

# Research on the Cultivation Strategy of English Students' Cross-cultural Communication Ability in the New Media Environment

**Lin Fan\***

Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology Haikou 571126, Hainan, China

*\*Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

**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:** In the current era of deep integration between globalization and new media technologies, the cross-cultural communication competence of English learners has become a key indicator for assessing their language proficiency. New media, with its interactive, real-time, and diverse features, offers innovative pathways for cultivating cross-cultural communication skills while challenging traditional teaching models. This paper explores strategies for developing such competence in English students through five dimensions: pedagogical innovation, resource utilization, practical scenario design, evaluation system enhancement, and faculty development. By leveraging the unique characteristics of the new media environment, the study aims to provide practical references for university English teaching reforms, helping students overcome superficial language barriers and achieve effective communication in cross-cultural contexts.

**Keywords:** New media environment; English students; Intercultural communication competence; Cultivation strategies

---

**Online publication:** January 26, 2026

## 1. Introduction

Intercultural communication competence refers to the comprehensive ability of English students to accurately understand others' cultural connotations, appropriately express their own views, and avoid cultural conflicts in cross-cultural contexts. Its core encompasses four aspects: cultural cognition, language application, emotional empathy, and behavioral adaptation. With the rapid development of internet technology, new media platforms such as WeChat, TikTok, MOOCs, and cross-border social platforms have deeply integrated into the process of English learning, completely breaking the time and space limitations of traditional intercultural learning. Traditional English teaching often focuses on the impartation of language knowledge, and the cultivation of intercultural communication competence mostly remains at the theoretical explanation level, failing to meet students' communication needs in real contexts. The new media environment provides abundant resources and diverse scenarios for the cultivation of intercultural communication competence, allowing students to access authentic English cultural content and interact directly with people from different cultural backgrounds. Based on the technical advantages and application characteristics of new media, this paper focuses on the practicality and operability

---

of cultivation strategies, constructing a systematic plan to enhance the intercultural communication competence of English students, thereby helping them adapt to the practical demands of global communication <sup>[1,2]</sup>.

## **2. The influence of the new media environment on the cultivation of cross-cultural communication competence of English students**

### **2.1. Positive impact**

New media have expanded the channels for English learners to engage with cross-cultural awareness. Traditional cross-cultural learning relies on limited resources like textbooks and supplementary materials, which often lag in content updates and offer narrow perspectives, making it challenging for students to fully experience diverse cultural forms. New media platforms, however, aggregate vast amounts of content from English-speaking countries, including videos, news reports, cultural columns, and social media updates. Through platforms like YouTube, TED Talks, and BBC Culture, students can access real-time cultural information from various regions and communities, gaining firsthand insights into how English is used in authentic contexts. This helps them gradually build a multidimensional framework for cultural understanding <sup>[3]</sup>.

New media have empowered English learners to take greater initiative in cross-cultural interactions. Unlike traditional classrooms where teacher-led activities dominated and engagement was limited, the interactive nature of new media liberates students from classroom constraints. Through cross-border platforms like Facebook and Twitter, or language learning communities such as HelloTalk, learners can engage in one-on-one conversations with native English speakers. By initiating discussions and sharing perspectives, they gain firsthand experience of cultural differences, thereby enhancing the fluency and appropriateness of their language expression <sup>[4]</sup>.

New media diversifies approaches to developing intercultural communication skills. Beyond text-based exchanges, it supports interactive formats like voice calls, video chats, and live streams. Through activities such as online debates, cultural exchange sessions, and virtual role-playing, students can immerse themselves in cross-cultural scenarios, honing their cultural empathy and conflict resolution skills through hands-on practice. This multifaceted approach caters to diverse learning styles, making the training process both engaging and effective.

### **2.2. Potential challenges**

The fragmented and uneven quality of new media content has increased students' cognitive load. The chaotic dissemination of cross-cultural information on new media platforms, often containing partiality, subjectivity, or cultural biases, leaves students with insufficient discernment. This makes them susceptible to misinformation, leading to distorted cultural perceptions. Moreover, the fragmented nature of information delivery hinders the development of a systematic cultural knowledge framework, thereby impeding the deepening of cross-cultural communication skills <sup>[5,6]</sup>.

In the context of new media, linguistic simplification and informalization affect students' ability to express themselves formally. English on social media predominantly uses abbreviations, internet slang, and colloquial expressions. Prolonged exposure to such content may lead students to confuse the linguistic norms of formal and informal contexts, resulting in inappropriate expressions in formal cross-cultural scenarios like academic exchanges and business communications.

The inadequate application of new media by some students has constrained the effectiveness of their training. Differences in digital literacy among students are evident, with some only able to access basic learning resources through new media, while being unable to skillfully utilize advanced features such as online interactive tools and virtual simulation platforms. This hinders the full utilization of new media's advantages in cultivating intercultural communication skills <sup>[7]</sup>.

### **3. Strategies for cultivating English students' intercultural communication competence in the new media environment**

#### **3.1. Innovate teaching mode and build a “new media + cross-cultural” integrated classroom**

Teachers should transcend the limitations of traditional classroom settings by establishing an integrated “online + offline” teaching model, seamlessly integrating new media tools with intercultural communication instruction. In physical classrooms, educators can utilize digital resources to deliver thematic lessons, incorporating cross-cultural case studies from course content. Through formats like short videos, documentaries, and cultural interviews, students can analyze the historical and social roots behind cultural differences. For instance, when exploring the etiquette contrasts between China and the West, teachers might screen BBC-produced cultural documentaries to visually compare dining customs and greeting practices. Subsequent group discussions can then help students identify key differences, thereby enhancing their cultural literacy.

During online sessions, teachers can utilize platforms like MOOCs, Xuetong, and DingTalk to build cross-cultural learning communities and assign extended learning tasks. They may assign “cultural sharing assignments,” requiring students to research traditional festivals, customs, and values of English-speaking countries through new media platforms, then create PPTs, short videos, or illustrated notes for community sharing. Alternatively, teachers can organize online cross-cultural debates on topics such as “differences in family values between China and the West” or “comparisons of workplace cultures,” guiding students to express their perspectives in English and enhance their language application and cultural empathy through critical thinking<sup>[8]</sup>.

Teachers should adopt the Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach to design cross-cultural communication projects using new media. For instance, students could work in groups on a “cross-cultural public service campaign” theme, gathering materials, crafting English promotional content, producing videos, and sharing them on international social platforms. They would then invite native English speakers to provide feedback. Throughout the project, students must proactively understand target cultures' reception habits, adapt their communication styles flexibly, and effectively enhance their practical cross-cultural communication skills.

#### **3.2. Deeply explore new media resources and build a personalized cross-cultural learning system**

Teachers should curate high-quality new media resources tailored to students' language proficiency and learning needs, building a stratified cross-cultural learning repository. For foundational learners, platforms like BBC Learning English and VOA Slow English are recommended, where students can build vocabulary and expressions through digestible news and cultural articles. At the intermediate level, TED Talks, Netflix series, and The Economist's cultural columns provide authentic English expression and cultural depth. For advanced learners, guidance should focus on academic databases (e.g., JSTOR, Springer) and international organizations' websites (e.g., UN, EU) to develop academic cross-cultural communication skills.

Students should utilize new media tools to build personalized learning plans, focusing on targeted improvement of their weak areas. They can leverage the cultural expansion features of language learning apps (such as Baicizhan and Shanbei Reading) to understand relevant cultural backgrounds while memorizing vocabulary and reading articles. Alternatively, they can follow accounts of native English speakers or cross-cultural researchers on platforms like TikTok and Xiaohongshu to regularly access cultural science content and cultivate cross-cultural sensitivity. Additionally, students can create personal cross-cultural learning notes using new media tools like Shimo Docs and Youdao Cloud Notes to document cultural differences encountered during learning and language expression techniques. By regularly reviewing and summarizing these notes, they can gradually refine their cross-cultural knowledge system<sup>[9]</sup>.

Schools can collaborate with external resources to establish specialized cross-cultural new media learning platforms. By integrating virtual simulation technology, institutions can create immersive cross-cultural communication scenarios, enabling students to practice negotiation, academic exchanges, and daily social interactions through VR devices. This approach helps students navigate cultural barriers and refine their communication skills. Furthermore, partnerships with

international universities and language training providers can facilitate live-streamed interactions and online exchanges, offering students opportunities to engage directly with native English speakers and transcend geographical limitations in cross-cultural learning.

### **3.3. Building practice scenarios to strengthen cross-cultural communication skills**

Teachers should leverage new media to organize diverse cross-cultural practical activities, enabling students to hone their skills in authentic contexts. They may initiate a “Cross-Cultural Penpal” program, connecting students with native English speakers through international penpal platforms. This encourages regular communication via email and social media, where participants share their lives, cultures, and perspectives. Throughout these exchanges, students should focus on appropriate language use and cultural adaptation, gradually improving the accuracy and fluency of cross-cultural communication.

Schools can leverage new media platforms to host cross-cultural themed events, fostering a vibrant learning environment. For instance, they may organize online English Culture Festivals where students showcase cultural customs, culinary traditions, and traditional festivals from English-speaking countries through short videos. Alternatively, they could stage English-language drama performances featuring classic cross-cultural scripts, allowing students to experience the thought processes and behavioral patterns of characters from different cultural backgrounds through role-playing. Furthermore, schools can utilize live streaming platforms to invite international experts and scholars for cross-cultural lectures, enabling students to directly engage with cutting-edge research findings and authentic cultural experiences, thereby broadening their cross-cultural perspectives.

Students should proactively leverage new media platforms to expand cross-cultural practice channels and enhance independent practical skills. They may join online English debate communities and cultural exchange forums, initiating or participating in discussions on cross-cultural topics. Through interactions with students from diverse cultural backgrounds, they can hone their language expression and conflict resolution abilities. Alternatively, they can create short video content interpreting English culture and sharing cultural differences between China and the West. This process not only deepens their cultural understanding but also allows them to receive feedback and suggestions from others, continuously refining their cross-cultural communication skills. For students with access to resources, new media platforms can also provide online part-time opportunities such as cross-border e-commerce customer service, English subtitle translation, or international sports event volunteering, enabling them to improve practical cross-cultural communication skills in real-world work scenarios<sup>[10]</sup>.

### **3.4. Improve the evaluation system and establish a diversified cross-cultural competence evaluation mechanism**

Teachers should move beyond the traditional exam-centric evaluation model and establish a diversified assessment system that combines formative and summative evaluations to holistically assess students’ intercultural communication competencies. Formative evaluation should focus on students’ daily learning and practical performance, with data collected through new media tools. For instance, teachers can utilize platforms like XueTong and DingTalk to track students’ online task completion, community engagement, and performance in intercultural activities. Additionally, involving native English speakers and peers in the evaluation process—seeking feedback on language expression, cultural adaptation, and communication effectiveness—can enhance the objectivity of the assessment outcomes.

Formative assessment should emphasize evaluating students’ comprehensive application skills through diversified evaluation methods. Teachers may design cross-cultural communication scenario tests, creating virtual environments via new media platforms where students complete English communication tasks within specified time limits—such as simulated business negotiations, handling cross-cultural conflicts, or delivering cultural-themed speeches—and receive comprehensive scores based on their performance. Alternatively, students may submit cross-cultural communication practice reports that analyze challenges and solutions encountered in cross-cultural interactions, incorporating their online

and offline practical experiences to demonstrate cultural awareness and practical competencies.

Students should engage in self-assessment and reflection, utilizing new media tools to enhance the precision of their evaluations. By recording their cross-cultural communication videos and reviewing communication records, students can analyze their expression processes, identify shortcomings such as unfluent language, cultural misunderstandings, or communication skill gaps, and develop targeted improvement plans. Additionally, students can share evaluation insights with peers through new media platforms, exchanging experiences to mutually improve cross-cultural communication skills.

### **3.5. Strengthen faculty development to enhance teachers' capabilities in cross-cultural teaching and new media application**

Schools should enhance training programs for English teachers to improve their cross-cultural teaching competencies and proficiency in new media applications. Regular specialized training sessions on cross-cultural pedagogy can be organized, inviting experts and veteran educators in the field to deliver lectures on theories of intercultural communication, teaching methodologies, and case analysis techniques. This will help teachers update their teaching philosophies and expand their knowledge base in cross-cultural education. Additionally, schools should provide practical training in new media technologies, covering topics such as MOOC production, virtual simulation platform operations, and online interactive tools, to strengthen teachers' digital teaching capabilities.

Schools should establish teacher exchange platforms to facilitate experience sharing and collaboration among educators. By leveraging new media platforms, schools can create cross-cultural teaching communities for English teachers, encouraging them to share high-quality teaching resources, case studies, and new media application techniques. Additionally, organizing inter-school exchange activities allows teachers to observe "new media + cross-cultural" classrooms at other institutions, learn advanced teaching models and practical experiences, and optimize their own teaching plans based on these insights.

Teachers should proactively enhance their cross-cultural competence and digital literacy to serve as effective guides and companions in students' cross-cultural learning journeys. They can acquire cross-cultural knowledge through digital platforms, stay updated on global cultural trends, and compile practical teaching cases. Additionally, teachers should actively engage in online cross-cultural exchanges, interacting with native English speakers and fellow educators to refine their communication skills. Furthermore, educators should continuously explore synergies between digital tools and cross-cultural pedagogy, innovating teaching methodologies and activity formats while tailoring strategies to students' needs to optimize educational outcomes.

## **4. Case analysis**

Two English majors from the 2022 cohort at our university were selected as experimental subjects for a semester-long program on "New Media + Intercultural Communication Competency Development". The experimental class implemented the proposed training strategy, adopting a blended "online-offline" teaching model that leverages new media for resource learning, practical activities, and diversified assessments. The control group followed a traditional teaching approach, focusing on textbook explanations and theoretical lectures supplemented by limited cross-cultural case analyses.

During the experiment, teachers in the experimental class established an online learning community through XueXuetong, releasing weekly high-quality cross-cultural new media resources and organizing online debates and cultural sharing activities. They also matched students with native English speakers via an international pen pal platform to conduct cross-cultural correspondence. A combination of formative and summative assessments was used to comprehensively evaluate students' abilities. In contrast, the control class followed traditional curriculum arrangements, completing textbook content instruction and evaluating learning outcomes through written exams at the end of the term.

The semester evaluation revealed that the experimental class demonstrated significantly stronger cross-cultural

communication skills than the control group. In cross-cultural scenario tests, the experimental class scored 15.6 points higher on average, excelling in linguistic fluency, cultural comprehension accuracy, and communication skill adaptation. Moreover, the experimental class exhibited higher learning motivation and participation, with 85% of students actively utilizing new media for cross-cultural activities, compared to only 42% in the control group. This case study conclusively demonstrates that new media-based cross-cultural communication training strategies effectively enhance students' comprehensive abilities and yield positive practical outcomes.

## 5. Conclusion

The new media environment provides abundant resources and diverse pathways for cultivating intercultural communication skills among English learners, breaking the temporal and spatial constraints of traditional training models. The five strategies proposed in this paper—innovating teaching methods, developing educational resources, creating practical scenarios, improving evaluation systems, and strengthening faculty development—form a systematic training framework. These strategies effectively enhance students' abilities in intercultural cognition, language application, emotional empathy, and behavioral adaptation, offering practical references for reforming college English education. In future training practices, it is essential to monitor the development trends of new media technologies and continuously optimize training strategies. With the rise of technologies like artificial intelligence and the metaverse, innovative training formats such as “AI + intercultural communication” and “metaverse virtual environments” can be explored to provide students with more authentic and immersive cross-cultural learning experiences. Simultaneously, emphasis should be placed on cultivating students' ability to discern new media information, guiding them to rationally screen cross-cultural content and avoid being misled by misinformation.

In conclusion, developing intercultural communication skills among English learners is a long-term endeavor requiring coordinated efforts from schools, educators, and students. Schools should establish comprehensive support systems, teachers should innovate teaching methods and formats, and students should actively utilize new media for practical engagement. Only through this tripartite collaboration can new media truly become a powerful tool for cultivating intercultural competence, empowering students to communicate effectively in a globalized context and fostering them into versatile talents with both linguistic proficiency and cross-cultural literacy.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

## References

- [1] Zhang HY, 2024, Strategies for Cultivating Cross-Cultural Intelligence in College English Students in the New Media Environment. *Journal of Journalism Research*, 15(20): 62–66.
- [2] Zhou MR, 2024, Exploring Interactive Teaching Models for High School English in the New Media Environment. *Campus English*, (39): 51–53.
- [3] Li M, 2024, Integrating Cultural Confidence Education into College English Curriculum in the New Media Environment: An Exploration of the Integration of Ganpo Culture and Workplace Practice. *Knowledge Window (Teacher Edition)*, (08): 117–119.
- [4] Xing XQ, 2024, Innovative Approaches to English Education in Higher Vocational Colleges in the New Media Environment. *Shanxi Youth*, (16): 172–174.
- [5] Wu YF, 2024, The Application of New Media in Promoting the Reform of English Linguistics Curriculum. *Middle School*

English, (28): 85–86.

- [6] Cheng WL, 2024, Reflections on English Cross-Cultural Communication in the New Media Environment: A Case Study of Exhibition and Convention Majors. *New Curriculum Teaching (Electronic Edition)*, (12): 67–69.
- [7] Xiao GH, 2024, Research on Intercultural Teaching of English in Higher Vocational Education in the New Media Era. *Journal of Huainan Vocational and Technical College*, 24(03): 103–105.
- [8] Zhang L, 2024, Strategies for Cultivating Business English Talents in Higher Vocational Education under the New Media Environment. *Journal of Journalism Research*, 15(04): 129–131.
- [9] Liu HY, 2023, Strategies for Cultivating College Students' Intercultural Communication Competence in English under the New Media Communication Environment. *Modern English*, (24): 62–64.
- [10] Liu H, 2023, Cultivation of College Students' Intercultural Communication Competence in English under the New Media Environment. *Journal of Qiqihar University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, (10): 165–168.

**Publisher's note**

*Whioce Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.*