

Exploring the Practical Application of Micro-Lectures in Junior High School English Teaching

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Abstract

Amid the implementation of China's "Double Reduction" policy and the rapid advancement of educational informatization, classroom instruction is undergoing a significant transformation. As a novel instructional resource, micro-lectures have gained increasing prominence in junior high school English education due to their conciseness, clarity, multimedia integration, and flexible utility. This paper analyzes the defining features and pedagogical value of micro-lectures and explores their practical integration into four key instructional phases: pre-class preparation, lesson introduction, in-class instruction, and post-class consolidation. Drawing upon case studies, diagrams, and workflow charts, the study offers concrete implementation strategies. It also identifies common challenges and provides targeted recommendations, aiming to support English educators in leveraging micro-lectures to enhance instructional effectiveness and learning engagement.

Keywords

Junior High School English; Micro-Lecture; Instructional Technology; Lesson Design; Teaching Efficiency.

1. Characteristics and Pedagogical Advantages of Micro-Lectures

1.1. Definition and Evolution

The term micro-lecture—originally coined by educational technologists in the United States—refers to short instructional videos that address a specific knowledge point or learning task, typically lasting between 3 to 8 minutes. In China, with the growing integration of information technology into basic education, micro-lectures have become an important bridge between traditional pedagogy and digital instruction. Their key characteristics include[1]:

- (1) Concise format: Minimizing cognitive load while maximizing clarity;
- (2) Focused content: Targeting a single concept per video;
- (3) Multimedia delivery: Incorporating visuals, narration, animations, and subtitles;
- (4) Flexible application: Adaptable across instructional stages and easily revisited by learners.

1.2. Pedagogical Relevance in Junior High School English

Junior high school English instruction often encounters challenges such as time constraints, fragmented content, and uneven student engagement.[2] Micro-lectures offer effective responses to these issues by:

- (1) Improving instructional efficiency through condensed delivery;
- (2) Facilitating personalized, self-paced learning;
- (3) Stimulating student interest via rich multimedia presentation;
- (4) Enabling context-rich and repeatable exposure to language use.

2. Practical Integration of Micro-Lectures into English Instruction

2.1. Pre-Class Preparation: Activating Prior Knowledge and Guiding Learning Focus

Pre-class preparation fosters learner autonomy and primes students for meaningful engagement. Assigning preview micro-lectures allows students to gain preliminary understanding of upcoming content, helping them enter the classroom with clearer expectations.[3]

Example: In Unit 3 “What are you doing?”, the teacher produces a micro-lecture featuring real-life scenarios that use the present progressive tense (e.g., “I’m cooking dinner,” “He is watching TV”). Students watch the video and complete a task sheet involving vocabulary extraction and sentence construction. Using platforms like DingTalk or Xuexitong, teachers can monitor engagement and tailor their lesson plans accordingly.

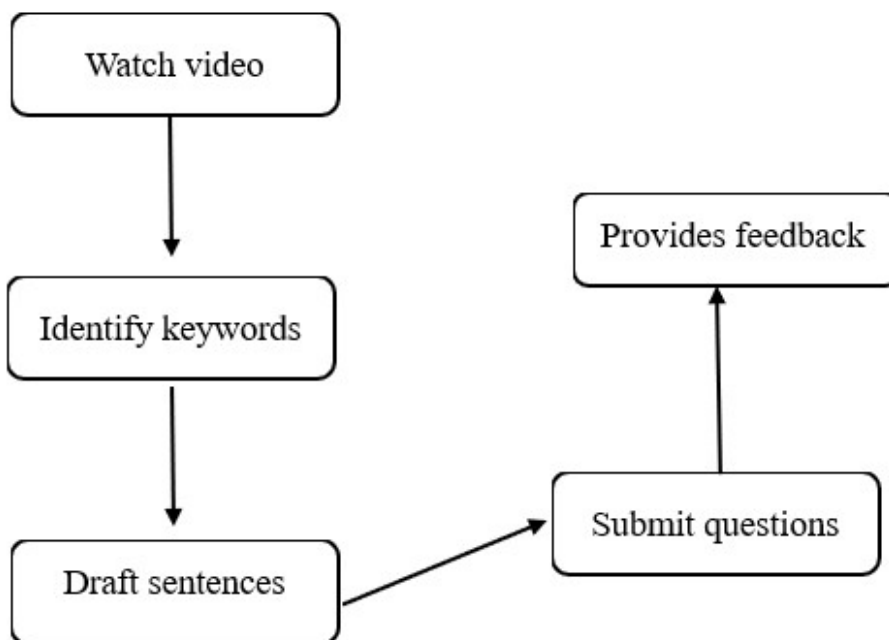


Figure 1. Micro-Lecture-Enhanced Pre-Class Workflow

2.2. Lesson Introduction: Establishing Context and Sparking Motivation

An effective lesson introduction captures attention and establishes relevance. Compared to traditional question-based methods, micro-lectures offer immersive, visually dynamic content—especially well-suited for thematic or cultural topics.[4]

Example: For a lesson on “Christmas,” the teacher plays a micro-lecture that highlights UK holiday traditions. Students are then asked: “What food do they eat?” “How do they decorate their homes?” This strategy integrates language practice with cultural understanding, deepening learners’ global competence.

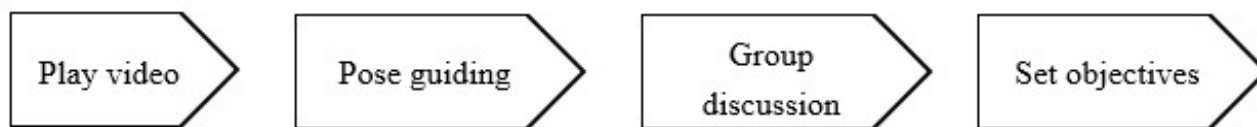


Figure 2. Micro-Lecture-Based Introduction Sequence

2.3. In-Class Instruction: Clarifying Key Concepts and Addressing Difficult Areas

Grammar instruction often presents difficulties for students due to abstract rules and low transferability.[5] Micro-lectures, by visualizing language structures and providing contextual examples, help make complex content more accessible.

Example: Teaching the future tense with “be going to”

The teacher creates a three-part micro-lecture:

- (1) Scene setting: A character plans a trip to the zoo;
- (2) Grammar focus: Structure-“Subject + be going to + base verb”;
- (3) Model usage: “I’m going to take photos.”
- (4) Following the video, students apply the structure in conversation and writing activities.

Table 1. Structured Use of Micro-Lectures in Grammar Instruction

Segment	Content	Function
Contextual Setup	Animated future scenario	Activate relevance
Structural Explanation	Visual + auditory breakdown	Enhance comprehension
Guided Practice	Error correction, translation tasks	Reinforce accuracy and fluency

Micro-lectures can also be modularized, allowing for staged release across multiple lessons to support spaced learning.

2.4. Post-Class Consolidation: Reinforcing Mastery and Encouraging Transfer

The post-class phase is essential for reviewing and applying newly acquired knowledge. Micro-lectures extend learning beyond the classroom and provide structured opportunities for output and reflection.

Example: Reviewing the use of infinitives

The teacher assigns the following tasks:

- 1) Watch the micro-lecture “How to Use Infinitives”;
- 2) Write five original sentences using infinitives, explaining their functions;
- 3) Record and upload a short video summarizing key takeaways and common errors.

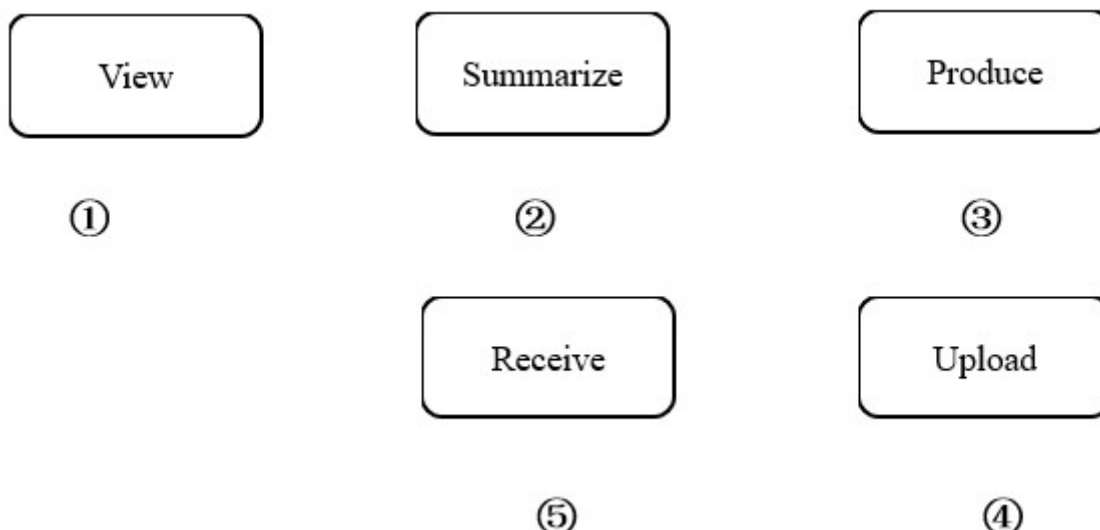


Figure 3. Post-Class Learning Flow Supported by Micro-Lectures

This model fosters self-regulated learning while bridging comprehension and production.

3. Implementation Challenges and Improvement Strategies

3.1. Identified Challenges

- (1) Limited digital literacy among teachers: Some educators lack the technical skills to produce quality micro-lectures.
- (2) Fragmented integration: Micro-lectures are often treated as supplementary rather than integral components.
- (3) Varied student autonomy: Not all students demonstrate consistent engagement with pre- or post-class tasks.
- (4) Lack of assessment frameworks: Few tools exist for evaluating micro-lecture effectiveness.

3.2. Recommendations for Practice

For junior high school English instruction, micro-lectures can narrow the gap between teacher input and student internalization by fostering deeper engagement, contextual practice, and sustained learning momentum.

Table 2. Strategic Recommendations for Implementing Micro-Lectures

Area	Strategy
Teacher Development	Provide training in video scripting, editing, and digital pedagogy
Resource Management	Develop school-level micro-lecture repositories for subject teams
Instructional Design	Pair each micro-lecture with actionable tasks and formative checks
Systematic Integration	Align micro-lectures with lesson objectives, assessment criteria, and learning outcomes
Collaborative Innovation	Encourage joint development and peer review through teaching communities

4. Conclusion

Micro-lectures are not merely a technological accessory, but a pedagogical catalyst for transforming traditional classroom dynamics. When systematically integrated into the pre-, during-, and post-class phases, they offer scalable solutions to enhance clarity, personalization, and student agency. Looking ahead, further integration of micro-lectures with emerging technologies such as AI-driven analytics and adaptive learning systems holds promise for creating truly intelligent, learner-centered English classrooms.

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