Faculty of Education
The University of Hong Kong
香港大學教育學院

Comparative Education Research Centre
ESTABLISHED IN 1994

清華大學 教育学院
School of Education , Tsinghua University

HKU-THU EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM

EDUCATIONAL TRADITIONS IN THE AGE OF AI: WHAT AND HOW

Symposium Programme

9:00 am~9:10 am	Welcome and opening remarks: Yang Rui, Shi Zhongying
9:10 am~9:40 am	AI and Traditions of Intelligence Liz Jackson
9:40 am~10:10 am	Education Innovation in the Age of AI Qin Fei
10:10 am~10:40 am	Reexamining Republican-Era Scholarly Experience: Reconstructing Chinese Academic Subjectivity in the Age of AI Yang Rui
10:40 am~11:00 am	Break
11:00 am~11:30 am	Reaffirming the “cong you (从游)” Legacy: Constructing the Inter-subjective Relationship between Teachers and Students in the AI Era Wen Wen
11:30 am~12:30 pm	Discussion Chair: Jeremy Rappleye
12:30 pm~1:30 pm	Lunch Break
1:30 pm~2:00 pm	Analysing Classroom Dialogue with AI: A Journey from Tools to Critical Partnership Long Yun
2:00 pm~2:30 pm	From Epistemic tools to Partners? A Hermeneutical Reflection on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Research Yang Lili
2:30 pm~3:00 pm	Facilitating Parent-Child Interaction in Academic Settings: Leveraging Generative AI for Behavior Analysis and Intervention Wei Jun
3:00 pm~3:20 pm	Break
3:20 pm~3:50 pm	Is (Artificial) Intelligence Representational or Relational? Jeremy Rappleye
3:50 pm~4:50 pm	Discussion Chair: Shi Zhongying
4:50 pm~5:00 pm	Closing: Yang Rui

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Opening Remarks:

Yang Rui

Dean and Chair Professor in the Faculty of Education at The University of Hong Kong

Shi Zhongying

Dean of School of Education at Tsinghua University; President of the Council of Beijing Mingyuan Institute of Education

Speaker: Liz Jackson

Liz Jackson is Karen Lo Eugene Chuang Professor in Diversity and Equity at The University of Hong Kong and the Associate Dean (Research) of its Faculty of Education. She is President of the Comparative Education Society of Hong Kong and Editor-in-Chief of *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. She is the author of over 200 books, journal articles, and book chapters, including *Beyond Virtue: The Politics of Educating Emotions*, *Questioning Allegiance: Resituating Civic Education* and *Emotions: Philosophy of Education in Practice*.

AI and Traditions of Intelligence

AI has shifted from an obscure to commonplace, common-sense concept in the last five years. However, its importance raises questions for how we understand intelligence: Specifically, what is human intelligence in relation to artificial intelligence? Does the potential value of the latter require that we rethink, in education and culture, how we understand the former? This paper starts with a comparative analysis of understandings of intelligence from Western and East Asian philosophy. It shows that rather than there being one concept of intelligence, many can be elaborated within and across traditions. Yet these different conceptions of intelligence make a difference for education. Thus, different views of intelligence have implicated different approaches to education found around the world. The second part of the paper inserts the apparent value of AI into this human discussion. What is the nature of artificial intelligence, and how does it compare with human intelligence(s)? Does AI require reconceptualisation of human intelligence? In what ways are humans more or less intelligent than machines? And what does all of this mean for education? This paper offers some preliminary thoughts and reflections related to these pressing questions.

Speaker: Qin Fei

Qin Fei, postdoctoral researcher in Institute of Education, Tsinghua University. She also earned her Ph.D. from Tsinghua University. Her research focuses on AI-powered education and educational evaluation research, with a recent focus on the practical application and impact of intelligent technologies in both K-12 and higher education settings.

Education Innovation in the Age of AI

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming education from its roots, reshaping missions, methods, and values. Beyond transmitting knowledge, education in the AI era must foster creativity, critical thinking, and learner autonomy while preserving humanistic and ethical integrity. Surveys at Tsinghua University reveal that more than half of students worry AI use may weaken independent thinking and creativity, calling for a balance between technological innovation and human cultivation.

Empirical evidence underscores how students' use of AI determines its benefits. A randomized controlled trial in high school physics showed that high achievers benefited most when using AI feedback autonomously, while lower achievers performed better under guided conditions. Another RCT trial compared AI instructional agents with human instructors among college students. Results indicated comparable learning outcomes and engagement, with AI teachers excelling in consistency and personalized pacing. The MAIC (Massive AI-Empowered Course) model—integrating AI teachers, classmates, and assistants—has been scaled across 117 courses in 40 departments, achieving over 80% satisfaction.

To guide systematic reform, the APPEX model—AI-leveraged Transformation, Pedagogical Orchestration, Personalized Learning in Community, and Experiential Learning—offers a framework for holistic integration of AI in education. Ultimately, education's mission in the AI age is not efficiency but human flourishing—cultivating creative, responsible, and resilient learners who can lead, not merely adapt to, the AI-driven future.

Speaker: Yang Rui

Professor Yang Rui is Dean and Chair Professor in the Faculty of Education at The University of Hong Kong. With over 37 years of academic career in both Hong Kong and Chinese Mainland of China, and Australia, he has an impressive track record on research at the interface of Chinese and Western traditions in education. Bridging the theoretical thrust of comparative education and the applied nature of international education, Professor Yang's research interests include education policy sociology, comparative and cross-cultural studies in education, international higher education, educational development in Chinese societies, and international politics in educational research. His international reputation is evidenced by his extensive list of publications, research projects, invited keynote lectures in international and regional conferences, leadership in professional associations and membership in editorial boards of scholarly journals.

Reexamining Republican-Era Scholarly Experience: Reconstructing Chinese Academic Subjectivity in the Age of AI

Contemporary Chinese academia is facing unprecedented challenges and opportunities. On one hand, a long-standing reliance on Western academic paradigms has deeply imprinted our knowledge system with Western content and methodologies, making it difficult to respond effectively to the practical needs of Chinese society and its cultural spirit. On the other hand, the rapid development of new technologies such as artificial intelligence is reshaping the modes of knowledge production and offering new avenues for reconstructing Chinese academic subjectivity.Against this backdrop, revisiting the unique experience of the Republican era—a historical period marked by the intersection of Chinese and Western scholarship—holds significant theoretical and practical value. As a time when China had not yet fully departed from its traditions while beginning to engage with Western thought, the Republican era showcased multiple paths toward asserting intellectual autonomy amid cultural collisions. This paper seeks to draw insights from the Republican experience and integrate the application of AI technologies in areas such as textual analysis, intellectual history, and academic innovation. It aims to explore how, in an era of accelerating digital intelligence and global knowledge restructuring, a culturally rooted and autonomous Chinese academic identity can be constructed—thereby advancing Chinese scholarship toward a new stage of independence, openness, and integration.

Speaker: Wen Wen

Wen Wen is a Vice-Dean and Professor at the School of Education, Tsinghua University. Her latest research examines higher education internationalisation, comparative and international higher education, and curricula in higher education. Prof. Wen has been Fulbright Scholar at Harvard University and a Visiting Scholar at the Center for International Higher Education at Boston College.

Reaffirming the "cong you (从游)" Legacy: Constructing the Inter-subjective Relationship between Teachers and Students in the AI Era

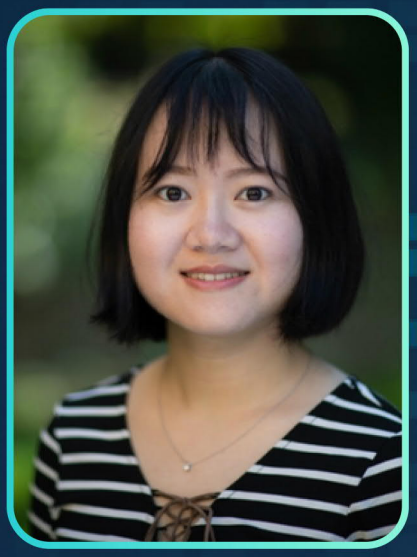
This paper reaffirmatively explores the "cong you (从游)" tradition to construct a meaningful intersubjective relationship between teachers and students in the AI era. As AI technology advances, it increasingly intervenes in the traditional processes of knowledge dissemination, production, and emotional support within higher education, threatening the cohesion of the teacher-student community and the legitimacy of talent cultivation. Drawing on the theory of intersubjectivity, the study examines the multi-dimensional nature of the teacher-student relationship—knowledge, social, and ethical—highlighting the long-standing Chinese pedagogical ideal of close, reciprocal interaction rooted in daily coexistence. The "cong you" tradition emphasizes mutual recognition, shared moral cultivation, and the unity of cognition and action, fostering an environment where teachers serve as mentors and friends, and students surpass their teachers through respect and inheritance of knowledge and values. However, current AI capabilities fall short of replicating the depth of human intersubjective interaction, particularly in reflexivity, moral judgment, and social role recognition. Consequently, AI cannot fully replace the nuanced, value-laden engagement between teachers and students essential for self-awareness and moral development. The paper advocates for revitalizing the "cong you" relationship by increasing physical and psychological closeness, establishing equitable partnerships, and embedding situated learning in everyday contexts. Such an approach enables students and teachers to better discern truth from falsehood, good from evil, and clarify life purposes, thereby enriching knowledge, sharpening practical skills, and promoting holistic personal development amidst AI's growing influence.

Speaker: Long Yun

Long Yun, Ph.D., is a postdoctoral fellow at Tsinghua University. Her research focuses on science education and classroom dialogue analysis, leveraging AI to examine and enhance instructional practices and student learning.

Analysing Classroom Dialogue with AI: A Journey from Tools to Critical Partnership

This presentation traces the evolution of a research programme that began with fine-grained analysis of primary science classroom dialogue and progressed to broader philosophical considerations concerning the integration of artificial intelligence in education. It commenced with a doctoral study involving extensive fieldwork, which led to the development of a domain-specific coding scheme, SciT-SEDA. While this tool effectively uncovered relationships between dialogue patterns and the development of disciplinary literacy, it highlighted the profound limitations of labour-intensive manual analysis. The advent of large language models (LLMs) promised a solution for scaling this analysis, yet their application revealed new dilemmas: the atomisation of dialogue into isolated codes and the problem of algorithmic 'hallucination'. This prompted a methodological innovation grounded in the history of AI itself: a hybrid agent that strategically **integrates symbolic AI (an expert-derived rule base) with connectionist principles (a LLM)**. This approach combines the reliability of expert knowledge with the flexibility of generative AI, enabling both scalable and trustworthy interpretation. This technical work, in turn, deepened our investigation into elements often marginalised by technology. We employed multimodal analytics to decode the rich significance of 'silence' in East Asian classrooms, and through a critical lens, we theorised the risks of AI-mediated 'monologisation' and the erosion of polyphony. The programme argues for a future in which AI's role in education is not one of replacement but of **thoughtful symbiosis**. It concludes by proposing a dialogic ethics for educational AI, positioning technology not as a gatekeeper of correctness, but as a partner in enhancing—rather than simplifying—the inherent complexity and human value of educational dialogue.

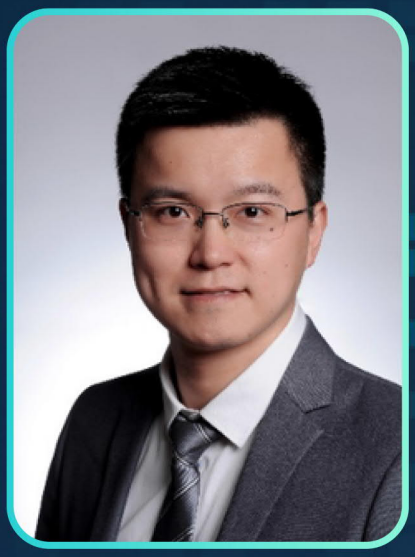


Speaker: Yang Lili

Yang Lili is an assistant professor at Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong. Previously she was a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Oxford, where she also received her DPhil in education. She specializes in cross-cultural comparison in higher education, with a keen interest in inequalities and imbalances in higher education and research. Her recent books include *Higher Education, State, Society: Comparing the Chinese and Anglo-American Approaches* (Bloomsbury, 2022, single-authored monograph) and *Student Agency and Self-Formation in Higher Education* (Palgrave McMillan, 2023, co-edited with Yusuf I. Oldac and Soyoung Lee).

From Epistemic Tools to Partners? A Hermeneutical Reflection on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Research

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming various sectors, including research—an area traditionally grounded in human intelligence. As AI progresses from being merely as an epistemic tool to an epistemic partner, its role shifts from assisting human researchers to actively co-creating knowledge. While an epistemic tool signifies human dominance, an epistemic partner denotes an autonomous, goal-directed agent capable of independent action. This progress of AI becoming a so-called “autonomous agent”, coupled with efforts to embody AI physically and virtually, prompts us to look beyond cognitive capacities and start questioning the very ontology of AI—the possible existence of AI as an “agent” and “being” (provocatively, which is more accurate: “artificial intelligence” or “artificial being”?). However, despite technological advances, the ontology of AI remains underexplored in current discourse, which predominantly focuses on cognitive capabilities and ethical usages of AI. Adopting a hermeneutical perspective, this essay argues that an epistemic agent possesses more than technical proficiency; it also embodies virtues and self-reflexivity regarding its own “horizon” and “prejudice,” drawing on Gadamer’s and Cheng Chung-ying’s hermeneutics. Relying solely on AI’s functional capacity risks neglecting virtues and hermeneutical considerations, which are essential for meaningful epistemic engagement of AI. This tendency is rooted in Cartesian scientific rationalism, emphasizing “scientism” while overlooking the role of human preconceptions and horizonal fusion in understanding. The essay advocates for a careful reflection and responsible approach to developing and engaging AI as epistemic partners—one that recognizes the importance of virtues and hermeneutical awareness alongside technological capabilities.



Speaker: Wei Jun

Wei Jun is an associate professor at the School of Education, Tsinghua University. He received PhD degree from the Department of Educational Psychology, the Chinese University of Hong Kong. His research mainly focuses on parenting and youth development, family-school-community collaboration, and college transitions. He serves as an editorial board member of *International Journal of Educational Research*, *Journal of Pacific Rim Psychology*, and *Journal of Research on Adolescence*.

Facilitating Parent-Child Interaction in Academic Settings : Leveraging Generative AI for Behavior Analysis and Intervention

In Chinese social contexts, parent-child interactions in academic settings are often accompanied by challenging and emotionally draining experience for parents, frequently leading to intense parent-child conflicts. These conflicts generate negative emotional experiences for both parties, adversely impacting children's academic and psychological functioning as well as straining family relationships. However, parents often struggle to recognize their communication problems and lack the necessary resources to enhance the quality of their academic support. This study utilizes generative AI technology to systematically identify and analyze linguistic patterns in parent-child interactions in homework settings. A codebook was developed with in-depth coding of 30 audio recordings of naturally occurring homework interactions between 1st to 3rd graders and their parents from different regions of China. This analysis revealed four core parental communication categories and three primary child response categories. Based on these findings, a comprehensive language coding system for parent-child homework communication was developed with detailed definitions and examples. This coding manual served as the foundation for constructing AI prompts through prompt engineering. AI-driven coding analysis was conducted on 438 homework audio clips, achieving accuracy rates ranging from 72% to 94% with the coding results of two human researchers. The high agreement between AI and human coding validates the system's reliability. Building on this coding framework, a homework assistance intervention app was developed to provide parents with actionable feedback. By submitting audio data from homework sessions, parents receive automated analyses that generate reports on language patterns, identify common communication issues, and offer personalized recommendations. This AI-powered solution offers a scalable and practical approach to fostering healthier and more effective parent-child interactions in academic settings.

Speaker: Jeremy Rappleye

Jeremy Rappleye is professor at The University of Hong Kong, and Director of the Comparative Education Research Centre. Before HKU, he worked at Kyoto University, exploring Kyoto School philosophy, a Buddhist-inspired approach with widespread impact across Japan. He sees opportunity for dialogue between Kyoto School philosophies and China's Confucian revival, one that would restore the complementarity and productive tension of the Three Teachings that has been lost in the Modern era.

Is (Artificial) Intelligence Representational or Relational?

Contemporary AI models are narrowly derived from as assumption of Representational Intelligence, building – apparently unaware - on modern Western psychology's substance-like mind and Cartesian dualism. To induce critical reflection on these assumptions, this piece aims to advance an emerging conversation among leading East Asia scholars – Japanese and Chinese – that explores East Asian theories of the mind, focusing specifically on the Buddhist concept of *yi* (意): a sense-organ for detecting the relational network that forms the substratum of the "I". The danger is that without stepping beyond the closed loop of Western psychology, neuroscience, and the 'ontologies' of AI engineering, rapidly advancing AI technologies subtly seduces (socializes) us into Representational Intelligence. In education, the more that contemporary forms of AI are deployed, the more that Relational Intelligence atrophies. However, the conclusion here is not a simplistic one of 'resist AI'. Instead, it calls for realization of the non-duality of Representational and Relational modes of intelligence; recognition of existing forms of education that foster the latter and development of the ability to move back and forth between the different forms of Intelligence. Only in this way can education and thought resist being subsumed and homogenized by AI's Representational mode. Beyond the specific Buddhist focus, the wider aim here is demonstrating entry-points through which educational traditions – Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist or otherwise - can deeply engage in our current era of AI euphoria.