

# Strategies for Application of POA to College English Teaching

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## ABSTRACT

Under the background of deepening educational reforms, college English teachers must have awareness updating their teaching concept. POA is a Chinese foreign language teaching theory that combines both local characteristics and international perspectives. This paper introduces the principles of POA, analyzes the challenges and significance of its application into college English teaching, and puts forward corresponding strategies for adopting this effective teaching mode in university English teaching.

**Keywords:** *POA, College English Teaching*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the trend of internationalization in China has become increasingly obvious, and international economic exchanges have become closer. Therefore, there is a strong demand for English professionals. As an important educational organization for training specific professionals, universities should strengthen undergraduates' English proficiency to meet the basic needs of current national development. However, the traditional college English teaching model is mainly based on teaching textbooks. In the classroom, students rarely have the opportunity to practice and use the language, which makes students' verbal and written output ability very poor, leading to separation of learning and use to some extent.

In order to improve the current situation of college English teaching, Chinese scholars have been working hard to explore teaching methods suitable for China's national conditions. Professor Wen Qiufang [1] and his team fully considered the actual situation of foreign language teaching in China, and formally proposed the production-oriented approach in 2015, which is short for POA. This paper introduces the three principles of POA, analyzes the necessity and significance of applying this approach to college English teaching and puts forward corresponding strategies for the application of this effective teaching mode in university English teaching.

## 2. THE PRINCIPLES AND SIGNIFICANCE OF POA IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING

POA is short for production-oriented approach, which aims at achieving the final learning outcomes. All the teaching activities should serve useful purposes for effective learning.

### 2.1. The Principles of POA

Basically, there are 3 teaching principles to be followed during the process of adopting production-oriented approach.

(1) Motivating principle: use output tasks to stimulate students' enthusiasm and initiatives to complete the language task. Output is not only the motivation of language learning, but also the goal of language learning. Teachers design real communication scenarios and tasks with potential communicative value, and students are required to try different levels of output. When students encounter the challenges of organizing the language, their interest and passion are inspired to deal with the challenges. Besides, the motivating methods should be diversified, giving priority of real scene and the humanity of English learning. The emphasis should be put on using potential communicative scenes to stimulate students' external motivations and interest as a driving force to arouse their internal motivation for knowledge construction and exploration.

(2) Enabling principle: teachers prepare sufficient learning materials according to the teaching goals, and

guide students to select and process the input materials to have a grasp of language content, chapter structure, cultural background as well as other information, leading to a complete understanding of learning materials; When trying to give output, the students realized the lack of language knowledge and began to seek help. The teacher provided students with necessary language skills and knowledge based on the output activities, guiding them to select the necessary facilitating materials to complete the output task. At this stage, teachers should take advantage of their own language proficiency and play the leading role to invest students with core language vocabulary and necessary sentence forms, enabling them to give satisfactory and fulfilling output. At the same time, students learn selectively according to the input materials, and apply core sentences and vocabulary to the language output expression, thereby internalizing language knowledge.

(3) Assessing principle: include instant evaluation and delayed evaluation, which means teachers offer prompt comment and guidance in the process of students' study, and find or solve students' problems after students complete their tasks. The purpose of evaluation is to promote student learning. The application must be based on the classroom, pay attention to learning goals, and inform students how to balance content, language and organizational structure. In terms of evaluation methods, it is necessary to integrate self-evaluation and mutual evaluation between students and students as positive feedback can help students foster a sense of fulfillment and improve their learning motivation. It is also possible to adjust the difficulty of the task or the degree of teacher intervention according to the needs of students, so as to facilitate learning and teaching [2].

## ***2.2. The Significance of Applying POA to College English Teaching***

Production-oriented approach is a new type of teaching method, which focuses on students' language input as well as the output. In view of the fact that many college students lose interest in English learning, college English teachers should adopt POA to formulate specific teaching plans, pay attention to the final learning outcomes, develop a teaching plan to cultivate students' subjective initiative, and cultivate students to learn on their own as well as reflecting on the learning effectiveness. In addition, POA can promote the reform of the evaluation mechanism and improve the establishment of student performance evaluation system. With the application of POA, it can change the mechanical learning situation of cramming, help set different teaching directions and objectives for different learning periods, and promote learning through step-by-step teaching methods. The academic performance of each

stage is beneficial to the teachers to find the shortcomings in time, and realize the ultimate learning goals of college students.

## **3. CHALLENGES FACED BY APPLYING POA TO COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING**

Despite the continuous reform of teaching approaches in recent years, there are still many problems in the overall situation of English teaching in Chinese universities. Although POA has been gained increasing popularity and accepted by scholars home and abroad, there are still many challenges that hinder its effectiveness.

### ***3.1. Challenges Faced by Teachers***

POA completely breaks through the traditional teaching method that relies on textbooks and focuses on input. Therefore, compared with the traditional teaching method, the difficulty of teaching is increased, and the teacher's language proficiency, management ability and coordinating competence as well as leadership are demanded to a great extent. Therefore, teachers must update the traditional teaching approach, making the teaching activities flexible, adjusting timely according to the progress of the course and students' individual needs. It is of great significance for them to innovate, develop and explore suitable and intriguing language output tasks, and meanwhile improve their skills of giving comments and effective guidance. In this process, the role of the teacher team can be fully brought into play [3]. For example, several teachers form a team to redesign the teaching units and distribute tasks to students before class. In this way, students are fully informed of the specific task, which allows them to start learning with a clear goal and motivation. In addition to utilizing textbooks, teachers can also use the Internet and other resources to discover topics that are useful or interesting to students, which is very time-consuming and mentally drained.

### ***3.2. Challenges Faced by Students***

The challenges faced by students are also multifaceted. Most obviously, they must overcome reserves and shyness to express themselves in English. Moreover, the understanding of input and organizing output have set a higher demand for their abilities of managing time, working in a team and screening information and communicating in English. In other words, students not only need to understand and read the required materials, but also to be able to express clearly and logically so that others can understand their intentions and opinions, achieving the purpose of

communication effectively. This requires constant and distributed practice in their daily life, which needs a higher level of self-discipline. However, these challenges are meaningful and worthwhile because POA can urge students to be actively involved and consolidate what they have learned, as well as improving their expressive and speculative skills.

### **3.3. Exam-oriented Learning**

Many universities do not have a rigid requirement for the teaching of English. Many college students believe that the purpose of college English learning is mainly to pass the test of CET-4/6, but such simple test-oriented learning cannot cultivate students' comprehensive language ability. More importantly, an applied course such as English requires a constant combination of input and output, which finally leads to a solid grasp of English. Under the circumstances, although students have been learning English for many years, the level of English is still in the stage of "dumb English", and it is impossible to achieve free communication in English. Therefore, college English teaching should clarify its specific teaching objectives, and strike a balance between the input and output in the class.

## **4. STRATEGIES FOR THE APPLICATION OF POA**

College English teaching based on POA concept needs to actively seek the transformation of teaching thought and practice, perceiving students as the center and language application as the goal, carrying out an in-depth reform from different aspects.

### **4.1. Focus on Innovation and Optimize Teaching Contents**

In order to target the learning outcome, college teachers should change the past cramming teaching method that focused on vocabulary explanation, emphasizing comprehensive capacity and problem-solving skills, and optimizing English teaching contents. POA advocates that all language teaching activities are closely connected with its production so that learning and application are integrated. Students complete output tasks by comprehending the text, achieving the goal of training language skills. Yet, mechanical training will only make students unmotivated and lose interest. Therefore, the priority should be given on how to design meaningful activities to achieve the purpose of language training and improve students' communicative competence in English [4].

College English teachers should adopt diversified forms of activities according to specific teaching

goals, such as role play, group discussion, debating, presentation, etc., to stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning, encourage students to think and explore the learning content, thereby promoting its inherent process of information processing and finally turning knowledge into ability. For example, when setting the tasks, teachers should recognize the differences of students' learning abilities to set up different-level teaching tasks, so that students can build their own learning styles in the process of completing the learning tasks. For example, some students are very good at English vocabulary and grammar, some are keen to reading comprehension of English articles, and others are good at oral English expression and English writing. Based on OBE teaching mode, teachers should target different students to help and guide them to establish a learning style that is suitable for them.

### **4.2. Make Optimum use of Modern Educational Technology**

POA requires teachers to guide students to participate in the learning of the materials, select appropriate content, and complete the task. On the other hand, the information age provides abundant resources for foreign language teaching. Therefore, teachers should use modern information technology reasonably to help students improve the effectiveness of information transmission and communication, which is one of the necessary skills for college English teachers. Moreover, strengthening teachers' training on information technology is an essential factor to technically guarantee the effective teaching. For a long time, most teachers are immersed in front-line work and rarely have access to training opportunities. Therefore, the university management department should provide teachers with opportunities for modern information technology training on a regular basis. The training can equip teachers with various teaching supplementary technologies, thereby continuously improving their application of information technology. Armed with modern education technology, teachers are more likely to integrate information technology, rationally use teaching aids, and create a diverse teaching and learning environment, which prompts students to develop in the direction of active, autonomous personalized learning. Plus, teachers should also extend classroom learning, make full use of online teaching resources and various teaching platforms in the era of big data, reasonably arrange extracurricular tasks according to the actual needs of students, and conduct effective monitoring and follow-up of the learning process to achieve a balance of online and offline language learning.

### **4.3. Improve the Evaluation Mechanism of English Teaching**

POA involves multiple assessing mechanisms. The traditional evaluation method tends to rely on the final exam, which is too monotonous and one-sided. The process evaluation can be added, which includes students' academic performance and progress of online self-learning, the performance of students' in-class and out-of-class activities, the completion of assignments, attendance, the results of periodic and final tests. Sources of evaluation consist of self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and teacher evaluation. This dynamic and diversified assessment method can truly mirror the students' learning outcomes, maintain the passion for continuous learning and witness the progress of the students' growth. In this way, the POA concept can yield amazing benefits in real English teaching.

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### **5. CONCLUSION**

Teaching is never a one-way process, college English is no exception. To truly apply POA to the reform of college English teaching requires the joint efforts of both teachers and students. In addition to deeply understanding the essence of POA, teachers need to constantly update their teaching concept to stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm for learning by well-designed output tasks. Their reasonable organization and guidance can enable students to master language knowledge, broaden their horizons, and use language skills in a subtle way. On the other hand, students need to continuously improve their independent learning ability and sample widely to challenge them in fulfilling tasks. This will effectively promote the reform of college English teaching and improve the teaching quality to produce a generation of intelligent thinkers and problems solvers with a good command of English.