

# Analysis on the Application of Production-oriented Approach to English Teaching in the Chinese Vocational Colleges

Shan Chen

University of Perpetual Help System DALTA, Manila, Philippines, 0900

Changde Vocational Technical College, 415000

---

**Abstract:** Production-oriented Approach (POA) has set off an upsurge of theoretical and practical researches on English teaching in the universities, whose research achievements have gradually been radiated to English teaching in the vocational colleges. However, whether POA, originally aiming at the reform of English education in the universities, still has vitality in vocational colleges? This paper is to analyze the feasibility of applying POA to English teaching in the Chinese vocational colleges, and discuss the specialties of English teaching in vocational colleges under POA.

**Keywords:** Production-oriented Approach; Vocational colleges; English teaching

---

## 1. Introduction

The Production-oriented Approach (POA), initiated by Chinese Professor Wen Qiufang, is based on the facts of learning-using separation in China's foreign language education. It is based on the teaching principles of learning-centered, learning-using integration, cultural exchange and key abilities. Its teaching hypotheses include Output-driven Hypothesis, Input-enabled Hypothesis, Selective Learning and Learning through Evaluation. POA is implemented in the the teaching process of motivating, enabling and assessing (Wen, 2018).

POA, which is supposed to be applied among intermediate and advanced foreign language learners (Wen, 2015), emphasizes the transformation of declarative knowledge into productive procedural knowledge. However, most vocational college students obviously cannot meet the requirements of declarative knowledge under the concept of POA. Does this mean that vocational college English teaching can only be labeled as a bystander or an audience of POA? This article will analyze the feasibility of applying POA to English teaching in vocational colleges, and discuss the difficulties that should be overcome when using POA in vocational college English teaching.

## 2. Feasibility Analysis of Applying POA into Vocational College English Teaching

### 2.1 Teaching Principles of POA for Vocational College English Teaching

#### 2.1.1 Learning-centered Principle

Learning-centered Principle emphasizes that school education is a planned, organized and efficient form of education (Wen, 2015), and teachers are the key factors determining the quality and efficiency of classroom teaching (Wen, 2018). Therefore, teachers should value the class time to promote effective learning of students.

Vocational colleges attach great importance to the cultivation of students' abilities. In classroom teaching, teachers' exclusive teaching should be rejected and students' inclusive activities should be encouraged. Therefore, English teachers tend to design various activities with a lively classroom atmosphere and high student participation.

#### 2.1.2 Learning-using Integration Principle

This principle advocates the close combination of input learning and output application. Under this guidance, students

with high or low English proficiency can do things in English. The difference is not in whether they can do things, but in the complexity of doing things (Wen, 2015).

Vocational college students are less likely to discuss topics such as the rationality of euthanasia, the artistry of Mona Lisa, and the bystander effect with foreigners, but the opportunities to make foreign friends, discuss business, and communicate in writing with foreigners are increasing. Closely linking what students learn in class with what they use after class can fundamentally stimulate students' learning motivation.

### **2.1.3 Cultural Exchange Principle**

This principle aims to correctly handle the relationship between the target language culture and the learner's native culture. Only by maintaining an attitude of equal cultural exchange between the two sides can the other party not feel disgusted or even resisted (Wen, 2018). Learning foreign cultures in language classes can deepen understanding of multiculturalism and enhance awareness of intercultural communication. It will also help students to use foreign languages to tell Chinese stories and make Chinese voices in the future (Qiu, 2020).

Nowadays, many students' attitudes towards foreign cultures have changed from worshipping foreign cultures to total negation, from which students have created excellent excuses for not learning English. Vocational college students are important members to spread Chinese culture to overseas. Only after fully understanding Chinese culture and foreign culture can they make their own voice objective and fair to other cultures.

### **2.1.4 Key Abilities Principle**

This principle refers to learners' abilities to solve problems in complex situations, including transfer ability, learning ability and cooperation ability (Qiu, 2020). English Curriculum Standards for Higher Vocational Education (2021 Edition) points out that the core literacy of English subjects in vocational colleges mainly includes four aspects: foreign-related communication in the workplace, multicultural communication, improvement of language thinking, and self-learning improvement. The core literacy of the English subject is the concentrated expression of the value of English subject education, and it is the correct values, necessary characters and key abilities gradually formed by students through learning and practice. The core literacy and key abilities of English subjects in vocational colleges complement each other, and the educational principles contained in them are in the same line and reflect each other.

## **2.2 Demand Analysis of POA for Vocational Colleges English teaching**

### **2.2.1 Output-driven Providing Learning Motivation**

POA requires teachers to present communicative scenarios in the motivating phase, and encourages students to complete the productive activities, during which students may feel their deficiencies in content, language, and structure. As a result, a starvation state may occur to students, which may arouse students' thirst for knowledge and generate sufficient internal motivation (Wen, 2015).

With the development of China's Belt and Road construction in the world, the international market needs a large number of international compound talents. Grasping this demand, vocational college English teachers can create scenarios with communicative authenticity, cognitive challenge and productive appropriateness (Wen, 2018), to stimulate students' learning interest and motivation, which broadens vocational college students' international vision and encourages them to burden the social responsibility of the Belt and Road construction.

### **2.2.2 Input-enabled Providing the Learning Content**

Although the overall English proficiency of vocational college students is lower than that of university students, the teaching objectives or productive activities set in vocational college English teaching can be higher than the actual level of vocational college students. Teachers should arrange the teaching content, decompose the sub-goals or productive sub-activities of the classroom, and use various forms of teaching methods and teaching activities to help vocational college students achieve the productive goals step by step. The enabling phase of POA can provide students with selective teaching content and teaching resources. Teaching procedures based on this selective teaching content can cater to vocational college students' practical English level, which can overcome difficulties brought by textbook and improve the efficiency of English teaching in vocational colleges.

### **2.2.3 Teacher-Student Cooperative Assessment Consolidating Learning Outcomes**

Vocational college English courses often adopt the one-way evaluation system operated by teachers. After the evaluation, opportunities for centralized feedback and error correction are few, and it is difficult to use evaluation to promote teaching. The

English foundation of vocational school students may not be satisfactory, but they already have possessed judgment, analysis and evaluation capabilities. Therefore, under the professional guidance of teachers, students can and are willing to make their own evaluations on other students' production. Even if students' evaluations cannot reach the professional level, when they are given the glorious mission to comment on other works, they can point out the shortcomings of other students, reflect and adjust their own works, and then consolidate knowledge and learn new things by reviewing.

### **3. Specificity of Application of POA to Vocational College English Teaching**

#### **3.1 Motivating Activities**

Creating a starvation state can enable students with strong learning interests and strong motivation to face up to difficulties and generate a desire to learn, but for most vocational college students, this state cannot adequately ensure effective motivation. The relevance and degree of entertainment of the productive activities are also crucial.

For example, in the unit of Food Culture, students can be asked to recommend a special Chinese restaurant to foreigners and introduce the main dish features, and then send their oral or written works to foreign friends to choose the most interesting ones according to their recommendation.

#### **3.2 Enabling Activities**

POA is always confused with the Project-based Language Teaching or Task-based Language Teaching. In the former, students often need to complete projects such as performing English dramas, writing English news, conducting English debates, or shooting English short videos. When completing these projects, students often rely on learning from each other within the group(Wen, 2017). In the latter, students need to complete tasks related to future jobs. The teaching tasks are just to decompose the target tasks into a series of small tasks, but the learners are mainly concerned with the meaning rather than the language form, and the learners do not need to learn new language points at all (Wen & Bi, 2020).

Language learning in these two teaching methods lacks the professional and systematic guidance of teachers, while in POA, teachers play the role of leader, designer and scaffolder from beginning to end. The interactive relationships between teachers and students determine that enabling activities must meet the criterion of gradualness, alignment and variety, and promote students' expression in content, linguistic form, and discourse structure.

#### **3.3 Assessing Activities**

It is difficult to mobilize the enthusiasm of the whole class and guide students to evaluate other students' works through the collaborative assessment of teachers and students. Students' evaluation often succumbs to peer-ship. Therefore, when implementing assessment, the teacher can select the works of several students in turn for the whole class to comment on, and then the whole class will rate them anonymously.

### **4. Conclusion**

This paper analyzes the applicability of POA to vocational college English teaching from the teaching principles and teaching processes, and discusses its specialties in vocational college English teaching. However, more empirical research and quantitative analysis are needed to determine how effective POA can be in vocational college English teaching.

### **References**

- [1] Wen, Q.F.(2015). Developing a Theoretical System of the Production-oriented Approach in Language Teaching. *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 4: 547-558.
- [2] Wen, Q.F.(2017). The production-oriented approach: A pedagogical innovation in university English teaching in China. In Wong L. & K. Hyland (eds.). *Faces of English Education: Students, Teachers, and Pedagogy*. London & New York: Routledge, 91-106.
- [3] Wen Q.F.(2018). Production-oriented Approach in Teaching Chinese as a Second Language. *Chinese Teaching in the World*, 2(3):387-398.
- [4] Wen, Q. F. & Bi, Z.(2020). On the Similarities and Differences of POA and TBLT. *Foreign Language Education*, 41(4): 41-46.
- [5] Qiu, L.(2020). Designing Enabling Activities in the Production-oriented Approach: Criteria and examples. *Foreign Language Education in China*, 3(2): 12-19.