



Some Solutions to Improve the Teaching Effectiveness of the "Chinese for Office Administration" Course for Large Classes at Hung Vuong University

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Article History

Received: 16.07.2026

Accepted: 09.09.2026

Published: 14.09.2026

Abstract: "Chinese for Office Administration" is a compulsory course serving as an alternative to the graduation thesis for final-year Chinese majors at Hung Vuong University. The course aims to equip students with fundamental knowledge regarding the drafting of Chinese administrative documents, enabling them to apply this knowledge professionally and meet employment demands in sectors such as Sino-Vietnamese trade, office administration, and assistant or secretarial roles. Currently, the teaching of this course at Hung Vuong University faces several challenges: large class sizes (approximately 70–80 students per class); uneven Chinese proficiency levels among students; differences in writing styles and administrative document culture between China and Vietnam; abstract and dry course content; practice scenarios in the curriculum based primarily on Chinese state agency contexts; insufficient in-class practice time; and a heavy grading workload for instructors. Based on the textbook "Comprehensive Collection of Common Administrative Document Writing and Templates" and considering the specific learning context of final-year Chinese majors at Hung Vuong University, this article proposes optimization strategies across three areas: restructuring course content, innovating teaching methods through real-world scenarios, and improving practice models. These measures aim to enhance teaching quality and strengthen students' practical document-drafting capabilities.

Keywords: Chinese Language Majors, Teaching Large Classes, Drafting Administrative Documents, Teaching Applied Chinese, Task-Based Teaching.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Against the backdrop of increasingly deep economic and trade relations between China and Vietnam, the market demand for versatile human resources — proficient in Chinese while also knowledgeable in other fields — is continuously growing, and proficiency in Chinese administrative documents is an equally essential part of this. "Chinese for Office Administration" is a compulsory course for final-year Chinese majors in Vietnam, combining theory, standards, and practice. This study focuses on large classes of around 70–80 fourth-year

Chinese-major students at Hung Vuong University. Although at this stage students have reached an intermediate-to-advanced level of Chinese and have a solid grasp of basic modern Chinese discourse, they still face distinctive challenges: limited exposure to the socio-cultural context in which Chinese state agencies operate, leading to a superficial understanding of the logical thinking behind drafting administrative documents; limited ability to grasp specialized terminology and formulaic expressions (often rooted in Classical Chinese); and few opportunities for hands-on writing practice due to

Citation: Nguyen, M. H. (2026). Some Solutions to Improve the Teaching Effectiveness of the "Chinese for Office Administration" Course for Large Classes at Hung Vuong University. *Glob Acad J Humanit Soc Sci*, 8(5), 84-88. <https://doi.org/10.36348/gajhss.2026.v08i05.002>

large class sizes, which makes it difficult for instructors to provide individualized guidance. The course's main textbook, "Comprehensive Collection of Common Administrative Document Writing and Templates," provides a framework covering state administrative documents, regulatory documents, administrative operational documents, as well as documents related to meetings and protocol; it closely combines in-depth theory with a rich system of sample documents. However, this teaching material was designed for personnel working in Chinese state agencies; the practice scenarios are drawn mainly from the administrative practices of the Chinese Communist Party and State, and lack scenarios suited to the actual context in Vietnam. Applying this curriculum in its original form may hinder students' learning process. Relying on the traditional "rote learning" model — with activities such as lecturing on theory, reading sample texts aloud, and a final written exam — often results in students merely memorizing rules without truly mastering writing skills. Therefore, researching a teaching model for administrative-document writing skills that is suited to the learning context in Vietnam in general and at Hung Vuong University in particular, while also meeting the demands of large classes, holds significant practical value for the teaching of specialized Chinese.

II. Current situation of teaching the "Chinese for Office Administration" course at Hung Vuong University

1. Large Class Sizes Limit the Ability to Provide Individualized Guidance.

Class sizes of 70–80 students limit the ability to provide individualized guidance. The "Chinese for Office Administration" course places strong emphasis on writing skills, requiring meticulous correction of formatting, word choice, and style. In such large classes, opportunities for interaction and asking questions in class are limited. Instructors cannot correct every assignment, nor can they give detailed, specific feedback on each student's writing. As a result, many students' formatting and expression errors are not corrected in a timely manner.

2. Differences in Culture and Document Presentation Style.

Differences in culture and document presentation style create barriers to knowledge acquisition. Types of administrative documents such as requests for instructions (请示), replies/approvals (批复), and resolutions all originate from the Chinese administrative system. Vietnamese students often confuse the contexts of vertical communication (superior–subordinate) and horizontal communication (between equal-level units), and fail to clearly distinguish between requests for

instructions and reports, or between official letters (函) and notices (通报). For distinctive closing phrases such as "please review and provide guidance" or "this document serves as the official reply," students often understand only the literal meaning without grasping the appropriate context of use, leading to incorrect or inaccurate application of these fixed expressions.

3. Teaching Scenarios Lack Connection to Real-World Work

Although the textbook contains many sample documents from Chinese Party and government agencies, most Chinese-major students in Vietnam — including those at Hung Vuong University — go on after graduation to work for Chinese-invested enterprises, joint ventures, or chambers of commerce, where they rarely encounter high-level resolutions or regulations. Students are taught large-scale administrative documents but lack training in the types of documents commonly used in actual work, such as notices, official letters, meeting minutes, and simple proposals. This disconnect between learning and practical application diminishes students' interest.

4. Teaching Content Remains Overly Theoretical

The theoretical content on administrative office documents in the curriculum is quite extensive; in class, instructors must spend a great deal of time explaining the concepts, document structures, and formatting rules of each document type, which limits the time available for hands-on practice. As a result, students feel confused and struggle to draft documents when faced with real-world tasks.

5. Uneven Chinese Proficiency Levels among Students

In a large class of 70–80 students, the gap in students' Chinese competence and proficiency is quite pronounced: some diligent students reach a high level and can easily read and comprehend sample documents, while others remain only at an average level, with limited reading comprehension and expression skills — some students cannot even read a full sentence, resulting in a failure to understand the lesson content. Consequently, when instructors teach according to a fixed lesson plan and curriculum content, conflicts often arise: stronger students find the content too easy (not challenging enough), while students with a weaker foundation struggle to keep up with the lesson.

III. Solutions for teaching the "Chinese for Office Administration" course to large classes at Hung Vuong University

1. Restructuring Teaching Content into Modules and Selecting Teaching Content

Replace the traditional teaching model (teaching each document type sequentially) by

reorganizing teaching modules based on the logical relationships between document types, while also streamlining the curriculum by removing document types with little relevance to students' future employment needs. Specifically:

- Module 1: Basic knowledge of administrative documents, including: concepts, classification (documents sent upward, downward, and between equal-level units), presentation elements, and document style; distinguishing formal administrative language from everyday spoken language.
- Module 2: Documents sent upward: Proposals and Reports; focusing on distinguishing the core differences between these two document types.
- Module 3: Documents sent downward: Notices, Circulars, Decisions, and Official Reply Letters.
- Module 4: Documents between equal-level units: Official Letters (used for negotiation, inquiries, or responses).
- Module 5: Meeting-related documents: Meeting Minutes.
- Module 6: Business and Protocol documents: Work Plans, Summaries, and Invitation Letters.

Each lesson focuses on one or two document types, following a pedagogical sequence: usage scenario → formatting standards → sample-document analysis → practice exercises, while making extensive use of comparison tables or mind maps to reduce the memorization burden for students in large classes.

2. Combining Diverse Teaching Methods in Class

(1) Task-Based Group Collaborative Teaching:

- Divide 80 students into 16 groups (5 members each), mixing students of different Chinese proficiency levels (high, average, basic) to encourage mutual support within groups.
- Convert the case studies in the textbook into practical tasks suited to students' future work environments, such as Chinese-invested enterprises in Vietnam or Vietnamese chambers of commerce. Examples include: drafting a proposal to headquarters in China for purchasing office equipment; drafting a negotiation letter to a partner company regarding joint training; and simulating a company's monthly meeting to produce meeting minutes.

Implementation process: Instructor explains key points → Assigns scenario-based tasks → Group discussion to complete a first draft → Group representatives present their results → Whole class

reviews formatting and style errors together → Instructor summarizes and gives feedback. Roles such as drafter, format checker, style reviewer, and presenter are specifically assigned within each group to clarify responsibilities; each individual's contribution counts toward the ongoing assessment score to reduce "free-riding."

(2) Comparative Teaching of Chinese and Vietnamese Administrative Documents:

Leveraging students' existing knowledge of Vietnamese administrative documents (their mother tongue) through a comparative teaching approach promotes positive knowledge transfer while minimizing negative interference from the native language. Similarities and differences are compared across multiple aspects such as titles, primary and copy recipients, communication hierarchy, specialized fixed expressions, and date formatting. Teaching content emphasizes strict rules, such as the "one proposal per document" principle for Chinese requests for instructions (请示), and distinguishing between easily confused document types; tables are used to visually illustrate the scope of application between proposals (请示) and reports (报告), as well as between notices (通知) and official letters (函).

(3) Tiered Simulation-Based Writing Skills Training:

Rather than requiring students in large classes to create content entirely from scratch, a tiered training method — "error correction → imitation and rewriting → independent writing" — is implemented, making effective use of the sample texts in the textbook.

Step 1, basic-level practice: Use excerpts from sample texts with deliberately inserted errors in the title, closing remarks, or forms of address to the recipient; the whole class works independently to correct the errors, and common mistakes are displayed anonymously on screen.

Step 2, intermediate-level practice: Students keep the structural logic of the sample text but rewrite the content, shifting the administrative context from the Chinese government to a Vietnamese business setting.

Step 3, advanced-level practice: Fully independent writing, assigned as homework based on given scenarios. Students with a weaker foundation are allowed to refer to the framework of the sample text, while more capable students must generate content entirely on their own — thereby achieving differentiated instruction even within a large class.

3. Combining Online and In-Person Practice to Reduce Grading Pressure

Relying solely on instructors to manually grade the assignments of 70–80 students per class — while instructors are also responsible for multiple classes, resulting in several hundred assignments — creates significant pressure and reduces grading efficiency. Therefore, establishing a blended online-and-in-person teaching model would be more effective. Sample texts, key concepts, and quizzes are uploaded before class so students can preview the material, saving time on theoretical lecturing and allowing more in-class time for hands-on practice exercises. A peer cross-review format is applied to after-class assignments: once a student submits their work online, the system randomly assigns each student's submission to 2–3 classmates for review; students provide revision suggestions based on grading criteria set by the instructor (formatting, choice of document type, logic, and style). Peer review cannot replace the instructor's grading; instead, the instructor should select one-third of the assignments for detailed review and determine the final grade by combining it with the peer-review results. At the same time, typical errors from all assignments should be collected and compiled into a shared document for the whole class to review repeatedly, thereby reducing the recurrence of similar mistakes.

IV. Some Notes for Teaching

First, course content from the reference textbook should be selectively chosen. Since the original textbooks were compiled for Chinese civil servants, document types with little relevance to the future work of Vietnamese students — such as Party congress resolutions or major official communiqués — should be simplified. Teaching should focus on highly applicable and commonly encountered document types such as notices, requests for instructions, official letters, and meeting minutes. Overloading a single lesson with too much content should be avoided.

Second, in-depth training on the style and expression used in administrative documents should be strengthened. Vietnamese students often unintentionally introduce everyday language into formal documents; instructors need to compile specialized administrative vocabulary from the textbook, clearly distinguish standard opening formulas, forms of address, and closing formulas, and use concrete examples to explain concepts — thereby avoiding the forced overuse of clichéd, archaic, or excessively formal expressions.

Third, when displaying student work in class, anonymity should be prioritized to protect students and ease their anxiety about the difficulty of

the assignment. At the same time, students who perform well or complete their work correctly or ahead of schedule should be promptly praised and recognized.

V. CONCLUSION

When teaching the "Chinese for Office Administration" course to large Chinese-major classes at Hung Vuong University, it is not possible to simply replicate teaching methods designed for small classes with evenly matched student proficiency, nor to mechanically apply Chinese government administrative textbooks to mass instruction. Instructors need to take a realistic view of class size, the gap in students' Chinese proficiency, institutional and cultural differences between China and Vietnam, as well as the actual employment context in Phu Tho province and neighboring areas. By comprehensively combining teaching methods such as modular instruction, task-based group work, comparative analysis of Chinese and Vietnamese administrative documents, tiered simulation exercises, blended online learning, and peer review, the focus of teaching can shift from memorizing theoretical rules to developing practical skills. Group work helps address the lack of genuine participation in large classes; comparative teaching methods help remove barriers to cross-cultural understanding; tiered simulation exercises help reduce the difficulty of writing administrative documents for Vietnamese students learning Chinese; and blended learning reduces the grading burden on instructors while meeting the diverse learning needs of students at different levels. Combined together, these methods will help improve the effectiveness of Chinese administrative-document writing skills for Chinese-major students at Hung Vuong University in particular, and for Vietnamese students in general.

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