

Teaching Design for College English Reading and Writing Course Based on Production-oriented Approach - Taking New Horizon College English as an Example

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Abstract. POA has been developed over the past decade with the aim of improving English classroom instruction at the tertiary level in China. Unlike other instructional approaches for language learning, the POA starts teaching with language production and ends with production while input serves as an enabler to help accomplish productive activities. [1] This article begins by introducing the background of the "Production-oriented Approach", followed by an overview of the theoretical framework of POA. Finally, it presents a teaching design for a college English reading and writing course based on POA, using Unit 1 of New Horizon College English Book 1 as an example.

Keywords: Production-oriented approach; reading and writing courses; teaching design.

1. Background of Production-oriented Approach (POA)

Production-oriented Approach (POA), was developed by the research team led by Wen Qiufang to address the issue of "separation of learning and application" in foreign language teaching in China [2]. Since the beginning of the reform and opening-up policy, English education in China has been criticized for its inefficiency low output and the phenomenon of "mute English" [3]. In recent years, while there has been a call to emphasize the learning of traditional culture, there has also been a growing demand to reduce the intensity of English learning. Although there are objective challenges such as a lack of input and insufficient communicative needs in foreign language education in China, there is still room for improvement. According to the analysis of Wen Qiufang's team, both the traditional "bottom-up" and "top-down" teaching methods have not given sufficient attention to language output, resulting in a disconnect between input and output, which seriously affects the effectiveness of teaching. POA has been proposed in response to this problem in this context.

2. Theoretical Framework of POA

From 2008 to 2023, the theoretical framework of POA went through approximately five developmental stages: preheating, embryonic, formation, revision, and further revision. These stages gradually refined the theory through a multi-round interaction involving theory, practice, and interpretation. The theoretical framework of POA consists of three parts: teaching principles, teaching hypothesis, and teaching procedures. These three components are interconnected and mutually influential. The principles of teaching serve as theoretical guidance for the other two components, including the perspectives of being learning-oriented, emphasizing the integration of input and output, fostering cultural exchange, and developing key competencies. Besides, the pedagogical hypotheses includes output-driven hypothesis, enabling input hypothesis, and selective learning hypothesis. In addition, the instructional process is comprised of N-cycles, which consists of three phases: motivating, enabling, and assessing. Each learning activity like guiding, designing, and scaffolding consists of multiple instructional cycles, with the specific number to be determined by the teacher as a facilitator and a consultant.

POA advocates using output-based tasks in speaking or writing as the starting point and goal, combining teacher-led input-based learning (listening or reading) with collaborative teaching evaluation and output tasks, creating a close integration and mutual reinforcement, enabling learning while using. Compared with "Output-based education", POA uses "production" to show that it can also be used in translation classes.

3. Design of College English Reading and Writing Course Based on POA

According to the teaching process of the POA, design a lesson for the third class of "Learning a Foreign Language" in unit 1 of the first volume of "New Horizon College English" based on the motivating stage, enabling stage, and assessing stage.

3.1 Driving Output, Igniting Motivation

Output Task: Due to the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, universities have been widely suspended, and teachers and students can only conduct teaching through online means. Therefore, many people believe that online teaching methods will replace traditional offline teaching methods. In light of this perspective, a foreign language teaching publishing company organized a university-level English essay competition with the topic "Will online learning replace traditional learning in the future?" And you should write a cause and effect essay to state your opinion. As a representative of our school, you will participate in the competition and complete the writing task on this topic.

Motivating Steps: The teacher will upload the micro-lecture for this class and the output task to the online learning platform, allowing students to submit their essays to the online essay evaluation system. By assessing students' output assignments, the teacher identifies areas for improvement, ignites students' learning motivation, and provides corresponding input content in terms of viewpoints, language, and structure during the enabling process.

3.2 Enabling Input, Three-way Loop

Enabling viewpoints: Through motivating assignments, it was discovered that students had a limited understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of online and offline teaching. Therefore, prior to the class, the teacher provided students with English materials related to both teaching methods for reading input, assisting them in summarizing relevant viewpoints. During the class, the debate format was employed, dividing the entire class into two debate teams and one judging team. The affirmative team supported online learning, while the opposing team supported traditional learning. The students in the debate teams processed the input viewpoints, completed their respective statements within a designated time frame, and answered related questions from the judging team. Ultimately, the judging team conducted a vote to determine the winning team. Some outcomes of the discussion are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Enabling Viewpoints

Learning style	Advantages	Disadvantages
Online learning	at anytime, anywhere, any pace	internet environment
	resources around the world	personal information
Traditional learning	face to face contact	fear
	practical skills	cost

Enabling language: After completing the viewpoints of the output task, the next challenge for students is how to transform these viewpoints into grammatically correct and coherent sentences. The teacher extracts vocabulary from the text, explains their meanings, and assists students in acquiring language relevant to input and output tasks. To gauge students' vocabulary mastery, the teacher utilizes an online survey tool for in-class assessments, enabling timely feedback on their progress. The vocabulary test questions are as following:

- (1). Online courses allow physically challenged students more freedom to reap the benefits of education.
- (2). I am lucky to have had access to so many resources around the world.
- (3). Students don't need to keep up with others' pace of learning in online courses.
- (4). I don't believe that a teacher using a virtual classroom can reach out to me in the same way.
- (5). Students may feel intimidated by teachers who lack patience or by students with higher skill levels.

The teacher elucidates the vocabulary questions based on students' responses provided through the questionnaire software, consolidating practice exercises for the words that pose more challenges to the students. Simultaneously, the teacher guides students in establishing connections between each sentence and its corresponding viewpoints. For instance, the first sentence "*Online courses allow physically challenged students more freedom to reap the benefits of education.*" corresponds to the viewpoint that online learning transcends spatial constraints. This approach aims at foster an internal linkage between the enabling input and enhance the effectiveness of enabling.

Enabling Structure: Following the enabling of viewpoints and language, students become capable of expressing corresponding viewpoints using complete sentences. However, the task at hand is to complete a comprehensive composition, requiring students to learn how to arrange these sentences in a cohesive and logical structure. The teacher analyzes the "cause-and-effect" writing structure found in the text and guides students in transferring this structure to their writing tasks. Additionally, the teacher provides a list of appropriate linking words to express "cause and effect" relationship and establish coherence, such as the reason for, lead to, due to, as a result, hence, finally, for this reason.

3.3 Assessment of Output and Teacher-Student Collaboration

Integration of viewpoints, language, and structure enables collaborative analysis of evaluation criteria for output tasks between teachers and students. Following the writing standards for the College English Test Band 4 (CET-4) composition, the evaluation will focus on three aspects: content, language, and structure of the composition. The teacher will divide the class into four-person groups, where each student will revise their own essays and engage in group discussions to select the best composition for making presentation in the class. The teacher will then guide the entire class in evaluating the compositions together based on the established criteria [4]. Remedial teaching and supplemental instruction will be provided to address any issues that arise during the student evaluation process. Finally, an open-ended output task will be assigned, allowing students to choose from three perspectives: the potential of online courses to replace offline ones, the limitations of online courses, and the benefits of blended learning. Students will select one perspective to complete their output task. The writing checklist is as the following table 2:

Table 2. Writing Criteria Checklist

Unity	<p>Discover a clearly stated point, or topic sentence, and make sure that all other information in the paragraph or essay supports that point.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does my essay have a clearly stated thesis, including a dominant impression of why my subject is a hero? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have I eliminated or rewritten irrelevant material?
Support	<p>Support the points with specific evidence, and plenty of it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have I supported my definition with an extended example?
Coherence	<p>Organize and connect supporting evidence so that paragraphs and essays transit smoothly from one bit of supporting information to the next.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have I consistently used a single method of development in each supporting paragraph? ● Have I organized my essay in a manner that is appropriate to my subject? ● Have I used transitional words to help readers follow my train of thought? ● Does my concluding paragraph provide a summary or a final thought or both?
Sentence skills	<p>Revise and edit so that sentences are error-free for clearer and more effective communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have I used a consistent point of view throughout my essay? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have I used specific rather than general words? ● Have I avoided wordiness and used concise wording? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are my sentences varied? ● Have I checked my writing for spelling and other sentence skills, as listed on the inside back cover of the book?

4. Summary

The advent of POA presents both opportunities and challenges for English teachers at large. It enriches their pedagogical philosophies and instructional methods, necessitating profound contemplation and meticulous design for each course, incorporating critical thinking and intercultural communication aspects. Teachers are required to continuously identify and address issues throughout the teaching process. The emergence of this teaching concept caters specifically to the context of foreign language education in China, highlighting its indigenous characteristics. However, the breadth and depth of theoretical research and practical exploration in this field are still far from sufficient, indicating considerable room for further investigation in POA related topics.

References

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