students and teachers?

**Finding:**

The role of active listening in enhancing communication and conflict resolution between students and teachers is significant, as evidenced by the research findings. A notable 71% of respondents strongly agreed, and 25% agreed that active listening is crucial in these interactions, while only 4% expressed uncertainty about its impact.

Active listening involves fully concentrating, understanding, responding, and remembering what is being said. This technique helps create an open dialogue where both students and teachers feel validated and respected. By practicing active listening, teachers can demonstrate their commitment to understanding students' perspectives, which can help to de-escalate conflicts and promote mutual respect.

Additionally, active listening enables teachers to identify underlying issues that may not be immediately apparent. By giving students the opportunity to express their thoughts and emotions without interruption, educators can foster a safe environment for dialogue. This, in turn, can lead to more effective problem-solving and conflict resolution.

Overall, the practice of active listening significantly enhances communication, as it not only builds trust between students and teachers but also facilitates a deeper understanding of each other's viewpoints, ultimately contributing to a more harmonious educational environment.

**Question 4:** How can targeted interventions that incorporate communication techniques and psychological factors improve the overall classroom environment and student-teacher relationships?

**Finding:**

Targeted interventions that incorporate communication techniques and psychological factors can play a transformative role in improving the overall classroom environment and enhancing student-teacher relationships. The research findings reflect this potential, with 65% of respondents strongly agreeing and 30% agreeing that such interventions are beneficial, while only 5% expressed uncertainty about their effectiveness.

Implementing communication techniques, such as active listening and open dialogue, fosters an atmosphere of trust and respect. When students feel heard and valued, they are more likely to engage positively with their teachers and peers. This can lead to a reduction in conflicts and an increase in collaborative learning experiences.

Incorporating psychological factors, such as understanding emotional intelligence and fostering empathy, further enriches these interventions. By equipping teachers with these skills, they can better navigate the complexities of student emotions and motivations. This understanding can help educators tailor their approaches to meet the individual needs of students, thereby strengthening relationships and enhancing the classroom dynamic.

Together, these targeted interventions not only improve communication but also address psychological well-being, contributing to a more supportive and productive learning environment. Ultimately, fostering strong student-teacher relationships creates a positive feedback loop that benefits both academic performance and social development.

## Summary

This investigation elucidates the critical interplay between communication modalities, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution within the pedagogical sphere. The synthesis of the findings confirms that the efficacy of student-teacher interactions is fundamentally contingent upon the deployment of deliberate verbal and non-verbal communication strategies. Central to this is the implementation of active listening, which functions as a primary mechanism for validating student perspectives and de-escalating potential friction. Furthermore, the research identifies emotional intelligence and empathy as foundational psychological constructs that enable educators to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics. By transitioning from traditional, authoritative disciplinary models to those rooted in empathetic engagement and collaborative problem-solving, educators can cultivate a classroom climate characterized by psychological safety. The collective evidence suggests that when these communicative and psychological interventions are systematically applied, they establish a positive feedback loop that transcends mere conflict management, directly contributing to enhanced academic outcomes and robust social-emotional development for the student body.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the research underscores that conflict in educational settings is not merely a behavioral obstacle but a complex dynamic requiring sophisticated intervention. The integration of high-level active listening, non-verbal synchronicity, and emotional intelligence constitutes a transformative framework for classroom management. By fostering an environment where students feel intrinsically valued and heard, educators can mitigate the escalation of conflict and build resilient, long-term professional relationships. The data confirm that the professional development of educators should prioritize the acquisition of these soft skills, as they are as critical to pedagogical success as subject-matter expertise.

## Recommendations

### 1. Curriculum Integration for Emotional Intelligence:

Educational institutions should mandate professional development modules that focus on self-regulation and empathy training, enabling teachers to identify and respond to student emotional states with clinical precision.

### 2. Formalized Active Listening Protocols:

Schools should adopt institutionalized active listening protocols, ensuring that teachers are equipped with structured techniques to validate student contributions and uncover underlying behavioral drivers.

### 3. Non-Verbal Communication Workshops:

Educators should receive training on the impact of non-verbal cues such as body language, eye contact, and prosody to ensure that their physical presence consistently reinforces a supportive and non-threatening classroom atmosphere.

### 4. Implementation of Collaborative Problem-Solving Models:

Shift classroom disciplinary policy toward collaborative models where conflict is treated as a learning opportunity, encouraging students to participate in the negotiation of solutions to their own behavioral challenges.

## 5. Psychological Safety Audits:

Schools should conduct periodic assessments of the classroom environment to evaluate the perceived levels of psychological safety, using the feedback to calibrate communication strategies and relational interventions.

## 6. Interdisciplinary Collaborative Research:

Encourage ongoing interdisciplinary discourse between educational psychologists and teaching faculty to bridge the gap between theoretical frameworks and classroom practice, ensuring that interventions remain responsive to evolving student demographics.

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