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The Rise of Short-Form Video Content in Education

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## **Introduction**

In recent years, education has undergone a dramatic transformation due to the proliferation of digital media. Among the most notable changes is the rise of short-form video content as a powerful tool for teaching and learning. Platforms like TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and Instagram Reels have redefined content consumption, introducing bite-sized educational videos that align with the fast-paced lives and decreasing attention spans of today's learners. While traditionally seen as sources of entertainment, these platforms are increasingly being harnessed by educators, institutions, and students to facilitate learning in more engaging, flexible, and accessible ways. This paper explores the impact of short-form video content on education, analyzing its benefits, challenges, and long-term implications.

## **The Emergence and Evolution of Short-Form Video**

Short-form videos, typically ranging from 15 seconds to two minutes, gained prominence with the popularity of apps like Vine and later TikTok. Their viral nature and algorithm-driven visibility have made them powerful mediums for communication and storytelling. In education, this format is used to explain complex topics quickly, offer micro-lessons, and deliver tutorials. For instance, YouTube's "Crash Course" series has popularized short, engaging videos that simplify history, science, and literature ("Crash Course"). Similarly, educators on TikTok present lessons in chemistry, mathematics, and language arts in formats that are both informative and entertaining.

The shift towards short-form video is also driven by the changing media habits of younger generations. According to a 2022 study in *Nature Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, students who engaged with short educational videos demonstrated increased

engagement and better retention compared to those who consumed longer, traditional content (Li et al.). This trend suggests a profound shift in how educational content is being delivered and consumed.

## **Benefits of Short-Form Video in Education**

### *Increased Engagement and Motivation*

One of the most significant advantages of short-form video is its ability to capture attention quickly. The dynamic, visually rich nature of such videos appeals to younger audiences, who are more likely to remain engaged throughout a 60-second clip than a 30-minute lecture. This enhanced engagement can lead to higher motivation and enthusiasm for learning, especially among students who struggle with conventional teaching methods.

### *Flexibility and Accessibility*

Short-form videos are easily accessible via smartphones and tablets, making them ideal for on-the-go learning. Students can view these videos during breaks, commutes, or while multitasking. Moreover, the simplicity and brevity of these videos allow learners to revisit content quickly for reinforcement, enabling personalized and self-paced education.

### *Support for Microlearning*

Microlearning, which involves learning in small, manageable chunks, is a pedagogical approach that aligns perfectly with short-form video content. According to a report by the Promotional Products Association International (PPAI), microlearning supported by short videos

improves knowledge retention by offering focused, repeatable lessons (PPAI). This approach is particularly effective in corporate training, exam preparation, and skill acquisition.

### *Encouragement of Creativity and Peer Learning*

Short-form videos also encourage learners to become content creators. Instructors often assign students to create educational videos as projects, fostering creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking. Platforms like TikTok have enabled student communities to share knowledge, provide peer support, and build networks for collaborative learning (HubSpot).

## **Challenges and Drawbacks**

### *Distraction and Content Overload*

Despite its educational potential, short-form video platforms also pose risks of distraction. Students may start watching educational videos but quickly get diverted to unrelated, entertaining content. The same algorithms that promote engaging learning videos also push viral dance challenges, memes, and celebrity gossip, making it difficult for students to stay focused.

### *Superficial Understanding*

Due to their brevity, short-form videos often simplify complex subjects, potentially resulting in superficial understanding. While they are effective for introductions and overviews, they may not suffice for in-depth learning unless supplemented with additional materials. Educators must strike a balance between engaging content and academic rigor (He et al.).

### *Inequality in Access*

Access to technology remains a barrier for many students. High-speed internet and modern devices are prerequisites for consuming short-form content, and not all learners have equitable access. This digital divide can exacerbate existing educational inequalities, especially among low-income or rural students (Johnson).

### *Quality Control and Misinformation*

Anyone can create and upload content to platforms like TikTok or YouTube. While this democratizes education, it also opens the door to misinformation and low-quality content. Students may encounter inaccurate or misleading educational material if content is not vetted or peer-reviewed. Educational institutions must play a role in curating and recommending reliable sources.

### **The Role of Educators and Institutions**

To harness the full potential of short-form videos, educators must adapt their teaching strategies. Many are already incorporating platforms like Edpuzzle, Flipgrid, and TikTok for classroom use. These tools allow teachers to create and monitor short videos, assign them as homework, and assess student engagement. Additionally, institutions are investing in professional development programs to train faculty in digital pedagogy and multimedia content creation. A compelling example is the "HillmanTok" initiative, which uses TikTok to share culturally relevant educational content for Black college students. This initiative not only promotes academic success but also supports cultural identity and community building (The Guardian). Furthermore, many universities and online learning platforms now employ short-form

video in marketing and course previews. Institutions recognize that today's learners prefer to preview course content in short segments before enrolling.

## **Future Implications**

The trend of short-form video in education is likely to continue evolving. With advancements in artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and personalized algorithms, future educational videos may become even more tailored to individual learning styles and needs. Instructors may collaborate with AI tools to generate customized video lessons or interactive content that adapts in real time. Additionally, short-form video may become a staple in hybrid and flipped classrooms. As educators move away from traditional lecture-based models, brief instructional videos can serve as pre-class material, freeing up class time for discussion and application. However, there will be an increasing need for content curation, media literacy, and digital ethics education. Learners must be equipped with the skills to critically evaluate digital content and identify credible sources.

## **Conclusion**

Short-form video content is transforming education by offering engaging, accessible, and flexible learning opportunities. While it presents certain challenges, such as distraction, superficial learning, and digital inequality, the benefits are substantial when implemented thoughtfully. Educators and institutions must embrace this trend while ensuring content quality, inclusivity, and academic integrity. As technology advances, short-form videos will likely become an even more integral part of educational ecosystems, reshaping how knowledge is shared and consumed in the 21st century.

## Works Cited

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