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Step into The Conversation Using 360° Video to Build Students' Communication Confidence

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In some of the educational spaces we find ourselves in, there's an event that seems all too familiar. Students understand what we have taught them. They can describe how to organise a presentation, recognise what should occur during a meeting, and successfully complete the assignments given to them. However, once students are required to communicate verbally, react, or engage in a real-time exchange, many continue to hold back. It isn't a matter of their lack of knowledge but of something else. Students are predominantly task-focused and less likely to participate in real-time communication. While this indicates the issue extends beyond simply educating students on content, it also highlights the need for approaches that support students in becoming active participants in relevant situations (Katlen et al., 2022; Salim et al., 2025a). It is not limited to one class or school. Language education research has repeatedly demonstrated that students face challenges communicating in real life because they lack meaningful exposure and opportunities to practice communication in realistic conditions. As stated by Foster et al. (2021), when students immerse themselves in the learning process through interactive experiences, they tend to retain information more effectively than those who learn only through passive instruction. In terms of communication education, this is especially true because communication cannot be explained solely. It has to be lived.



To help bridge this gap, various efforts have explored ways to introduce more "reality" into the classroom. Traditional role-plays and discussions remain valid methods for teaching students to communicate. However, they are often structured. Students are aware of their turn to talk, what to say, and when the exercise will finish. Communication in the workplace is typically unplanned, often messy, and frequently unpredictable. Additionally, communication in a work setting includes managing tone and responding to others in real time.

This can be seen in various studies that emphasise the importance of introducing students to authentic forms of communication, such as meetings, professional etiquette, and real-time communication interactions (Salim et al., 2025b; Ponomarenko et al., 2024; Siddiqui, 2024). One method that has demonstrated significant effectiveness in bridging this gap is the utilization of 360-degree video. On the surface, it appears similar to other instructional technologies, yet the experience it provides is significantly different. Rather than viewing the scene from a fixed point, students can navigate the space, observe various speakers interact, and follow conversations from multiple viewpoints. Essentially, students are not merely watching the conversation; they are immersing themselves in it. According to Radianti et al. (2020), immersive technologies enable learners to experience reality more realistically, leading to greater engagement and understanding. This approach is further supported by the work titled "Immersive Vocabulary Learning with Step Into Vocabulary (S.I.V.)" (Salim et al., 2025c), which used a 360-degree video to create contextualised learning

environments. The findings indicated that learners became more engaged and confident and, more importantly, were able to connect language to real-world situations rather than relying solely on memorisation. When applied to communication education, the effects become even more pronounced.

Students who view discussions or meetings via 360° video will be able to identify factors they would otherwise never have seen. The students can see what starts the dialogue, how one participant reacts to another, and how the ideas develop. While viewing these dialogues, students are also becoming increasingly aware of nonverbal communication, such as facial expressions, posture, eye contact, and tone. This is an area that cannot be taught directly; however, it is an important factor in effective communication. A study by Shah et al. (2026) on the influence of Immersive 360 Degree Video on Oral Communication found that students' performance in discussing topics improved with exposure to immersive experiences. What makes using 360° video exciting is that it fits well with the evolving trends in second language education. The integration of 360° videos in various technological tools, such as chatbots and social media, allows students to practice their communicative abilities in low-risk situations and obtain instant feedback without being evaluated or judged by others (Salim et al., 2026; Shah et al., 2025; Malik & Qureshi, 2024).

Ultimately, utilising 360° video represents a larger paradigm shift in education: rather than teaching students simply about the "what" of communication, we are now emphasising the experiential nature of learning. Regardless of whether that occurs through an immersive video experience, interactive chatbots, or online platforms, our overall objective has remained consistent: to assist students in moving beyond knowledge of how to communicate effectively to the ability to apply such communication skills in practical settings. Perhaps what students need is not mere explanation, but more opportunities to experience communication as it happens. When they are given the chance to step into these situations, through a screen, the learning goes beyond knowing what to say to having the confidence to say it.

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