

# On the Approaches of Improving Students' International Communication Ability With Short Videos

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The popularity of short videos among college students brings a good channel for students to disseminate traditional Chinese culture. Starting from the survey on the international communication capability of vocational students, the article analyzes four advantages of applying short videos in college English teaching and three advantages of short video in disseminating Chinese culture, explores five useful principles for both teachers and students to make better short videos, and offers four important suggestions for college English teaching.

*Keywords:* international communication ability, short video, college English teaching, traditional Chinese culture

## Introduction

Facing the economic globalization, cultural diversity makes international communication skills essential for college students. There exist many challenges for college students in cross-cultural communication, including insufficient language expression, little chance for real cross-cultural communication, and lack of cultural sensitivity for Chinese culture. To deal with these challenges, educators have been exploring effective teaching approaches to enhancing students' international communication skills. Sun (2023) extracted the curriculum design process and teaching principles, and demonstrates some specific implementation of the course through cases in the course "Telling China's Stories in English". Zhang (2023) explored the teaching practice of integrating ideological and political education, and constructs a curriculum goal that deeply integrates cognitive goals, skill goals, literacy goals, and professional awareness. And this article aims at effectively using short videos in English teaching to enhance student's ability to disseminate Chinese culture.

## The Survey on the International Communication Capability of Vocational College Students

In order to survey the international communication capability of vocational college students, the author conducts a survey in Sichuan, China. According to the results of 484 collected questionnaires, 44.42% of students have little or no understanding of the influence of Chinese culture abroad, and 76.86% of students have little or

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no understanding of international communication. The questionnaire results also showed that 75.83% of students had no experience in spreading Chinese culture in a foreign language, and 49.38% of students stated that they had never had any cross-cultural communication experience. The *Curriculum Standards for English Majors in Higher Vocational Education* (2021 Edition) calls for cultivating the ability of vocational college students to spread Chinese culture (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2021). Therefore, college English teachers have a long way to go to improve students' international communication capability.

About the methods of spreading Chinese culture, the survey results show that students have different preferences, among which film and tourism are more popular. Meanwhile, 91.53% of the respondents maintain a high positive attitude towards spreading Chinese culture by short videos, believing that they are an effective way of communication. So, it would be meaningful to research how vocational college English teachers can make use of short videos to improve students' international communication capability.

### **The Application of Short Videos in College English Teaching and Learning**

The application of short videos in college English teaching offers a dynamic and modern approach for both teachers and students. Therefore, short videos in college English teaching have become increasingly popular for the following reasons.

#### **Short Videos Help to Enhance Students' Language Competence**

Short videos, especially those with native speakers, are good learning material for students to improve listening skills, and to imitate the pronunciation and the intonation. With vivid scenarios, short videos can make the complex grammar rules more accessible to students, and can make the new words and phrases easier to understand and remember.

#### **Short Videos Help Language Learning and Teaching More Dynamic**

The visual and auditory nature of videos can make learning more engaging, during or after the video, teachers can give students some interactive activities, such as quizzes and polls to check students' understanding, and teachers can also design some discussions, debates, and group work to motivate students to participate more actively in class.

#### **Short Videos Provide a Good Way of Assessment**

Teachers can use video assignments as a form of assessment, asking students to create their own short videos to demonstrate their learning products or their language skills. Besides, short videos can be used for self-assessment and peer feedback, allowing students to reflect on their language use and receive constructive criticism.

#### **Short Videos Bring More Accessibility to Students and Teachers**

Short videos can be accessed anytime and anywhere, making them a convenient tool for students who want to practice outside of class. Short videos can also be used for teacher professional development, providing insights into new teaching methods and strategies.

### **The Advantages of Short Videos in Spreading Chinese Traditional Culture**

#### **Short Videos Can Demonstrate Chinese Cultural Vividly**

Short videos can break the limitations of time and space, which makes it a good way to present the profound

history and splendid culture of China. Many attractive moments of Chinese history and culture are displayed on the short video platforms, such as *Feel of China*, *Festival China*, and *Hello, China*. Combined with visual impact of editing effects, these short videos can stimulate viewers' interest and attract them to actively learn about Chinese culture.

### **Short Videos Provide an Innovative Channel**

Faced with unprecedented changes in the past century, the international dissemination of Chinese civilization is facing brand new opportunities and unprecedented challenges. With the help of short videos, more and more ordinary people become inheritors, recorders, and disseminators of Chinese civilization, which greatly lowers the threshold for content production and dissemination. The participation of the public is a new boost to tell a good Chinese story, spread the voice of China, and present a credible, lovely, and honorable image of China.

### **Short Video Will Bring Economic Benefit**

The profound and amazing Chinese culture can provide excellent content for short video, which can provide new business opportunities for recorders and disseminators. It may start a new market for Chinese cultural accessories and other related products with Chinese features. The economic benefit can make the international dissemination of Chinese culture more dynamic, which will definitely promote the high-quality development of international dissemination of Chinese civilization.

## **The Approaches to Making Better Short Videos**

### **Select Universal Themes to Reduce Cultural Discounts**

The uniqueness of eastern civilization in Chinese culture may bring certain obstacles in cross-cultural communication, so universal themes can be selected when making short videos to reduce cultural discounts. For example, the idea of the whole world as one community coincides with building a community with a shared future of mankind; the concept that man is an integral part of nature is a common ecological thought all over the world; the thought that people are the foundation of a country receives global recognition. These kind of themes can easily strike a chord with foreign audience and reduce cultural discounts at the same time.

### **Get Involved More Foreigners**

As mentioned earlier in this passage, short video brings an innovative channel, lowering the threshold to disseminate Chinese civilization, which brings good opportunity to attract foreigners to become spokesmen of Chinese civilization. Foreign students can be invited to play a role in the video at first, and they can be heroes and spokesmen when they get enough knowledge about Chinese Cultural. With the perception of foreigners, it is easier to avoid the dilemma of "talking to oneself", and Chinese cultural will be disseminated more efficiently. Besides, good data analytics can help to tailor content to meet the expectations of different users, which will bring more and more overseas users for short videos.

### **Highlight the Characteristics of Chinese Culture**

The short videos should highlight the outstanding characteristics of Chinese culture. The long-standing harmonious and unified civilization integrates and firmly consolidates the cultures of various ethnic groups. The openness and inclusiveness of Chinese civilization bring many exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese

civilization and other civilizations around the world. The peaceful nature of Chinese civilization brings peaceful and harmonious coexistence and has great impact on building a community with a share future for mankind. Short videos highlighting the outstanding characteristics of Chinese civilization allow overseas user groups to further experience and appreciate the charm of Chinese civilization.

### **Optimize the Ways of Expression**

Firstly, dialogue is better than self-narration. In the process of promoting the international dissemination of Chinese civilization, conversational communication or dialogue is a better way than one-way promotion, so it is necessary to establish interactive elements and feedback mechanisms to engage viewers and adjust content strategies based on audience responses. Secondly, small stories are better than big stories. Small stories with refined content is more popular among international user groups. So, when selecting materials, we try to avoid some macro topics, and choose some micro ones instead. And this is a good way to make the best use of the "short" advantages of short videos. Thirdly, shared topics are better than monopoly topics. One of the most important function of English is to solve the global issues, so the short videos integrate the concepts of Chinese civilization with global concerns, such as poverty, climate-changing, environment pollution, epidemic disease, and security, which would be a good way to demonstrate the exchange and mutual learning between Chinese civilization and other civilizations. Fourthly, Key Opinion Leader (KOL) speaks louder than common people. Video makers can encourage and feature cultural ambassadors, such as KOL or celebrities from time to time, because they can effectively communicate the essence of Chinese culture to international audiences.

### **Diversify Platforms and Broaden Channels**

First, it is necessary to make the best use of existing platforms introducing Chinese culture, such as China Culture, Chinese History Digest, and Chinatownology. Second, the excellent documentaries, such as *Hello China*, *Amazing China*, *Festive China* can be widely used to disseminate Chinese civilization. Third, some global social media, such as Tiktok, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn can be fully leveraged. Different platforms get overseas Chinese, Chinese culture enthusiasts, and overseas users involved and encourage them to interact and communicate. On the other hand, the most important thing is to promote our own communication platforms into international platforms, which will be widely used by overseas user groups. And we can build short video platforms overseas, by means of business expansion and acquisition or others, which is not difficult owing to our rich experience in constructing short video platforms and the expecting commercial interest.

## **Suggestions for College English Teachers**

### **Enhance Conscience for Disseminating Traditional Chinese Culture**

According to the new curriculum of college English, one of the roles of college English teachers is ambassadors. With the rapid pace of globalization, traditional Chinese culture may easily be overshadowed, so it is high time for college teachers to leverage the power of short videos to present engaging content. Short videos can illustrate complex cultural concepts in an enjoyable way and inspire students' deeper appreciation for Chinese culture. On the other hand, by setting an example of disseminating Chinese culture, the students can be inspired

to value and to appreciate traditional Chinese culture, which will lead to a ripple effect, with students creating their own videos to disseminate the Chinese culture.

### **Adopt Interdisciplinary Approach**

College English teaching calls for interdisciplinary approach since culture is intertwined with language, history, and social studies, and teachers should give equal importance to language competence and humanity education. From the perspective of different majors, English teaching should be intertwined with the knowledge related to the professionals. Short videos, a widely consumed medium globally and a modern teaching medium, can easily integrate different disciplines, and can leave a deep and lasting impression to students.

### **Optimize the Class Structure**

College English teachers can use different teaching methodologies, such as Flipped Classrooms, Production-Oriented Approach, and Task-based Language (TBL) Teaching Method. Before class, teachers can share some short videos to students, which may set an example for students' production after class, provide teaching clues for students to discover, explain a difficult teaching points, or release a learning task. After class, some group tasks are such as making short videos to introduce one of the traditional Chinese festivals, to tell stories related to teaching content, to report a group programme, or to share other relative things. While in class, most of the teaching time is spent on group discussions, peer evaluations, and teacher's feedbacks. In this way, teachers can make full use of the class time to interact and solve students' problems, and their free time to study by themselves, which can get students involved in learning, and cultivate students' lifelong learning ability.

### **Promote Learning Through Competition**

Short video competitions can increase student engagement by providing a platform, where students can express their language competence and creativity in a dynamic and creative way. Short video competitions require the integration of multiple skills and abilities, such as real-life communication skills, collaborative skills, technology integration skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. Any success in short video competitions can boost students' confidence and motivation in their language learning. Chinese culture short video competitions, extracting and reformatting the highlights of the Chinese culture, are thought to be a cross-medium reproduction of cultural content, allowing for the adaptation of existing cultural materials to fit the preferences of short video user groups. Short videos that feature elements of Chinese culture, such as traditions, painting, calligraphy, music, and festivals, allow users to appreciate the charm of Chinese culture.

## **Conclusion**

Short videos, as an innovative teaching and learning tool, provide new possibilities for enhancing students' international communication abilities. Short videos can effectively improve students' confidence, team spirit, innovative thinking, and the ability to disseminate traditional Chinese culture. Welcome more educators to adopt this tool and work together to create a more diverse and interactive learning environment for students.

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