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Designing TED-TI instructional strategy: tackling high-density classroom management dilemmas and tapping into the employment potential of native-language public speaking education

Xiaojian Zheng^a , Mohd Hazwan Mohd Puad^a , Habibah Ab. Jalil^a  and Wei Wang^b 

^aFaculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia; ^bDepartment of Business English, Xi'an International Studies University, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China

ABSTRACT

Given the profound impact of Technology, Entertainment, Design (TED) Talks and Toastmasters International (TI) on Public Speaking Competency (PSC), this study aimed to integrate them into the local non-English speaking tertiary vocational education system. Concomitantly, under-recognized mother-tongue PSC education also confronts the challenge of managing densely populated classrooms. This study designed a TED-TI classroom instructional strategy and developed employment-oriented mother-tongue PSC courses using the ADDIE design model. In the analysis stage, design motivation of the capacity rebuilding and pedagogy demands is clarified; in the design stage, a TED-TI classroom teaching model is created; in the development stage, mother-tongue PSC and employment elements are integrated to produce auxiliary textbooks, TED Thinking Taskbook and TI Meeting-style Training Booklet; in the implementation and evaluation stage, TED-TI is optimized through internal design validation. These promising pilot results suggest the potential for expanding TED-TI, including larger-scale applications, extending beyond Mandarin, further investigating local employment promotion schemes via PSC, and aiding countries in grappling with educational equity challenges.

ARTICLE HISTORY

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TED (Technology, Entertainment & Design) Talks; Toastmasters International (TI); Instructional Strategy; High-Density Classroom Management; Employability Empowerment; Native-Language Public Speaking Education; Higher Vocational Education; Educational Equity; ADDIE Design Model

SUBJECTS

Education; Communication Studies; Vocational Education; Applied Linguistics

1. Introduction

Technology, Entertainment, Design (TED) Talks and Toastmasters International (TI) are prominent non-profit organizations focused on enhancing public speaking competency (PSC). TED disseminates ideas regarding societal benefits, whereas TI provides a structured leadership training platform. Their global influence is evident in TED's 115-language video library and TI's 16,800+ clubs spanning 143 countries. Their multidisciplinary, multicultural, and multilingual nature renders them valuable resources for improving learners' English proficiency and PSC (Laske et al., 2024; Wang & Csomay, 2024).

Notably, the influence of TED and TI on local communities has extended to non-English native-language training, especially in China (Chen, 2000; Wu et al., 2012; Zhang, 2018). In addition to English, Chinese-language content frequently appears on these platforms. On public forums like Facebook and YouTube, users can find Mandarin speech videos from local TEDx events and TI clubs in Southeast Asian regions, including Malaysia, China's Taiwan region, and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, where Mandarin-related activities are held. These developments have led to the concept of integrating TED and TI into TED-TI in Chinese higher education.

CONTACT Mohd Hazwan Mohd Puad  hazwan@upm.edu.my  Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia
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This integration is expected to address three nascent challenges pertaining to mother tongue PSC education.

First, it raises awareness of native-language PSC education in the local community. In China, English-language PSC research has taken precedence, while the mother tongue has received less attention. It rarely exists as an independent discipline and is typically incorporated into “Speech and Eloquence” in Chinese higher vocational education. The latest national planning textbooks allocate minimal attention to this area, lack explicit pedagogical or internationally aligned assessment criteria, and have remained unrevised for more than two decades in specific provinces (Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, 2023; Morreale et al., 2007; Yan, 2005; Zheng et al., 2025a). Thus, integrating TED-TI’s cross-language technology offers an urgent solution to improve Mandarin PSC education.

Second, job-seeking phobia among graduates often leads to Public Speaking Anxiety (PSA) (Ibrahim & Devesh, 2019). Native PSC, as an authentic assessment activity, helps graduates integrate into the labor market (Sokhanvar et al., 2021). Self-reflection during speech preparation, self-promotion in public expressions, and positive traits from overcoming PSA help graduates bridge the theory–practice gap and approach employment more positively (Bridgstock, 2009; McNatt, 2019). Given the popularity of TED and TI among professionals and their impact on employment, how to tap their potential to reframe PSC from a subset of oral communication to a generic skill for addressing employability shortfalls (Jackson et al., 2022).

Finally, effective PSC education requires efficient training techniques to help students apply their practical knowledge. Thus, PSC training is a practice-oriented approach that requires ample practice opportunities for all students (Korthagen et al., 2006). However, achieving this in Chinese higher education is challenging because of the large class sizes, typically exceeding 40 students. It is difficult for instructors to manage the classroom and provide equitable training opportunities within the allotted period (Chan & Smith, 2024; Shan, 2020). In addition, advanced pedagogies, shaped by factors such as globalization and educational policies (Oliinyk et al., 2024), often prioritize English learning over the mother tongue. This inexperience often leads teachers to avoid practice-based teaching in favor of simpler indoctrination methods. Thus, this study proposed using the established practices of TED and TI to improve classroom management. TED and TI offer valuable methodologies such as TI’s peer assessment, role-playing techniques, and TED’s flipped classroom model (Zheng et al., 2025b). A key challenge is how to seamlessly integrate these approaches into the classroom settings while adhering to local academic management practices and ensuring the inclusion of every student.

Based on these issues, this study addresses three sequential research questions (RQs):

RQ 1: What theoretical underpinnings can elucidate the mechanisms through which TED-TI can facilitate the enhancement of job-seeking attitudes and optimization of classroom training within native-language PSC education?

RQ 2: What TED-TI instructional model is optimally suited for classroom training, and what complementary teaching materials can promote seamless integration of native-language and employment-related advancements?

RQ 3: What is the degree of acceptance among experts and vocational college students following small-scale local implementation?

This study adheres to the Introduction, Methodology, Results, and Discussion (IMRaD) structure (Sollaci & Pereira, 2004; Wu, 2011). Given the unique focus of each section, the subsequent parts systematically present the design methods (M), design outcomes (R), and opportunities ahead (D) of TED-TI.

2. Design methods

This study is classified as Design Development Research (DDR) and adheres to the Analysis, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate (ADDIE) model (Branch, 2009; Richey, 2005). These five phases correspond to the study’s three research questions (RQs).

The analysis phase responds to RQ 1 by clarifying the TED-TI design’s motivational basis. It examines two key gaps: (1) the competency development gap, which focuses on addressing the disconnect

between PSC education and employability training, and (2) the classroom equity gap, which involves constructing a comprehensive PSC instructional framework to resolve educational equity challenges in high-density classrooms. Appropriate theoretical constructs related to competency development and classroom instruction are proposed as conceptual solutions, followed by considerations of how to integrate TED and TI practices. This leads to the formulation of a theoretical framework that elucidates how TED-TI-mediated classroom instructional strategies can be designed to cultivate employability-aligned PSC. Local educational conditions were incorporated into the analysis.

The design and development phases address RQ 2 by translating the analytical findings into tangible solutions. The design phase constructs a prototype instructional strategy that enables the seamless integration of TED and TI practices into classroom settings while accommodating local teaching conditions and training equity requirements. The development phase expands the prototype by systematically integrating employability development elements, resulting in the creation of TED-TI teaching materials (both English and Mandarin versions) tailored for educators and learners. Additionally, the current state of PSC education in local institutions was considered.

The implementation and evaluation phases occur concurrently and are guided by the DDR's internal verification process. Experts and pilot students assessed whether TED-TI met the expectations established during the analysis phase for optimization, prior to its full operation. The research and pilot were conducted in distinct institutions, with the TED-TI pilot at the Speech Club of X Higher Vocational Education Institution in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. This study was approved by two institutions, and invitations were extended to experts and pilot students via letters of appointment and informed consent forms.

Subject specialists and experienced educators (as field experts working at X institute) in pedagogy, language, and human resources completed three questionnaires developed specifically for this study to verify TED-TI's content validity, focusing on: (1) classroom usability of the TED-TI; (2) suitability of TED-TI teaching materials for each unit; and (3) accuracy of the Chinese translation. Subsequently, 61 pilot students from Institution X's speech club participated in all TED-TI teaching units and completed a reliability questionnaire assessing the attainment of each unit's objectives. The Percentage Calculation Method (PCM) evaluates expert content validity, whereas Cronbach's alpha measures the reliability of student feedback. Additionally, a face validity test was conducted. Expert and student consultation opinions, analogous to usability documents in DDR's internal verification, were documented, leading to revisions and enhancements of TED-TI.

3. TED-TI design outcomes

3.1. Analysis stage (for RQ 1)

3.1.1. Theoretical foundations for addressing the dual gaps in competency cultivation and classroom training

The RQ 1 investigates the theoretical mechanisms through which TED and TI can enhance job-seeking attitudes and optimize classroom training in native-language PSC education. To address the identified gaps in competency development and classroom management, this study integrates two theoretical models: Graduate Attributes for Employability (GA-EM; Bridgstock, 2009) and Core Components of Education 4.0 in Higher Education (CCEdu4.0-HE; Miranda et al., 2021).

3.1.1.1. Rationale for GA-EM. GA-EM (Bridgstock, 2009) aligns seamlessly with PSC due to their shared conceptual features. Although GA-EM emphasizes five dimensions (generic skills, discipline-specific skills, self-management skills, career-building skills, and underlying traits), graduates often struggle to translate academic knowledge into employability without fostering self-management skills, career-building skills, and positive traits. These employability attributes can be cultivated through PSC training.

- a. Self-management and Speech Preparation: Career self-management involves the objective assessment of personal competencies, values, and goals (Bridgstock, 2009). Specifically, preparing speeches requires evaluating content accuracy and relevance, deepening discipline/industry

knowledge, and developing self-reflection for employment (Easterly et al., 2017; King, 2004; Vogt & Colvin, 2005).

- b. Career building and public expression: Career building emphasizes showcasing personal strengths to attract employers (Bridgstock, 2009). Self-promotion in public expression, particularly during job interviews, directly supports this skill (Alkooheji & Al-Hittami, 2021; Chen et al., 2023).
- c. Underlying Traits and Public Speaking Anxiety (PSA): Positive traits, such as confidence, mitigate PSA, which often stems from fear of public criticism. PSC training helps students to regulate anxiety and build resilience (Balakrishnan et al., 2022; Chiaburu et al., 2006; Grieve et al., 2021; Snowden & Lond, 1939).
- d. Discipline-Specific vs. Generic Skills: Vocational students prioritize discipline-specific skills but lack time to develop generic skills (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2022a, 2022b; Sánchez-Queija et al., 2023). PSC is proposed as a representative generic skill because of its direct relevance to employability (Bridgstock et al., 2019; Bridgstock & Jackson, 2019; Clokie & Fourie, 2016).
- e. Job search self-efficacy (JE-SE): Although direct evidence linking PSC to JE-SE is lacking, this study hypothesizes JE-SE as a core goal, given the established correlation between PSA and job-seeking stress (Arnold, 2018, p. 76; Saks et al., 2015; Saks & Ashforth, 1999).

3.1.1.2. Rationale for CCedu4.0-HE. CCedu4.0-HE (Miranda et al., 2021) addresses contemporary educational challenges, including equity and technology integration. The four components of the model guide the design of the PSC training pedagogy as follows:

- a. Competency dimension: Develops integrated “skills and psychological traits” competency goals tailored to realistic educational needs.
- b. ICT: Facilitates blended learning through the asynchronous delivery of resources.
- c. Learning Method: Various training strategies are integrated to synchronize operations.
- d. Infrastructure: Aside from investing in facilities, effective management in high-density classrooms is challenging.

3.1.1.3. Integration strategy. GA-EM provides intervention conditions (self-management, career-building, traits) for employability-aligned PSC, whereas CCedu4.0-HE offers techniques (competencies, ICT, methods, infrastructure) for training PSC to operationalize these conditions. TED-TI acts as a pusher for both. This progression from instructional strategies to competency development presents a theoretical framework (see Figure 1) for employment-oriented PSC education in high-density classrooms. It is consistent with ADDIE’s “Design to Development” sequence, which translates Phase A insights into actionable strategies.

3.1.2. Integrating TED and TI pedagogies into the theoretical framework for employability-aligned PSC training

Utilizing a theoretical framework (see Figure 1), we present TED-TI solutions to the PSC’s educational requirements and the effective practices of TED and TI. Regarding how PSC promotes employability (denoted as “PSC→EM” in Figure 1), we reference the GA-EM model, which encompasses generic skills, discipline-specific skills, self-management skills, career-building skills, and underlying traits. In this context, PSC is considered a generic skill, with tertiary vocational students representing discipline-specific skills (the bottom area of Figure 1). The remaining three components are fundamental. In contrast to previous approaches that have independently developed each element, we propose integrating them through authentic assessment activities conducted by the PSC in three critical stages (the far left and right sides of Figure 1; (Jackson et al., 2022; Jackson & Bridgstock, 2021; Ng et al., 2022):

- a. Career self-management skills: Structuring speech content during preparation facilitates objective self-reflection in specific disciplines, workplaces, and job acquisitions. TED speakers, as subject-matter experts, provide reliable and up-to-date domain knowledge, whereas TI’s structured evaluation protocols systematically guide learners to analyze speech content and delivery methods.

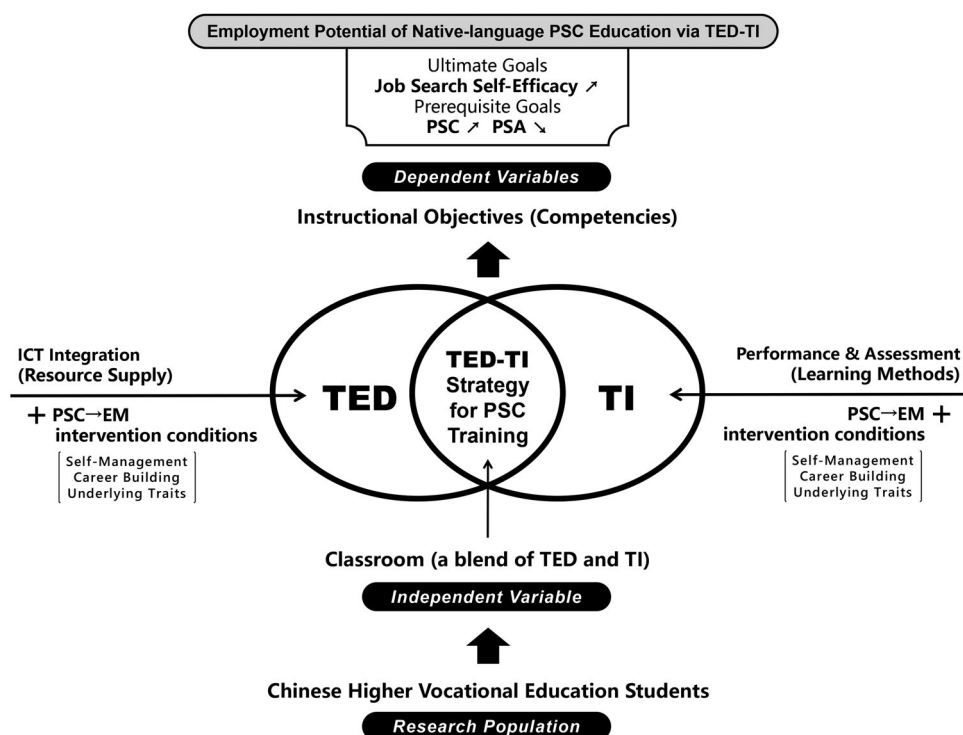


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework for TED-TI Classroom Instructional Strategy.

- Career-building skills: Mastering messaging techniques during public expression effectively markets one's insights and strengths and attracts potential employers. TI's simulated interview environments and intensive role-playing drills offer authentic opportunities, while TED's case studies on persuasive communication and interview strategies provide real-world models for emulation.
- Underlying traits: Developing confidence in public settings (e.g., job interviews) assists individuals in overcoming excessive self-consciousness. TI's desensitization training through repeated performance reduces PSA, while TED's motivational narratives enhance cognitive understanding of confidence-building strategies. The synergy between TI's supportive community and TED's inspirational resources amplifies their effects, creating a comprehensive framework for alleviating anxiety.

The aforementioned elements constitute the intervention conditions for "PSC→EM." These intervention conditions were implemented through the PSC classroom training. To maintain the integrity of the teaching methodological framework, we incorporate the CCEdu4.0-HE framework by Miranda et al. (2021) and integrate valuable teaching practices from TED and TI (middle area of Figure 1).

- In the "competencies" section, competency goals should align with current educational contexts. In addition to PSC and PSA, Bridgstock's (2009) job search self-efficacy was included as a PSC training goal for the TED-TI.
- ICT: Real-time, open-access video resources aligned with the "PSC→EM" goals were curated using the TED platform, enabling asynchronous learning.
- Learning Methods: TI's philosophy of "learning by doing" and "everyone's involvement" is realized through group meeting management scripts that integrate performance and assessment activities. This creates a simulated, synchronized, and collaborative training environment, providing ample practice opportunities and ensuring that the "PSC→EM" intervention conditions systematically influences the individual outcomes.
- In the "classroom" section, it is essential to integrate local educational conditions and present a design challenge for TED-TI by merging TED and TI with local education classrooms.

Institution X represents the top-tier higher vocational education in China by focusing on vocational and technical majors. However, native-language PSC is neither mandatory nor offered as a standalone course. It is taught in large classes (40+ students) for 90 minutes weekly. Additional training is available only through extracurricular activities organized by the institution's speech club.

3.2. Design stage (for RQ 2)

3.2.1. TED design decisions: Serving as an ICT platform to provide resources for the flipped classroom

Step 1: Pre-class preparatory guidance

Prior to formal instruction, the instructor recommended TED videos with Chinese subtitles or Mandarin versions for students to view asynchronously. Corresponding "Thinking Tasks" were assigned to facilitate self-directed learning outside the class to understand the content in advance.

Step 2: Learning progress monitoring

During asynchronous learning, the instructor monitored students' progress and solicits feedback regarding learning challenges.

Step 3: Question compilation and categorization

Teachers collect student feedback on Thinking Tasks, focusing on questions or interests, to prioritize instruction.

Step 4: Targeted classroom elucidation

Leveraging TED's multimodality, instructors can efficiently interpret complex concepts challenging for students (Bernad-Mechó & Valeiras-Jurado, 2023), using only half of the allocated class time.

3.2.2. TI design decisions: Simulated group meeting-style training that integrates performance and evaluation

In the latter portion of the course, students participated in practical training exercises. Instructors utilized TI to establish group-meeting protocols, ensure equitable training opportunities, and provide comprehensive evaluations across competency dimensions. This approach incorporates several widely adopted pedagogical methods.

3.2.2.1. Dual role-playing and rotation. Students concurrently assume the roles of speakers and feedback providers in the same context (Yu-Chih, 2008). As speakers, they deliver prepared orations on job interview topics. As feedback providers (hereinafter referred to as rapporteurs), they manage meeting logistics or conduct peer evaluations and feedback (Shadinger, 2016). Rapporteur responsibilities rotated each session to allow students to experience different feedback roles, while speaker roles remained constant.

3.2.2.2. Modeling of peer evaluation and immediate feedback. Instructing large classes presents challenges for educators to promptly evaluate and provide feedback to each student, necessitating reliance on peer assessment. During students' presentations, peers simultaneously evaluate and provide instant feedback. However, limited knowledge and cognitive abilities impede professional evaluations. This study addresses this limitation by incorporating two key features into the design: assigning different dimension evaluation tasks to each group member for comprehensive assessment and providing clear criteria, including evaluation tables with filling and scoring columns, to assist evaluators in organizing content and providing clear feedback (Darouk et al., 2022; Janesarvatan & Asoodar, 2024, p. 399).

3.2.2.3. Student-centered self-organized Meeting script. To ensure smooth dual-role operations and evaluation-feedback modeling, we referred to the TI meeting mechanism and designed a classroom management script to regulate group meetings (Buquiran, 2014; Petrusch, 2002; Wolff et al., 2021). This autonomy allows groups to function without constant instructor intervention, enabling simultaneous activities and accommodating more students. The ideal state approximates a self-organizing community (see Figure 2), with the instructor as the central entity and the learning groups as satellites. Self-organized learning within groups mirrors planetary rotation, relying on the instructor's script, analogous to planets revolving around the sun, and guides groups to complete tasks within the allocated time.

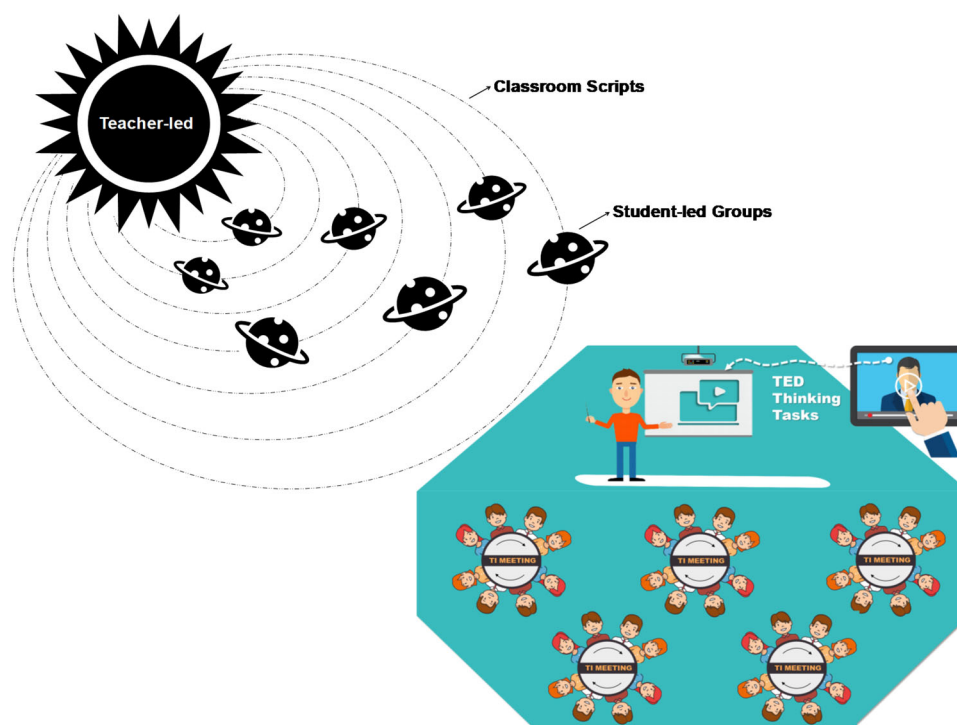


Figure 2. TI- Self-organized Learning and TED-TI Classroom Layout.

This pedagogical approach advocates the concept of universal leadership; consequently (Kireeti, 2025), the classroom is deliberately configured with numerous banquet-style tables.

3.2.2.3.1. Meeting roles. A panel of eight persons, each acting as a speaker and rapporteur, was established. The rapporteurs included a moderator, timekeeper, ah-counter, grammarian (Topic Fit), and four general evaluators. Under the instructor's guidance, the moderator oversees the meeting to ensure adherence to the agenda. The timekeeper manages the speaking duration for each agenda item. The ah-counter tracks repetitive filler words such as "and," "like," "um," and "uh." Grammarian (topic fit) identifies unclear speech topics or inappropriate semantic expressions. General evaluators assess various aspects of the speech performance. An eight-person group was selected for three reasons: in large classes (over 40 students), smaller groups create an impractical number of groups for the instructor to manage; a group of eight allows for manageable peer assessment tasks for students; and groups larger than eight pose management challenges for student moderators.

3.2.2.3.2. Meeting agenda. The agenda ensured equitable opportunities for all participants to deliver presentations, receive feedback, and undergo evaluations. The moderator orchestrated the meeting. The proceedings were structured as follows: After every four presentations, the timekeeper, ah-counter, and grammarian provided feedback. Upon completion of all presentations, four general evaluators comprehensively assessed the eight speakers. Within a 45-minute time constraint, each speaker is allocated 180 seconds, and each rapporteur (excluding the moderator) is allotted 90 seconds.

As illustrated in Table 1, the initial four speakers required 12 minutes (3 minutes each), with 4.5 minutes designated for rapporteur feedback (1.5 minutes each). Four subsequent presentations were followed, accompanied by corresponding feedback. Finally, the evaluators provided comprehensive feedback on all speakers, utilizing six minutes (1.5 minutes each). The entire session was completed within 45 minutes, conforming to the standard class duration in Chinese vocational educational institutions, thus allowing 45 minutes for TED knowledge dissemination.

3.3. Development stage (for RQ 2)

The mission was to integrate the "PSC→EM" intervention conditions into the TED-TI design outcomes and further develop them into TED-TI instructional materials.

Table 1. TI agenda and speaking time for roles.

Meeting agenda	Duration	Total length
1. The moderator introduces all members, particularly the Rapporteurs they are portraying and opens the meeting and opens the meeting.	4 min/person	4 min.
2. Speakers #1 - #4 in turn on stage.	3 min/person	12 min.
3. Timekeeper, Ah-counter, and Grammarian give feedback in turn.	1.5 min/person	4.5 min.
4. Speakers #5 - #8 in turn on stage.	3 min/person.	12 min.
5. Timekeeper, Ah-counter, and Grammarian give feedback in turn.	1.5 min/person	4.5 min.
6. General feedback from the four Evaluators.	1.5 min/person	6 min.
7. The moderator organizes a vote, and the person with the most votes is selected as the "Star of Speech."	2 min/person	2 min.
Total		45 min.

Table 2. Summary of Mandarin "PSC→EM" course syllabus.

Unit	Public speaking competency (PSC)	Job interview topics (JST)
1	PSC 1 - Uses pronunciation, grammar, and articulation appropriate to the audience and occasion	JST 1 - Start the interview by introducing yourself as a job seeker.
2	PSC 2 - Uses physical behaviors that support the verbal message	JST 2 - What motivates you in your job search?
3	PSC 3 - Uses vocal variety in rate, pitch, and intensity (volume) to heighten and maintain interest appropriate to the audience and occasion	JST 3 - What are your abilities? What can you do?
4	PSC 4 - Provide supporting material (including electronic and non-electronic presentational aids) appropriate for the audience and occasion	JST 4 - What do you think about our company? How do you see this position in this department?
5	PSC 5 - Uses language appropriate to the audience and occasion	JST 5 - What is the salary you are asking for?
6	PSC 6 - Chooses and narrows a topic appropriately for the audience and occasion	JST 6 - What kind of leader do you like?
	PSC 7 - Communicates the thesis/specific purpose in a manner appropriate for the audience and occasion	
7	PSC 8 - Uses an organizational pattern appropriate to the topic, audience, occasion, and purpose	JST 7 - If you are hired, how do you plan to do the job?
8	Ibid.	JST 8 - Why have you not found a job after so long?

Note: PSC dimensions 6 and 7 can be consolidated into a single unit, whereas PSC 8 requires an additional unit for instruction.

3.3.1. Preparation: "PSC→EM" course syllabus

As previously noted, no standalone Mandarin PSC courses exist in the Chinese higher vocational education system. Consequently, preparatory work was necessary to establish such a course before developing TED-TI instructional materials. We adapted "实用口语" (Practical Spoken Language) from Yan (2005), the only published textbook on vocational education in Guangdong Province. This textbook comprises multiple modules, including recitation and debate, with PSC constituting a minor component. We extracted the PSC content, introduced internationally recognized PSC standards, and restructured the syllabus. Following the eight dimensions delineated by the National Communication Association (NCA, from the U.S.)'s "Competent Speaker Speech Evaluation Form" (Morreale et al., 2007), we established eight corresponding modules. Furthermore, the "Job Interview" unit in Practical Spoken Language is emphasized. This unit includes eight common job-interview questions. These questions serve as authentic assessment tasks completed via prepared speech delivery. This method promotes self-reflection during job-seeking preparation and enhances self-promotion skills during the public expression in interviews. Table 2 summarizes the "PSC→EM" course syllabus.

3.3.2. TED-TI textbooks

The TED-TI textbooks comprise two sections: TED Thinking Taskbook and TI Meeting-style Training Booklet. Initially composed in English, they were translated into Chinese for local use. TED cases are used for classroom introduction purposes only, with their original content kept intact and unmodified, adhering to the Creative Commons license for noncommercial use. TI resources are used in compliance with their copyright and disclaimer requirements. Both materials were typeset using WPS Office software developed by Kingsoft Corporation.

3.3.2.1. TED thinking taskbook. TED video cases are utilized to implement content- and language-integrated learning (Dinham, 2024), which assist educators in elucidating specific PSC dimension concepts, thereby facilitating student access and emulation. The cases correspond to students' assignments

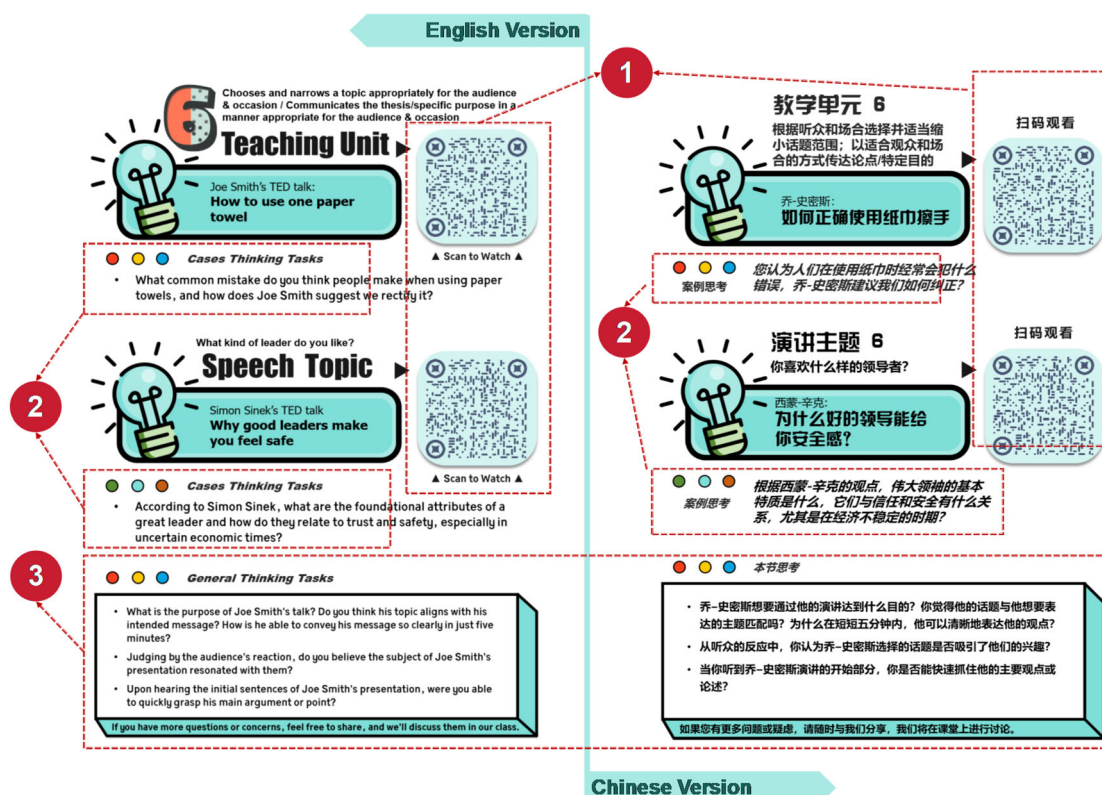


Figure 3. Layout process for TED thinking taskbook.

in each class, with topics focusing on job interview speeches, thus providing valuable insights. Furthermore, they incorporate a speaker's personal narrative, which contributes to the enhancement of positive attributes such as self-confidence (Morton et al., 2024). All these cases are converted into QR codes and incorporated into the TED Thinking TaskBook (see Figure 3, Region 1).

Additionally, thinking tasks were developed around the selected TED cases, adapting them into a flipped classroom that aligns with instructional objectives (Sohrabi & Iraj, 2016). We divided thinking tasks into case reflections and general reflections. The case thinking task (see Table 3 and Region 2 of Figure 3) does not directly pose questions related to teaching objectives but guides learners through the case speaker's experience, gradually leading to relevant questions. This approach inspires learners and reduces their mental cognitive load. Students are usually required to answer these questions before class, enabling teachers to gauge their understanding and adjust their subsequent teaching methods accordingly.

The "general thinking tasks" (Region 3 of Figure 3) assist learners in focusing on the key aspects of PSC instruction in this unit, encouraging them to identify and address confusing points. This process helps educators recognize difficulties during pre-class preparation and effectively address them during instruction. For example, in Unit 6, based on the recommended case, students were prompted: "What is the purpose of Joe Smith's talk? Do you think that his topic aligns with his intended message? How is he able to convey his message so clearly in just five minutes?" Students are encouraged to respond to questions before class, enabling educators to assess their comprehension and adjust their pedagogies accordingly.

3.3.2.2. TI meeting-style training booklet. The TI Meeting-style Training Booklet differs from TED materials in its content organization by emphasizing equitable and autonomous training for students in a simulated environment through structured learning procedures. It delineates the meeting process and role responsibilities, and ensures standardized implementation across classes.

The Moderator and Timekeeper are responsible for maintaining the meeting order. The moderator manages the meeting flow and the timer manages the duration of each agenda item. The moderator's

Table 3. Case thinking tasks for PSC and JST.

Unit	PSC thinking task	JST thinking task
1	How does Eva Burbo view grammatical and accent mistakes in speeches, and what methods does she propose to alleviate the anxiety caused by these errors?	Rizzotto has introduced three strategies for interview preparation aimed at impressing employers. How are these three strategies interrelated, and how can they make our self-introductions more impactful?
2	Why does Amy Cuddy believe that a few minutes of “power posing” can change our lives?	How to use your unique personal story effectively to express why you desire a job and emphasize your distinct strengths?
3	How does Julian Treasure suggest that our daily exposure to noise impacts our mental health, and what are some steps he recommends for restoring our relationship with sound?	Why does Regina Hartley believe that candidates who have faced adversity (“Scrappers”) might be better hires than those with perfect resumes, and what qualities do “Scrappers” bring to an ever-changing workplace?
4	Why is an effective presentation so crucial for conveying information and capturing the audience’s attention? In your opinion, what elements or strategies can make a PPT presentation more appealing?	Why does Vincent stress the need for comprehensive knowledge about a profession before diving into it, and how can this approach impact an individual’s career satisfaction in the long run?
5	What are some techniques Julian Treasure suggests for enhancing the effectiveness of our speech and ensuring we’re truly heard?	Why does David Burkus believe that salary transparency is beneficial, and how can it challenge or change traditional workplace norms and practices?
6	What common mistake do you think people make when using paper towels, and how does Joe Smith suggest we rectify it?	According to Simon Sinek, what are the foundational attributes of a great leader, and how do they relate to trust and safety, especially in uncertain economic times?
7	Based on Sy Duan Lee’s life stories, how does he perceive the unpredictable twists and challenges in life? What attitude does he suggest we adopt when facing these twists and challenges?	How does Sarah Lewis view events that are “near failures” and “almost successes”? What role do these events play in the pursuit of success and excellence?
8	Tim Urban delved into the topic of procrastination, pointing out that many people, like him, begin with a plan but end up procrastinating. Do you think Tim Urban’s approach of challenging a widely accepted notion right at the beginning is a good way to start a talk?	How do you view a curved career trajectory in comparison to the traditional linear career ladder? In the current social and economic environment, which career development path do you think is more relevant? Why?

script, based on Table 1’s meeting agenda, outlines the dialogue content for classroom management and specific phrases for each agenda item, leaving blanks for speakers’ names and estimated durations (see Figure 4); It also accounts for contingencies: if a panelist is in the midst of a presentation and thus unable to perform a peer assessment task, the Moderator assumes this responsibility.

Various roles undertake specific tasks and responsibilities. Except for the Moderator, all other roles involve peer assessment. The four General Evaluators assess “PSC Dimensions 4 and 6–7,” “PSC 8,” “PSC 1, 3, and 5,” and “PSC 2,” respectively (see Table 2). Additionally, the Timekeeper, Ah-Counter, and Grammarian share some assessment duties with Evaluators 1 and 3. Specially designed assessment sheets assist evaluators in providing immediate and organized feedback, ensuring consistency and enhancing feedback accuracy and utility. After all speakers have concluded, General Evaluators standardize skill level interpretations (Figure 5a).

Figure 5b’s assessment sheets for the Timekeeper, Ah-Counter, and Grammarian include standardized columns for recording observations, facilitating detailed record-keeping.

3.4. Implementation and evaluation stage (for RQ 3)

3.4.1. Expert validity

Usability of the TED-TI in the classroom (see Appendix A): The implementation of this blended teaching model in the classroom was demonstrated and subsequently verified by three subject-matter experts and two field experts. The Percentage Calculation Method (PCM) yielded a result of 94.44% with a validity coefficient of 0.94, both exceeding the 70% threshold. This finding indicates that the integration of TED and TI in classroom teaching results in high content validity and substantial expert support. Experts 3 and 4 recommended enhancing teachers’ professional competence in classroom management.

Suitability of the TED-TI materials for each unit: To ensure alignment with the PSC→EM instructional objectives for each unit in Table 2, three professional experts and two field experts evaluated the textbooks. The PCM result was 93.88% with a coefficient of 0.94, suggesting that TED-TI aligned effectively with the course objectives. Experts have proposed several improvements in this regard. Expert 1 recommended reducing the number of TED cases to mitigate cognitive overload. Expert 2 emphasized

Time (min:sec)		Agenda	Duration		Speaker
From	To		≥	≤	
00:00	01:00	Today is the ____th TI meeting, and I am your Moderator, _____. The main topic for speeches in this meeting is _____.	-	1	_____
01:00	02:00	For those in attendance who are both speakers and assessment officers, the order from Speaker 1 to 8 is as follows: Moderator, Timekeeper, Ah-counter, Grammarian, Evaluator 1, 2, 3, 4. If they are unable to perform their assessment tasks, I will step in to fill the role.	-	1	_____
02:00	04:00	We now move on to the prepared speech section. Each speaker has 3 minutes. The Timekeeper will display a green, yellow, and red card at 60 seconds, 120 seconds, and 180 seconds respectively to monitor your time. If you exceed the time limit, a bell will ring to forcefully conclude your speech.	1	2	_____
Prepared Speech Session (1st to 4th speakers)					
04:00	07:00	I am Speaker 1.	1	3	_____
07:00	10:00	Next, please welcome Speaker 2, _____. A round of applause, please.	1	3	_____
10:00	13:00	Now, let's welcome Speaker 3, _____. Please give a warm applause	1	3	_____
13:00	16:00	Finally, up next is Speaker 4, _____. A round of applause, please.	1	3	_____
Assessment Report Session (Timekeeper, Ah-counter & Grammarian)					
16:00	17:30	Next, we have three reporters to provide feedback on the performance of Speakers 1 to 4. You have 90 seconds each, with green, yellow, and red cards shown at 60, 80, and 90 seconds respectively. Let's welcome the Timeer first, _____. A round of applause, please.	-	1.5	_____
17:30	19:00	Up next, please welcome the Ah-counter, _____. A round of applause, please.	-	1.5	_____
19:00	20:30	Finally, let's welcome the Grammarian, _____. Please give a warm applause.	-	1.5	_____
Prepared Speech Session (5th to 8th speakers)					
20:30	23:30	We now return to the prepared speech section. Please welcome Speaker 5, _____. A round of applause, please.	1	3	_____
23:30	26:30	Up next, let's welcome Speaker 6, _____. Please give a warm applause.	1	3	_____
26:30	29:30	Following that, let's hear it for Speaker 7, _____. A round of applause, please.	1	3	_____
29:30	32:30	And finally, please welcome Speaker 8, _____. Let's give a hearty round of applause.	1	3	_____
Assessment Report Session (Timekeeper, Ah-counter & Grammarian)					
32:30	34:00	Next, we will have three Rapporteurs providing feedback on the performances of Speakers 5 to 8. Let's welcome the Timekeeper, _____. A round of applause, please.	-	1.5	_____
34:00	35:30	Up next, please welcome the Ah-counter, _____. A round of applause, plea	-	1.5	_____
35:30	37:00	Finally, let's welcome the Grammarian, _____. Please give a warm applause.	-	1.5	_____
Assessment Report Session (Evaluators)					
37:00	38:30	Next, we will have four Evaluators reporting on the performances of all speakers. You also have 90 seconds each. Let's welcome Evaluator 1, _____. A round of applause, please.	-	1.5	_____
38:30	40:00	Up next, please welcome Evaluator 2, _____. Please give a warm applause.	-	1.5	_____
40:00	41:30	Following that, let's hear from Evaluator 3, _____. A round of applause, please.	-	1.5	_____
41:30	43:00	And finally, please welcome Evaluator 4, _____. Let's give a hearty round of applause.	-	1.5	_____

Figure 4. TI meeting moderator's scripts (partial display only).

the need to enhance resource accessibility and feedback mechanisms. Expert 4 suggested modifying the page color of the TED Thinking Task Book to reduce visual fatigue. Consequently, the following adjustments were made to the TED section: two cases per class were selected, aligning with PSC and JST goals; a pre-class spreadsheet was designed for students' questions, facilitating submission and aggregation; and distinct colors were used for each unit.

Accuracy of the Chinese Translation (see [Appendix B](#)): Three experts, comprising one language expert and two field experts familiar with Chinese vocational students and oral teaching, assessed the Chinese versions of TED-TI textbooks. The PCM result was 90.67%, with a coefficient of 0.91, surpassing

Evaluation Projects		Speakers No. (other than myself)						
Competency	Level Description	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[1]	<i>The speaker's choice of topic is</i>							
Chooses and narrows a topic appropriately for the audience & occasion	[Excellent] clearly consistent with the purpose, is totally amenable to the time limitations of the speech, and reflects unusually insightful audience analysis.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	[Satisfactory] generally consistent with the purpose, is a reasonable choice for the time limitations of the speech, and reflects appropriate analysis of a majority of the audience.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	[Unsatisfactory] inconsistent with the purpose, the topic cannot be adequately treated in the time limitations of the speech, and there is little or no evidence of successful audience analysis.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Since you may not be able to assess during the presentation, kindly delegate the evaluation task to the Toastmaster.								

English Translate Chinese

评估项目		演讲者发言顺序 (本人除外)						
能力	等级说明	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
[1]	<i>演讲者选择的主题</i>							
根据听众和场合选择并适当缩小话题范围	[出色] 显然与演讲目的相一致, 完全符合演讲的时间限制, 并体现了对听众的独到分析。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	[满意] 基本符合演讲目的, 是在演讲时间有限的情况下做出的合理选择, 并反映了对大多数听众的适当分析。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	[不恰当] 与演讲目的不符, 在演讲时间有限的情况下无法充分论述该主题, 几乎或根本没有成功分析听众的证据。	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
考虑到您可能无法在演讲过程中完成评估任务, 请将其提交给主持人代为评估。								

Figure 5. a. Assessment Sheets (partial display of general evaluators).

Note: Adapted and translated from NCA (Morreale et al., 2007).

Speaker	Types of Frequent Endings or Superfluous Words (Please tick the appropriate box)			
_____	☐ -um	☐ -uh	☐ -you know	☐ -like
_____	☐ -well	☐ -so	☐ -basically	☐ -actually
_____	☐ -kind of	☐ -you see	☐ -I mean	☐ -other _____
_____	☐ -um	☐ -uh	☐ -you know	☐ -like
_____	☐ -well	☐ -so	☐ -basically	☐ -actually
_____	☐ -kind of	☐ -you see	☐ -I mean	☐ -other _____
_____	☐ -um	☐ -uh	☐ -you know	☐ -like
_____	☐ -well	☐ -so	☐ -basically	☐ -actually
_____	☐ -kind of	☐ -you see	☐ -I mean	☐ -other _____

English Translate Chinese

演讲者	频繁出现尾音或赘词的类型 (请在对应处填“√”)			
_____	☐ -啦	☐ -啊	☐ -嗯	☐ -哦
_____	☐ -呀	☐ -然后	☐ -就是说	☐ -这个/那个
_____	☐ -所以说	☐ -我觉得	☐ -也就是说	☐ -其他 _____
_____	☐ -啦	☐ -啊	☐ -嗯	☐ -哦
_____	☐ -呀	☐ -然后	☐ -就是说	☐ -这个/那个
_____	☐ -所以说	☐ -我觉得	☐ -也就是说	☐ -其他 _____
_____	☐ -啦	☐ -啊	☐ -嗯	☐ -哦
_____	☐ -呀	☐ -然后	☐ -就是说	☐ -这个/那个
_____	☐ -所以说	☐ -我觉得	☐ -也就是说	☐ -其他 _____

Figure 5. b. Assessment Sheets (partial display of Ah-Counter).

Note: Consider Ah-counter as an example only.

the 70% standard. Nevertheless, certain TED speech titles require optimization. For instance, Unit 4's title "How to Avoid Death by PowerPoint" was modified to "The Ultimate Guide to Avoiding PowerPoint Failures (如何避免 PowerPoint 失败的终极指南)" to eliminate inappropriate expressions; and Unit 6's "How to use one paper towel" was refined to "How to Properly Dry Your Hands with a Paper Towel



Figure 6. TED-TI pilot lesson scene.

(如何正确使用纸巾擦手)” to enhance readability. Additionally, the PSC goal in Unit 2, “Uses physical behaviors that support the verbal message,” was accurately adjusted to “Use body language to assist in message delivery (使用肢体语言辅助信息传递)” to ensure proper Chinese terminology.

3.4.2. Pilot students

A pilot study was conducted between February and April 2024. After eight sessions, students assessed their confidence level in achieving the objectives of each unit. A Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.91 indicated acceptable reliability and showed high consistency in students’ opinions. TED-TI Classroom scenes were recorded (see Figure 6), and the videos are available at <https://bit.ly/4g74XRT> or <https://bit.ly/42yi3DV>.

Feedback indicated that the students were generally receptive to the TED case videos and thinking tasks. They freely discussed the topics of interest and sought advice from teachers when encountering learning difficulties and receiving timely in-class responses. Students adapted to the TI group meeting process, completing performance and evaluation tasks on time. Most students felt that TED facilitated knowledge absorption, whereas TI offered ample opportunities for practice and feedback.

At the start of the course, a few students found it challenging to maintain rhythm when playing roles in the TI group. They noted difficulties in adapting due to the need to learn new roles in each class and to play each role only once. To address this issue, pre-class role-orientation training was introduced before the third class, which significantly improved the situation. For future course rollouts, a TI drill should be included in the introductory class to ensure that students engage in autonomous learning according to the TI process. These guiding measures will help students familiarize themselves with the role process and prevent classroom disorder.

4. Opportunities ahead

This research pioneers the integration of TED and TI, expanding their application from English language acquisition to native language education and employment promotion. As this was a descriptive study, further steps are necessary.

Following internal validation, external validation of TED-TI should be conducted using standard DDR procedures such as controlled testing and field evaluation. Comparative experiments should gather summative evaluation data to assess pedagogical usability and learning efficacy (Richey, 2005). Feedback from classroom observations and clinical interviews can inform revisions of TED-TI.

Following the successful adaptation of TED and TI to Mandarin mother tongue speech materials, research can be extended to other mother tongue domains. It is imperative to draw upon exemplary language-teaching practices while adapting to local community cultures to maximize the cross-cultural communication benefits of TED-TI (Cavalcante et al., 2024). Systematic and rigorous design studies utilizing the ADDIE model should be conducted to ensure reliability and enhance educators’ instructional design capacity through professional development (Nalbantoğlu & Bümen, 2025).

Verifying that native PSC education improves confidence in job search through employment interventions opens up a novel interdisciplinary orientation in content- and language-integrated learning methods (Zheng et al., 2025b). Future efforts should refine the interaction between PSC and career management skills, aligning native language PSC education with local labor markets to benefit graduates (Neroorkar, 2022).

In large classes with constrained schedules, the TED-TI supports a blended teaching method that ensures equitable access to education. This is particularly instructive for densely populated developing countries, such as Bangladesh (Hwang & Lim, 2024). Existing TED resources can support asynchronous self-directed learning tailored to student needs. Group cooperative learning models suitable for local classrooms can be designed using TI scripts. This necessitates enhancing teacher professionalism and customization through training (Wolff et al., 2021).

5. Conclusion

This study elucidates the instructional design process for implementing local mother-tongue PSC education in high-density resource-scarce classes to enhance graduates' employability. Through the integration of international language education platforms, such as TED Talks and Toastmasters International, we developed an innovative TED-TI classroom strategy. Using the ADDIE methodological model, motivation was clarified in the analysis stage, a TED-TI teaching model was formulated in the design stage, mother-tongue PSC and employment elements were incorporated into specialized materials during the development stage, and DDR internal verification was conducted in the implementation and evaluation stages to optimize the TED-TI.

The outcome of the TED-TI pilot underscores future opportunities for mother-tongue PSC education: scaling TED-TI to larger scenarios, developing PSC materials for languages other than Mandarin, investigating mechanisms to enhance employment fit in local markets, and supporting nations with scarce educational resources to ensure educational equality.

Note

TED Thinking TaskBook

(English version): <https://flbook.com.cn/c/8EdbtRl9rm>

(Chinese version): <https://flbook.com.cn/c/fSJpXXFL9z>

TI Meeting-style Training Booklet

(English version): <https://flbook.com.cn/c/Vnnh8xKJyB>

(Chinese version): <https://flbook.com.cn/c/sAN2hN1fvk>

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Ethics approval and consent to participate

Ethics approval for this educational research study was obtained from the Ethics Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects of Universiti Putra Malaysia on January 29, 2024 (Approval number: UPM.TNCPI.800-2/1/7). Given that the study involved higher vocational education students, all participants were informed about the nature, purpose, potential impacts, and benefits of integrating the TED-TI instructional strategy into their native language public speaking courses. Written informed consent was obtained from each student before participation. The process adhered to ethical guidelines for educational research, ensuring that students' rights, privacy, and well-being were protected.

Consent for publication

All authors of this research article have provided explicit consent for the publication of this manuscript. As the study focused on instructional design and did not involve personal or identifiable information of individual students in a way that could lead to their identification, no additional consent for publication from students was required. However, if any unforeseen identifiable information were inadvertently included, appropriate consent procedures would be followed.

Authors' contributions

Xiaojian Zheng: Proposed the idea of integrating TED-TI into local higher vocational education to address classroom management and employment-related issues. Conducted all stages of the ADDIE design model, with a particular emphasis on the development of auxiliary textbooks, namely the TED Thinking Taskbook and TI Meeting training booklet. Additionally, took the lead in drafting the initial version of the manuscript.

Mohd Hazwan Mohd Puad: Conducted the analysis stage of the ADDIE design model, clarifying the design motivation. In the design stage, designed the TED-TI classroom teaching model. Actively participated in revising the manuscript, contributing to the theoretical and practical significance of the paper.

Habibah Ab. Jalil: Performed quality control over the entire design process. Provided content for the sections of the manuscript related to the challenges and opportunities of native-language public speaking education in high-density classrooms. Moreover, was responsible for ensuring the overall quality of the manuscript, making sure it was scientifically rigorous, logically coherent, and readable.

Wei Wang: During the development stage, he assisted in integrating native-language public speaking and employment elements, and provided quality control on the applicability of the materials to a Mandarin-speaking environment. Participated in the implementation and evaluation stages, providing profound insights for the internal design validation of TED-TI.

All authors have reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

About the authors

Xiaojian Zheng: is a Ph.D. Candidate at the Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, with a research focus on Employability Training, Mother Tongue (Chinese) Speech Competency Development, and Instructional Design. Currently, he serves at Shenzhen University of Information Technology (formerly Shenzhen Institute of Information Technology)—and holds two key professional credentials: National Senior Speech Trainer and Global Career Counselor.

Mohd Hazwan Mohd Puad: Senior Lecturer, Ph.D., Head of Department of Science and Technical Education, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, specializing in Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Technology.

Habibah Ab. Jalil: Associate Professor, Ph.D., Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, specializes in ICT in Education, Online Learning and Instruction, Future Education, and Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

Wei Wang: Associate Professor, Ph.D., Department of Business English, Faculty of Business School, Xi'an International Studies University, specializing in the field of language teaching and business English translation.

ORCID

Xiaojian Zheng  <http://orcid.org/0009-0002-8953-7164>

Mohd Hazwan Mohd Puad  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1527-9174>

Habibah Ab. Jalil  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4242-746X>

Wei Wang  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9053-2128>

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Appendix

Appendix A: TED-TI usability in the classroom

Descriptions	Scales (from disagreement to agreement)									
1. If TED Talk is viewed as a classroom entry behavior integrating ICT, it can be utilized in asynchronous teaching spaces similar to the flipped classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. Toastmasters International (TI) can be used as a student performance assessment pattern in the classroom, especially the role assignment and rotation of TI peer evaluations are feasible.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3. TI's group meeting agenda is a viable strategy for redesigning classroom time allocation and spatial layout.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4. Merging the learning methods of TED and TI (TED-TI) can result in a complete procedure for implementing a blended instruction model.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5. TED-TI can be used in higher vocational education and training, especially for students obtaining diplomas rather than degrees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6. TED-TI can be used as generic skills training tailored to develop employability attributes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7. TED-TI can enhance students' job-seeking self-efficacy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8. TED-TI helps students noticeably perceive improvement in their public speaking skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9. TED-TI alleviates students' anxiety towards public speaking.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Appendix B: Accuracy of translating TED-TI

Descriptions	Scales (from disagreement to agreement)									
1. Semantic Accuracy: The translation effectively conveys the core essence of the original text.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. Contextual Appropriateness: The translation thoroughly considers differences in cultural and educational backgrounds.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3. Terminological Accuracy: Ensures that terms related to the profession or discipline are translated aptly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4. Readability: The translated text is fluid to read and easily comprehensible.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5. Neutrality: The translation steers clear of any offensive or discriminatory expressions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10