

# Strategic Research on College English “Gold Course” Based on Production-oriented Approach

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## ABSTRACT

In order to meet the assessment standards of “gold course”, it is proposed to apply the POA (Production-oriented Approach) theory into the construction of “gold course” through the implementation of the learning-centered, learning-using integration and whole-person education teaching principles with modern information technology in this paper. Through the combination of the process of motivating-enabling-assessing with the high-level, creativity and challenge of “gold course”, this paper aims to promote the organic combination and common development of the theory and the practice, so as to achieve the ultimate goal of college English “gold course” construction.

**Keywords:** POA (Production-oriented Approach), college English, “gold course”, construction of courses

## 1. INTRODUCTION

After the conference—National Undergraduate Education in the New Era, “gold course” with depth, difficulty and challenge has become an important content of teaching reform in colleges and universities by adopting new educational concepts, teaching modes, teaching design and teaching content. Foreign language education is an important part of higher education in China. Only by innovating teaching modes, updating teaching content and combining with modern information technology can foreign language teaching meet the needs of the country, society and students to serve the highest national interests. In view of the main problems existing in the current foreign language “water course”, namely, low-quality course, such as low-level teaching objectives, outdated curriculum design, short-sighted curriculum content and “separation of learning and application”, this paper puts forward that the teaching principles of “learning centered”, “Learning-using integration” and “whole person education” and the teaching process of motivating-enabling-assessing should be implemented in the foreign language teaching. These high-level, innovative and challenging content and modes, such as values-shaping, frontier-exploring and ability training, are integrated into the teaching to achieve the organic integration of the POA theory and the construction of “gold course” of college foreign language, so as to provide a theoretical basis for practical application.

## 2. CONCEPT OF “GOLD COURSE”

In June 2018, Minister Chen Baosheng of the Ministry of Education proposed for the first time at the National Undergraduate Education Conference in the New Era that

the academic challenge of college students should be improved, and the “water course” should be truly transformed into the “gold course” with depth, difficulty and challenge. In August, the Ministry of Education specially issued the notice on strengthening the implementation of the spirit of the conference which proposed that “colleges and universities should comprehensively sort out the teaching content of various courses to eliminate “water course” and create “gold course” through the improvement of academic challenge, increase of the difficulty of courses, expansion of the depth of courses and the effective improvement of the teaching quality.” Eliminate water course and create gold course” was written into the document of the Ministry of Education for the first time. In November of the year, Wu Yan, director general of the Department of higher education, further explained at the 11th “China University Teaching Forum” that the “gold course” is with the high-level, innovative and challenging characteristics [1]. The high level refers to the organic integration of knowledge, ability and quality to cultivate students' comprehensive ability and advanced thinking in solving complex problems. Course teaching is not only the instillation of knowledge, but also the cultivation of students' comprehensive ability, especially the ability and logic of solving complex problems. Innovation is mainly reflected in the teaching content, teaching form and teaching results. Challenge means that the course must be difficult to some extent. At the same time, the goal of five “gold course” is established, namely, offline “gold course”, online “gold course”, online and offline hybrid “gold course”, virtual simulation “gold course” and “gold course” in social practice.

Offline “gold course”: classroom teaching is the main position, main channel and main battlefield of “gold course”. Online “gold course”: MOOC (MOOC), a new form of course inspired by “Internet + education”. Vigorously promoting the construction of online open

courses is an important way to realize the higher education of talents in China. At present, there are more than 8000 online courses on the platforms in China, such as XuetangX, zhihuishu and iCourse with the number of university students and social learners exceeding 140 million. Online and offline hybrid "gold course": the flipped classroom learning mode is adopted to improve the teaching effect through modern information technology. Virtual simulation "gold course": using information technology, intelligent technology and practice teaching to realize virtual simulation "gold course" and carry out the construction of the "gold course" in social practice.

### 3. AN OVERVIEW OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF PRODUCTION-ORIENTED APPROACH

In the past 30 years, the concept of college foreign language education in China has undertaken two great changes. The first one is from the focus on the "language form" to the focus on the "overall meaning" of the

language; the second is from imparting "language knowledge" to cultivating "language application ability". Since 2013, with the deepening of education reform, new teaching ideas and modes have sprung out and teaching content has been keeping pace with the times, but there are still a lot of problems.

For example, teaching focuses on teaching texts, neglects the practical application of language and blindly follows "learner-centered", which leads to the separation between learning and application. Overemphasizing teachers' knowledge input or relying too much on students' autonomous learning output violate the law of language learning. Wen Qiufang advocates the full play of teachers' role in language teaching, guiding students to connect "input" and "output" in the process of completing productive activities, and puts forward POA. Based on the current situation of college English teaching in China, POA, guided by the teaching principles of "learning-using integration", puts forward the hypothesis of output-driven, input-enabled and selective learning and constructs the learning process of "motivating-enabling-assessing" [2].

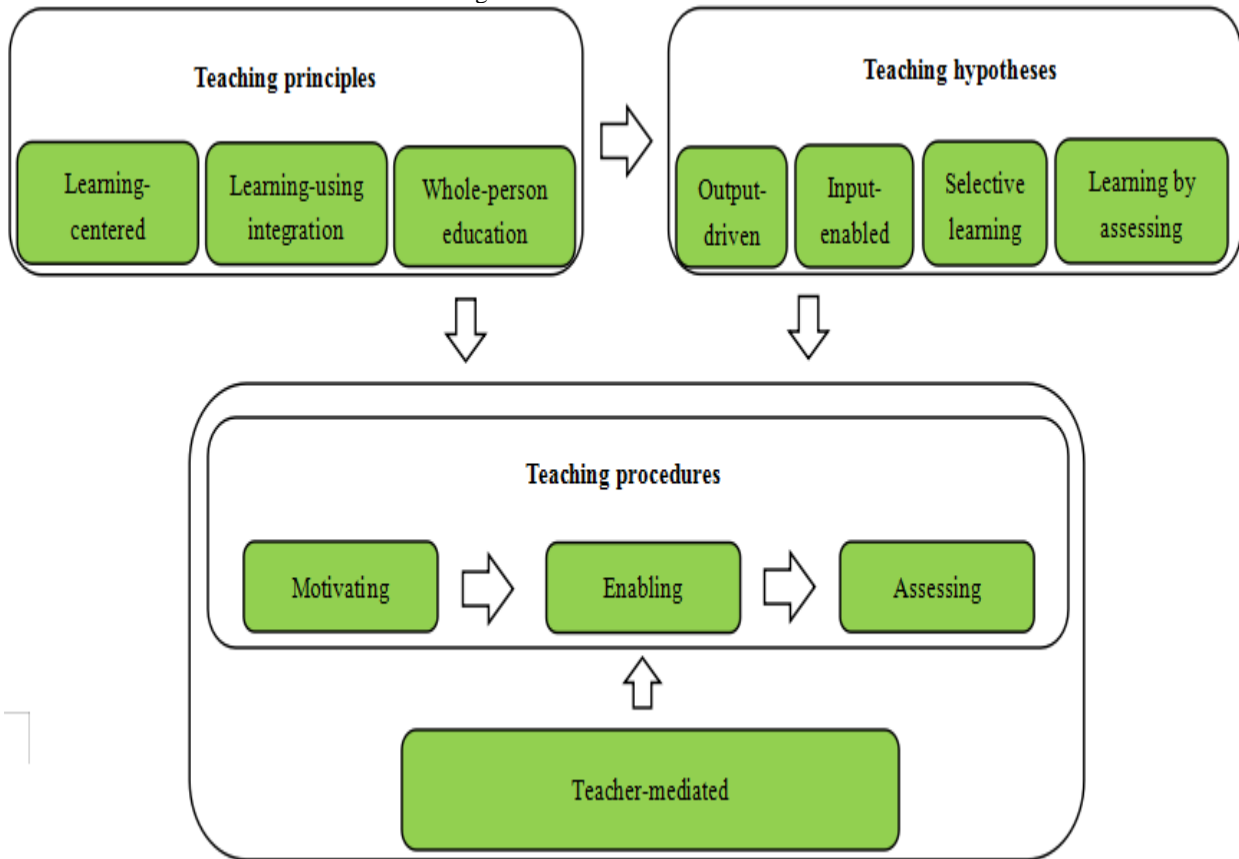


Figure 1 Production-oriented Approach

### **3.1. Teaching Principles**

"Learning-centered principle" refers to serving the occurrence of effective learning. In the concept of "learning-using integration", learning refers to input learning, and "using" refers to productive use. The theory of "whole-person education" holds that while improving students' language application ability, it should pay attention to the improvement of students' overall humanistic qualities. The selection of input materials and the design of teaching activities are all for the purpose of the cultivation of students' cultural self-confidence and patriotism, enhancement of ideological awareness and the broadening of the international vision.

### **3.2. Teaching Hypothesis**

"Output-driven" is based on "output hypothesis" and "interaction hypothesis" (Long 1983). Output is the driving force of and the goal of language learning. "Input-enabled" motivates students to activate their existing knowledge and enhance their language application ability with the help of teachers. "Selective learning" refers to the selection of input materials.

### **3.3. Teaching Procedure**

The teaching steps include "motivating", "enabling" and "assessing" with teachers as mediators. For motivating, after the teachers present communicative scenes, students complete communicative activities, and teachers explain teaching objectives and productive activities. For enabling, after the teachers describe the productive activities, students carry out selective learning and the teachers give guidance and inspection. Then, students practice productive activities and the teachers give guidance and inspection. For assessing, teachers and students learn the evaluation standards together, after the students submit productive results, teachers and students evaluate the results in class and after class together.

## **4. CONSTRUCTION STRATEGY OF "GOLD COURSE" OF COLLEGE ENGLISH BASED ON THE THEORY OF PRODUCTION-ORIENTED APPROACH**

### **4.1. Teaching Principles of "Learning-using Integration" and "Whole-person Education" are Consistent with the High-level of "Gold Course" of College English**

English is not only the main tool of foreign exchange, but also the important guarantee of opening up. The

application ability of language service talents directly affects the effect of communication. At present, the phenomenon of emphasizing theory and neglecting practice still exists in the cultivation of English talents. The limitation and low level of students' practice opportunities, the outdated learning content, and the disconnection with the market demand lead to the lack of application ability and greatly limit the important role that language service should play in expanding the opening up. Therefore, students' ability to use enable them to better qualify for the language service. "Learning-using integration" focuses on students' knowledge output and the ability of language use, the expansion of the knowledge and skill system and the improvement of their critical thinking. A specific situation, clear learning objectives and productive activities lead the students into the real situation to acquire diverse abilities such as comprehensive competence of using English and critical thinking. The "high-level" of "gold course" emphasizes that the teaching content should be of high-density, all-dimension and multilevel. The specific embodiment of "gold course" in college English education is to cultivate students' comprehensive ability and advanced thinking to solve complex problems, closely combining and promoting "learning" with "using" to realize the effective internalization of students' ability.

At the same time, the teaching principle "whole-person education theory" of "Production-oriented Approach", which focuses not only on the cultivation of students' language ability, but also on the cultivation of students' humanistic quality and patriotism. The "high level" of "gold course" is not only reflected in the high level of professional knowledge, but also the complete of the fundamental task of moral cultivation [3]. It is not only necessary to cultivate students' ability in their major, but also penetrate the humanistic spirit and values contained in the discipline into teaching activities through closely combining ideological elements with curriculum construction objectives. In the process of teaching, English education not only cultivates language competence, but also broadens the international perspective of students. But in giving students a good understanding of foreign culture and international situations, the education must put the priority on the establishment of correct values and ideas, the enhancement of the ability to distinguish "the essence" and "the dregs" and the enhancement of cultural confidence and national pride. Therefore, the teaching principles of "learning-using integration" and "whole-person education" in the POA are closely consistent with the high-level nature of the "gold course" of college English.

#### **4.2. Teaching Process of "Motivating-enabling-assessing" is in Line with the Innovation of "Gold Course" of College English**

The innovation of "gold course" means that its content should reflect the front edge and the times, and its teaching form should be advanced and interactive. Innovation injects continuous driving force and vitality into the development of education. "Based on the careful study of the future social needs and national development strategies, colleges and universities should make breakthroughs and innovations in the levels, objectives and modes of cultivating interdisciplinary foreign language talents according to their own actual situation in view of the needs of social, economic and cultural development in their respective regions<sup>[4]</sup>." Only innovation can keep up with the fast changing trend of the times, meet the increasing social needs and cultivate high-level talents to adapt to the economic and social development. Innovation is mainly reflected in two aspects. The first is the innovation of curriculum design, highlighting the teaching objectives set by the curriculum for the new era and courses with new perspectives, new ideas or new views. At the same time, there should be a student-centered innovative teaching mode with the focus on cultivating learners' innovative consciousness and thinking and emphasizing learning effectiveness.

The teaching process of POA is divided into three stages of "motivating-enabling-assessing". In the motivating stage, teachers need to use materials to arrange productive activities. Teachers' guidance of students to select learning materials is the key to the promotion of Production-oriented Approach, that is to guide students to extract learning information to complete the productive activities while relying on materials to complete the "enabling" activities [5]. The teaching process updates the current teaching mode, the design of teaching productive activities and the selection of teaching content are innovative and epochal. At the same time, the rapid development of information technology provides great help for the innovation of teaching mode and teaching content. Micro class, MOOC, flipped classroom and other teaching modes will greatly improve the teaching effect and achieve teaching innovation. Classroom teaching content is more abundant and teaching activities are more efficient to fully internalizing knowledge, which realizes the "integrated teachers-leading environment with learners as the main body and teaching resources as the support, thus classroom and extracurricular interaction space is infinitely expanded"<sup>[6]</sup>, which plays an important role in promoting the construction of online and offline hybrid "gold course", and cultivating learners innovative thinking to reflect the innovation of "gold course".

#### **4.3. Productive Activities are Consistent with the Challenge of "Gold Course"**

Designing tasks with cognitive challenge is the starting point of the Production-oriented Approach. Teachers should design productive activities with increasing difficulty according to the actual situation of students, which has a certain degree of challenge and can stimulate students' learning desire of "jumping higher". The degree of challenge emphasizes the difficulty in the process of students' ability training and the degree of goal achievement. In the college English curriculum, there are not only the dimension of language ability, but also the dimension of cognitive ability, which is seamless with the challenge requirements of "gold course".

### **5. CONCLUSION**

The construction of "gold course" with high level, innovation and challenge is the top priority in the current higher education reform. English education is an important part of higher education. "Production-oriented Approach" is a theoretical achievement tested by practice on the basis of English teaching ecology in China. The teaching principles of POA such as "learning-centered", "learning-using integration" and "whole-person education" are applied throughout the process of college English education. The abstract teaching links of "motivating", "enabling" and "assessing" are linked with the three characteristics of "gold course", which achieves the teaching goal of "Trinity" of students' value shaping, knowledge imparting and ability training through innovating the teaching mode to optimize the teaching design and enriching the teaching content. This paper aims to promote the organic combination and common development of theory and practice and provide strategic research for the construction of "gold course" of college English.

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