

UAI JOURNAL OF EDUCATION, HUMANITIES AND LITERATURE (UAIJEHL)



Abbreviated Key Title: UAI J Eud Huma Lit.

ISSN: 3049-3196 (Online)

Journal Homepage: <https://uaipublisher.com/uaijehl-2/>

Volume- 1 Issue- 6 (November-December) 2025

Frequency: Bimonthly



From Performance to Pedagogy: How Hosting Skills Catalyze the Reconstruction of Teachers' Professional Identity

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how hosting skills—originally cultivated in broadcasting and performance communication—can be recontextualized to support teacher professional growth and pedagogical transformation. Conducted at the Mongolian Chinese Friendship School (MCFS) in Ulaanbaatar, the research involved three beginner-level Chinese language teachers who participated in a twelve-week professional development program integrating hosting-based strategies into classroom instruction. Drawing upon the frameworks of dialogic pedagogy (Alexander, 2020), reflective practice (Schön, 1983), and social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978), the study investigates how teachers transitioned from scripted performance to authentic facilitation in their classrooms. A qualitative case study design was adopted, incorporating classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and teacher reflection journals. Thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006) guided data interpretation, with triangulation and member checking enhancing trustworthiness. Results indicate a progressive transformation from performance-centered delivery to student-centered, interactive learning. Teachers' communication behaviors shifted from one-way lecturing to responsive dialogue, fostering learner engagement and collaborative meaning-making. Table 1 compares classroom behaviors before and after the application of hosting skills, while Figure 1 illustrates the three-stage developmental process from performer to facilitator to host. These shifts were accompanied by increased teacher presence, attentiveness, and confidence—key dimensions also reflected in the thematic model presented in Figure 2. The findings suggest that hosting skills can function as pedagogical tools bridging expressive performance and educational facilitation. By merging presence, adaptability, and dialogic communication, hosting skills cultivate teachers' ability to engage learners while maintaining authenticity. The study contributes to existing literature by positioning the teacher as both communicator and reflective practitioner, offering empirical support for integrating hosting-oriented training into teacher education programs to foster professional identity, classroom connection, and sustainable pedagogical growth.

KEY WORDS: Hosting skills, Pedagogy, Professional growth, Reflective teaching, Teacher identity.

Introduction

In contemporary educational discourse, teacher professionalism is increasingly defined not only by subject knowledge and pedagogical techniques but also by the ability to communicate effectively, create meaningful classroom interactions, and establish authentic connections with students. The classroom has gradually evolved from a space of transmission to one of co-construction, where dialogue, presence, and engagement become central to the learning process. Within this context, *hosting skills*—originally developed in broadcasting and performance communication—offer a distinctive lens for understanding and improving teaching practices. In broadcasting, the host maintains audience attention through presence, voice control, and empathy. Translated into the classroom, these same competencies can transform static delivery into dynamic facilitation. Yet, while performance has long been metaphorically associated with teaching, there remains limited empirical investigation into how specific hosting techniques can enhance teacher identity, instructional communication, and reflective growth in authentic educational contexts.

Previous research in communication-oriented pedagogy has suggested that effective teaching is inherently performative (Goffman, 1959). Teachers, like performers, construct impressions and engage audiences through verbal and nonverbal cues. However, the analogy often ends at surface-level metaphors rather than examining the practical skill transfer between stage performance and teaching. In contrast, dialogic pedagogy (Alexander, 2020) emphasizes conversation as the foundation of meaningful learning, while constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1978) views interaction as a driver of cognitive and social development. The intersection of these theories opens a space for reinterpreting teaching as a form of *interactive hosting*, in which the teacher is neither performer nor mere facilitator, but a host who guides participation, fosters inclusion, and ensures emotional safety. This conceptual shift reframes teaching as a human-centered communicative art rather than a procedural task.

Despite growing attention to teacher identity and professional reflection (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004), most studies continue to analyze teachers' growth from cognitive or behavioral perspectives, with less emphasis on the aesthetic and communicative dimensions of classroom practice. Yet, it is precisely through these expressive dimensions that teachers project authenticity, empathy, and leadership. The art of hosting bridges the gap between performance and pedagogy, suggesting that teachers can learn from media hosts how to manage presence, spontaneity, and responsiveness under real-time interactional pressure. These skills are particularly relevant for second-language classrooms, where communication, gesture, and emotional tone are central to engagement. In such multilingual, multicultural settings as the Mongolian Chinese Friendship School (MCFS), where this study was conducted, teachers must simultaneously perform as linguistic models, cultural ambassadors, and emotional connectors.

The professional development program at MCFS emerged from this pedagogical need. Three beginner-level Chinese language teachers participated in a semester-long intervention designed to integrate hosting-based training into teaching. During weekly sessions, teachers practiced techniques of voice modulation, turn-taking, improvisational dialogue, and nonverbal communication—skills commonly cultivated in the field of broadcasting. Through classroom implementation, these teachers began to replace rigid, scripted lessons with more dialogic and student-responsive approaches. The process of transformation can be conceptually

visualized in Figure 1, which outlines the developmental trajectory from *performer* to *facilitator* and ultimately to *host*. Each stage reflects a deepening awareness of classroom interaction as a shared communicative performance, rather than a unidirectional transmission.

Theoretically, this study draws upon Schön's (1983) reflective practitioner model, which situates professional growth within the cycle of action and reflection. When teachers apply hosting skills, they are compelled to observe their communicative presence, adjust tone and timing, and reinterpret student feedback as part of their ongoing reflection-in-action. This reflective dimension connects hosting to pedagogical renewal, allowing teachers to refine not only what they teach but also how they relate to learners. The dynamic integration of hosting practices therefore represents both a methodological and identity-based transformation. It aligns with recent calls in teacher education to move beyond technical competence toward relational and reflective competence (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Within this framework, the present study positions *hosting skills* as a set of communicative tools that enhance teacher awareness, classroom flow, and emotional intelligence. By examining the experiences of three teachers at MCFS, the research aims to illuminate how these skills can facilitate professional identity reconstruction and pedagogical innovation. Specifically, the study addresses three interrelated questions: How do teachers integrate hosting techniques into their classroom routines? In what ways do these skills influence their interaction patterns and reflective practices? And how does this transformation contribute to their sense of professional growth? By answering these questions, the study contributes to bridging the gap between performance communication and educational theory. It provides empirical grounding for integrating hosting-based training into teacher education curricula, supporting the development of educators who are both expressive and reflective—teachers capable of hosting learning rather than merely managing it.

Method and Materials

This study adopted a qualitative case study design to examine how hosting skills can be pedagogically adapted to enhance teacher professional growth in the context of Chinese language teaching. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for in-depth exploration of teachers' lived experiences and meaning-making processes, emphasizing understanding over generalization. As Braun and Clarke (2006) noted, qualitative inquiry provides a pathway for identifying patterns within complex human behaviors, allowing themes to emerge naturally through participants' narratives. This methodological orientation aligned well with the study's aim of capturing teachers' evolving communication practices and reflective awareness as they integrated hosting skills into classroom interaction.

The research was conducted at the Mongolian Chinese Friendship School (MCFS) in Ulaanbaatar, a multicultural institution where both Mongolian and Chinese students study together. The participants were three beginner-level Chinese language teachers who had been teaching for one to three years. Each teacher was responsible for classes ranging from Grade 1 to Grade 4, teaching fundamental speaking, listening, and character recognition skills. Although all three participants demonstrated strong linguistic knowledge, classroom observations before the intervention revealed a heavy reliance on scripted instruction and minimal student engagement. The teachers often performed lessons as if following a

prewritten text, resulting in limited spontaneity and dialogic interaction. This context made MCFS an ideal site for exploring how hosting skills—rooted in media performance and interpersonal communication—could transform teaching from a performative act to an interactive practice.

The professional development program lasted twelve weeks, designed collaboratively by the researcher and the MCFS teacher development committee. Each week, teachers participated in a 90-minute session focusing on specific aspects of hosting practice such as vocal projection, expressive timing, body language, empathy, and audience connection. These sessions were modeled after professional host training but modified to fit classroom realities. During practice, teachers were encouraged to adapt techniques like tone modulation, strategic pausing, and improvisational dialogue to classroom communication. As Darling-Hammond (2000) emphasized, teacher learning is most effective when it is active, context-based, and reflective, allowing educators to reconstruct their practice through guided experience rather than abstract instruction. To support this reflective process, participants kept weekly journals documenting challenges, successes, and emotional responses to their evolving teaching styles.

Data collection employed three complementary sources: classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and reflective journals. Observations were conducted twice for each teacher—one before and one after the twelve-week program—to compare behavioral patterns. The researcher recorded details about voice control, gesture, pacing, and teacher-student interaction. Semi-structured interviews were held at three intervals: the beginning, midpoint, and end of the semester. The interviews explored teachers' perceptions of hosting skills, their evolving sense of classroom presence, and the impact on their relationships with students. Reflective journals served as an ongoing record of teachers' professional dialogue with themselves, documenting how their perception of teaching shifted from performing content to facilitating engagement.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This six-step process—familiarization, coding, theme generation, review, definition, and reporting—enabled systematic identification of key themes. The analysis focused on communication patterns, reflection-in-action, and identity reconstruction. Themes were refined collaboratively with participants to ensure interpretive credibility, consistent with the reflective and participatory model of teacher learning described by Zeichner (2010). This co-analysis process reflected the study's belief that research and professional learning can be mutually reinforcing, allowing teachers to become co-constructors of meaning rather than passive subjects.

To ensure trustworthiness, triangulation was employed across data sources—observations, interviews, and journals—so that each theme could be validated from multiple perspectives. Participants were invited to review the interpretations of their interviews, a procedure that increased accuracy and ownership of findings. Kelchtermans (2009) emphasized that professional learning requires self-understanding and vulnerability; hence, this study foregrounded participants' emotional and reflective dimensions as evidence of genuine transformation. Furthermore, Shulman's (1986) concept of pedagogical content knowledge underpinned the interpretation of findings, linking communication strategies to teachers' understanding of how knowledge is presented and internalized by students.

Ethical considerations were carefully observed. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and anonymity was maintained

throughout data reporting. The study was implemented at the Mongolian Chinese Friendship School (MCFS) with the cooperation and permission of the school to conduct classroom observations and interviews. The researcher maintained reflexivity through a reflective log, acknowledging their dual role as both teacher trainer and observer.

In summary, this methodology combined structured professional development, reflective practice, and interpretive analysis to illuminate how hosting skills support teacher transformation. The multi-method data collection and thematic interpretation ensured that both observable behaviors and internal reflections were captured. This design ultimately enabled the study to trace how teachers at MCFS evolved from scripted performance to authentic dialogue, illustrating the transformative power of hosting skills as pedagogical tools for professional growth.

Results and Findings

This section presents the major results of the study, drawn from classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and teacher reflection journals. The findings reveal significant changes in teachers' communicative behavior, interactional stance, and sense of professional identity following the integration of hosting skills into their teaching practices at the Mongolian Chinese Friendship School (MCFS). Three interrelated themes emerged through thematic analysis: *From Script to Dialogue*, *From Self-Focus to Student-Focus*, and *Finding the Voice of the Host*.

The first theme, *From Script to Dialogue*, describes teachers' transition from rigid, pre-scripted instruction to more spontaneous, conversational teaching. Before the hosting-based training, all three teachers relied heavily on their lesson scripts and showed limited improvisation. Lessons were characterized by mechanical rhythm, minimal questioning, and an overall lack of classroom energy. After integrating hosting skills—particularly techniques such as tone variation, turn-taking, and improvisational speaking (Li & Song, 2003)—teachers began to treat teaching as an interactive exchange rather than a monologue. Alexander (2020) emphasized that dialogic pedagogy allows learning to unfold through reciprocal conversation rather than unidirectional delivery, and this was precisely the transformation observed in MCFS classrooms.

The behavioral shift can be clearly illustrated by comparing classroom observations before and after the hosting training, as shown in the table below.

Table 1

Comparison of classroom behavior before and after hosting skill application

Observation Item	Before Hosting Training	After Hosting Application
Teaching Language	Monotone, scripted	Dynamic, conversational
Interaction Style	Teacher-centered	Dialogic, student-centered
Classroom Energy	Passive atmosphere	Active participation
Student Responses	Minimal	Frequent, enthusiastic

Note. Classroom observation data were collected before and after a 12-week intervention.

After the hosting training, classroom interactions became livelier and more relational. Teachers reported that they began “speaking with” rather than “speaking to” students. This subtle linguistic and behavioral shift significantly altered classroom energy, fostering more laughter, questioning, and student-to-student interaction. The atmosphere became more natural and collaborative, with students more eager to participate and respond. One participant summarized this transformation in her reflection journal:

When I used to follow my plan word by word, the classroom felt flat. Now I follow the students’ energy. When they smile or ask questions, I respond freely, just like a host would keep the audience engaged.

The second theme, *From Self-Focus to Student-Focus*, reflects teachers’ changing understanding of their classroom roles. Initially, they viewed teaching as a performance centered on self-presentation, emphasizing control, articulation, and accuracy. However, through ongoing reflection and hosting-based communication exercises, they began to focus more on student reactions and engagement. Wang and Wu (2021) observed that effective communicators use vocal variety and emotional authenticity to sustain connection—principles that teachers in this study gradually internalized. Classroom recordings showed that teachers shifted their focus from “Did I speak well?” to “Did my students respond?”

In interviews, teachers expressed that this change also reduced their anxiety. One teacher described, “I used to feel nervous about my pronunciation and rhythm. But once I thought of myself as a host, not a performer, I started to relax and connect. The students responded better because they could feel my confidence.”

Hattie (2009) emphasized that the clarity of instruction and emotional connection between teachers and learners have a strong impact on student achievement. Consistent with this, classroom energy at MCFS increased noticeably. Teachers used humor, eye contact, and flexible timing to sustain participation. Students began volunteering to answer questions, and group activities became more animated.

The third theme, *Finding the Voice of the Host*, highlights teachers’ evolving professional identity and teaching presence. As teachers practiced hosting techniques, they discovered a sense of balance between authority and warmth—what Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000) refer to as *teaching presence*. Through self-observation and feedback, teachers developed a more confident and natural voice. They learned to guide the “flow” of the class rather than dominate it. This transformation from “performer” to “facilitator” to “host” was gradual but visible across the semester, as illustrated in the figure below.



Figure 1

The process of teacher transformation: From performer to host.

Note. The figure illustrates the progressive shift from performer (focus on delivery) to facilitator (focus on dialogue) to host/educator (focus on connection).

Teachers’ reflection journals consistently described this process as liberating. They felt empowered to improvise, listen, and connect. One participant explained:

Before, I tried to sound perfect. Now, I try to sound real. Hosting skills taught me that good teaching is not about control but about connection.

This statement captures the essence of hosting as both a communicative and pedagogical art. By learning to “host” their classroom interactions, teachers cultivated empathy and responsiveness—qualities at the heart of effective teaching. The practice encouraged deeper self-reflection, helping teachers reconstruct their professional identity as relational educators.

As Li and Song (2003) emphasized, hosting requires adaptability, emotional intelligence, and audience awareness. These qualities are transferable to teaching, especially in multicultural contexts like MCFS, where teachers must simultaneously manage language, culture, and affective engagement. The teachers’ enhanced classroom presence, student enthusiasm, and reflective awareness collectively demonstrate that hosting skills served as catalysts for professional growth.

Overall, the findings show that the integration of hosting techniques transformed not only teachers’ instructional communication but also their perception of themselves as educators. By shifting from performing to connecting, teachers became active co-creators of learning experiences, embodying the very essence of dialogic and reflective pedagogy.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrated that hosting skills not only enhanced teachers’ communicative ability but also redefined their pedagogical identity and reflective consciousness. This discussion interprets these findings through two major perspectives: *Hosting Skills as Pedagogical Tools* and *Identity Reconstruction and Reflective Practice*. Together, these perspectives illuminate how hosting practices transformed teaching from performance to facilitation and from self-expression to connection.

Hosting skills, when viewed as pedagogical tools, provided a communicative framework that improved classroom engagement, flow, and emotional presence. Teachers at the Mongolian Chinese Friendship School (MCFS) who adopted hosting techniques demonstrated greater flexibility in managing interaction and energy. As Li and Song (2003) emphasized, the core of effective hosting lies in responsiveness and adaptability—qualities equally essential to successful teaching. The hosting-based approach encouraged teachers to read students’ reactions in real time, using tone, rhythm, and nonverbal cues to adjust their instructional flow. This finding aligns with Garrison, Anderson, and Archer’s (2000) concept of *teaching presence*, which highlights the integration of design, facilitation, and direction in creating an engaging learning environment.

Through this lens, hosting skills acted as catalysts for relational pedagogy. Instead of focusing solely on content transmission, teachers began to design learning moments as conversations. This transformation is consistent with Alexander’s (2020) argument that dialogic teaching empowers both teacher and learner by placing dialogue at the heart of learning. In practice, hosting techniques enabled teachers to construct a sense of classroom “flow,” similar to how professional hosts sustain audience engagement. This communicative flow contributed to students’ sustained participation and the overall emotional cohesion of the learning experience.

Moreover, hosting skills encouraged teachers to cultivate *presence*—a state of mindful awareness of their voice, body, and environment. Wang and Wu (2021) noted that vocal quality and

expressive authenticity are crucial components of communication training. Within the MCFS context, this meant that teachers who learned to project warmth and confidence were better able to connect with students emotionally. As Gimpel (2022) observed, teaching presence involves managing attention and building immediacy through expressive communication, both of which were strengthened through hosting-based practices.

Beyond communicative technique, the integration of hosting skills prompted a deeper form of reflective practice. Schön (1983) described reflection-in-action as the process of thinking while doing—an ability teachers must master to navigate unpredictable classroom dynamics. In this study, teachers reported becoming more conscious of their communicative behaviors, analyzing how their gestures, tone, or pauses affected student engagement. This reflexive awareness marked a shift from automatic teaching routines to mindful facilitation. Prestridge, Main, and Schmid (2023) similarly argued that effective teachers break the “fourth wall” of classroom communication, engaging students as participants rather than spectators. The hosting framework naturally fostered this breaking of boundaries, positioning the classroom as a shared communicative space rather than a hierarchical performance setting.

Identity reconstruction emerged as another significant dimension of the transformation. Teachers who initially viewed themselves as performers began to see themselves as hosts—facilitators of dialogue and connection. This shift was not merely technical but existential: it redefined their sense of purpose and professional self. Jin (2021) observed that the art of hosting combines expressiveness with empathy, bridging linguistic delivery and emotional resonance. The teachers’ reflection journals from this study echoed that insight, describing hosting as both a skill and a mindset that integrates authenticity and responsibility.

This process of identity reconstruction can be visualized in the thematic model below, which summarizes the interrelation between hosting skills, reflective practice, and teacher professional growth.

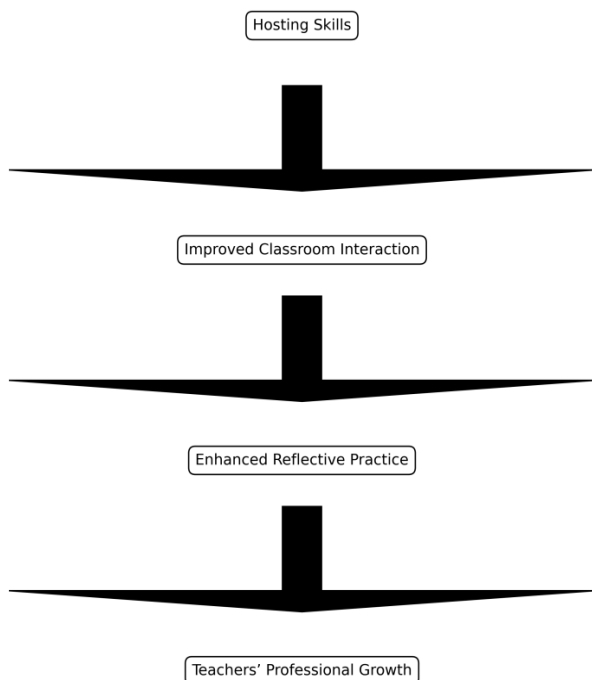


Figure 2

Thematic model of hosting skills and teacher professional growth.

Note. Hosting skills enhance interaction and reflection, leading to

teachers’ professional growth.

As the figure shows, hosting skills function as the central hub that connects three core developmental strands: communicative technique, reflective practice, and identity evolution. Teachers’ development was not linear but cyclical, where communicative experiences informed reflection, and reflection reinforced professional identity. This resonates with Zhao (2016), who emphasized that voice and language training for broadcasters involve both expressive mastery and self-awareness—elements that also underpin pedagogical professionalism. Similarly, in the teaching context, mastering hosting skills requires not only technical control but also emotional attunement and social awareness.

The discussion therefore positions hosting not as a metaphor for teaching but as a functional model for it. Hosting integrates linguistic, emotional, and cognitive dimensions into one unified practice. It helps teachers move from managing classrooms to *hosting learning experiences*—spaces characterized by connection, responsiveness, and authenticity. Through this process, teachers not only improved their instructional communication but also redefined what it means to be a professional educator in multicultural environments like MCFS.

Conclusion

This study explored how hosting skills can serve as effective pedagogical tools to support teachers’ professional growth, focusing on the experiences of three Chinese language teachers at the Mongolian Chinese Friendship School (MCFS). The findings revealed that hosting skills—originally cultivated for broadcast performance—carry significant educational value when adapted to the classroom. They help teachers transform from performers into facilitators, from transmitters of information into hosts of learning experiences. This chapter concludes the study by summarizing key insights, emphasizing their theoretical and practical implications, and suggesting directions for future research.

The research demonstrated that hosting skills enhanced three key dimensions of teaching: communicative competence, reflective awareness, and professional identity formation. Teachers who learned hosting techniques became more adept at managing voice, gesture, and emotional tone, thereby improving classroom energy and student participation. This aligns with Wang and Wu (2021), who emphasized that effective vocal performance requires emotional authenticity and control—qualities that also strengthen teaching presence (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000). Hosting skills encouraged teachers to adopt a dialogic and improvisational stance, enabling them to respond to students dynamically rather than adhering rigidly to scripts (Alexander, 2020).

From a reflective perspective, hosting practices fostered teachers’ capacity for *reflection-in-action* (Schön, 1983). Teachers became aware of how their linguistic and nonverbal behaviors influenced student engagement, developing a habit of self-monitoring that led to continuous pedagogical improvement. This reflexivity marked a departure from habitual, one-way instruction toward a more mindful, adaptive teaching style. Prestridge, Main, and Schmid (2023) described this as “breaking the fourth wall” in online and face-to-face learning, in which teachers intentionally connect with students as participants rather than passive listeners—a process also facilitated by hosting-based approaches.

In terms of identity development, teachers redefined themselves as communicative professionals who balance authority with empathy. Before the intervention, many viewed teaching as a stage

performance, emphasizing self-presentation and control. After integrating hosting practices, they began to see themselves as *hosts*—figures who coordinate attention, foster participation, and create an inclusive communicative atmosphere. This identity reconstruction reflects Beauchamp and Thomas's (2009) view that teacher identity is fluid and shaped through ongoing dialogue between self and context. Hosting therefore provided not only performance techniques but also a conceptual model for relational pedagogy.

Theoretically, this study extends existing discussions of instructional communication by bridging two seemingly distinct disciplines—broadcast hosting and education. The integration of Li and Song's (2003) framework on *scene adaptability* with Vygotsky's (1978) concept of *social interaction* highlights how communication-oriented arts can inform pedagogy. Hosting transforms teaching from an act of delivery into an act of co-creation, where the teacher becomes a facilitator of shared meaning. This resonates with Goffman's (1959) sociological insights on "presentation of self," reinterpreted here as a foundation for authentic classroom presence.

Practically, the findings carry valuable implications for teacher training and professional development. Teacher education programs should consider integrating hosting-based modules that emphasize communicative adaptability, empathy, and stage presence. As Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner (2017) stressed, effective professional development requires experiential, reflective, and collaborative elements—all of which align with the hosting framework. By blending communication training with pedagogical reflection, educators can enhance both teaching performance and relational engagement, leading to more holistic professional growth.

At the same time, the study underscores the importance of cultural context. MCFS, as a multicultural institution, provided an ideal environment to test how hosting principles—originating from Chinese broadcast arts—could be adapted across languages and cultures. The results suggest that hosting skills are not bound by culture but instead operate on universal principles of empathy, attentiveness, and communicative clarity. This adaptability makes hosting-based pedagogy applicable to various educational settings, from multilingual classrooms to teacher preparation programs worldwide.

Nevertheless, the study also faced limitations. As a small-scale qualitative case study, its findings are context-specific and cannot be generalized without caution. Future research could adopt mixed-method designs to quantitatively measure changes in teacher confidence, communication, and student engagement after hosting-based interventions. Comparative studies across different cultural contexts would further deepen our understanding of how hosting practices interact with local pedagogical traditions.

In conclusion, this research confirmed that hosting skills can effectively support teachers' transition from performing to facilitating. They help teachers embody presence, responsiveness, and empathy—qualities essential for meaningful learning. Hosting bridges the gap between communication and pedagogy, demonstrating that the artistry of human connection can be a profound form of teaching. As educators increasingly face complex, intercultural classrooms, the hosting mindset offers a new paradigm: to teach not as performers delivering content, but as hosts creating shared spaces of learning and understanding.

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