A Study on Ideological-political Education in Comprehensive English Course for College English Majors Based on Production-Oriented Approach

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Abstract: *The ideological-political education within the framework of foreign language instruction underscores the development of students' competencies and ethical dispositions. Within the Production-Oriented Approach (POA), there is an emphasis on integrating learning with practical application, thereby highlighting the enhancement of students' applied skills. The synergistic fusion of ideological-political education and POA incorporates value inculcation, knowledge dissemination, and capacity building, ultimately contributing to the cultivation of English professionals with a composite perspective blending Chinese ethos and international outlook. This study, guided by POA and employing the Comprehensive English course for English majors as a conduit, addresses classroom pedagogy across five dimensions: teaching content, teaching objectives, procedural steps, specific implementation, and pedagogical assessment. Embracing the "motivating, enabling, and assessing" stages advocated by POA, it seeks to delineate an implementation pathway that seamlessly integrates explicit language instruction with implicit ideological-political education, thereby optimizing the efficacy of the course's pedagogical framework.*

Keywords: *Production-Oriented Approach; Ideological-political education; Comprehensive English course*

1. Introduction

The Comprehensive English course stands as a core component within the curriculum of college English majors, aiming to foster students' proficiency in applying English language knowledge and skills comprehensively within the initial stage of their college English studies. Central to this course is its emphasis on "comprehensiveness", which integrates specialized instruction in phonetics, morphology, syntax, and discourse, thereby advancing the holistic application and refinement of students' listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating capabilities. The ample class hours, varied instructional content, and diverse pedagogical approaches of this course create an advantageous environment for the seamless integration of ideological-political education into the course.

Educators responsible for Comprehensive English course are tasked with meticulously delineating the course content, aligning diverse intellectual frameworks and value systems, and delving extensively into the ideological-political dimensions of the course. They are encouraged to consciously, deliberately, and purposefully design teaching content and pedagogical strategies to ensure the effective implementation of ideological-political education within their courses. This study, based on the principles of POA, utilizes the teaching design of Unit 1[1] from the Comprehensive English course as a focal point, seeking to achieve educational objectives centered around enhancing students' ability to comprehensively apply English language knowledge and skills for effective communication.

2. Theoretical framework of course design

The Production-Oriented Approach (POA) is a foreign language teaching theory introduced by professor Wen Qiufang[2] in 2015, tailored to the specific national context of China and characterized by its distinctly Chinese attributes. POA is conceived as a response to the issue of "disconnection between learning and application" within English language education. Diverging from traditional "input-oriented" pedagogy, POA prioritizes the outcome as well as the process of language production.

The theoretical underpinning of POA lies in the "output-driven &input-enabled hypothesis," which advocates for the fusion of learning and practical application. Within this framework, language

production serves not only as a catalyst for language acquisition but also as the very objective of language learning. Input, on the other hand, is viewed as a facilitator for accomplishing immediate output tasks, rather than solely serving the purpose of enhancing receptive knowledge and understanding abilities. Emphasizing actual language production as a means for learners to fortify their grasp of language knowledge during the language acquisition process, this approach underscores students' utilization of learned language for communication, writing, and expression, in contrast to a passive reception of language input. Furthermore, it places significant emphasis on the contextual and environmental factors surrounding language use, thereby enabling students to apply acquired language skills within authentic contexts, leading to a better comprehension and assimilation of language rules and conventions. The approach encourages students to identify their language deficiencies through output and independently seek methods for improvement, gradually instilling a propensity for self-directed learning.

The POA teaching approach is driven by students' actual language use, aiming to enhance their language abilities through practical language output activities. This approach emphasizes students' real-life language usage, communication skills, and practical applications, encouraging the production of natural, fluent language. It facilitates the accumulation of vocabulary and grammar knowledge through language use and enhances overall language proficiency. An additional benefit of employing the POA in English teaching is its capacity to enhance students' communication skills. Particularly, in the realm of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), one primary objective is to foster students' ability to communicate effectively within professional contexts. Through the implementation of real-life language communication tasks, POA serves to bolster students' language output, enabling them to better acclimate to the demands of professional communication while concurrently refining their adaptability and overall communication proficiency.

Embedded within POA are tenets such as the "learning-centered principle," "learning-using integrated principle", and "whole-person education principle," all of which advocate for a student-centered approach that integrates knowledge acquisition, skill development, critical thinking, and value cultivation. It stands as both an impetus and an objective for pedagogical practice. Additionally, the diverse and multi-faceted assessment mechanisms inherent within the production-oriented teaching philosophy facilitate prompt identification and resolution of issues for both educators and students, thereby advancing the seamless attainment of educational objectives.

3. Teaching design

The instructional framework of POA is geared towards fostering students' language production and practical application skills by structuring specific tasks and contextual scenarios, offering constructive feedback, promoting collaborative learning, and incorporating personalized learning methodologies. Emphasizing task-based activities, this approach encourages students to undertake authentic and meaningful communication, thereby facilitating the practical application and use of language. By simulating real-life situations, work-related environments, or social interactions, this pedagogical method engenders genuine contexts in which students can learn and apply language effectively. Additionally, it incorporates immediate feedback mechanisms to aid students in comprehending their language production, learning from errors, making timely corrections, and continuously enhancing their language proficiency. Furthermore, it advocates for collaborative learning, encouraging students to work together to accomplish tasks, learn from one another, and foster language production and communication through cooperative endeavors.

3.1. Teaching content

This unit marks the inaugural segment of Comprehensive English course and serves as the first lesson for freshmen of college English majors. Comprising two texts—Text A "Half a Day" and Text B "Making the Grade", it delivers distinct yet interconnected experiences. Text A recounts a young boy's initial encounter with kindergarten, employing his trip to, from, and within the kindergarten premises to unveil life's profound philosophy, encouraging readers to value time and approach life's challenges with optimism. It's a short story written by Egyptian writer Naguib Mahfouz[3], depicting a young boy's first day at school and his journey through life in a condensed yet symbolic manner. The story begins with the boy's excitement as he embarks on his first day of school, accompanied by his father. The narrative then swiftly progresses through various stages of the boy's life, symbolizing the passage of time and the rapidity with which life unfolds. Each stage of his life represents a different stage,

ultimately culminating in the boy's realization that half a day has passed, signifying the brevity of human existence. Through this allegorical tale, Mahfouz offers a reflection on the fleeting nature of life and the inevitability of its passing. Furthermore, Text B, also a narrative, presents greater linguistic complexity in terms of vocabulary and sentence structure, making it an apt opportunity for students to apply the skills honed through Text A to surmount the language intricacies.

Central to this unit is Text A, which employs diverse literary techniques to delineate the shifts in the young protagonist's mindset. Throughout the narrative, the boy's emotions are seldom explicitly stated; instead, they are implied through the description of his specific actions, such as "clutch, be thrown into school, tear away, cling to", as well as through the portrayal of the surrounding environment, such as "a huge, high-walled building, exceedingly stern and grim" , an atmosphere exuding severity and solemnity. These descriptions immerse readers in the boy's sentiments, evoking vivid visual imagery. The study aims to enable students to grasp the author's vibrant writing techniques and adeptly apply them in their own writing.

Simultaneously, this unit endeavors to nurture students' affection for their hometown and enhance their capacity to articulate compelling narratives about their localities in English. To this end, the teacher sets a written assignment "Great Beauty: My Hometown", tasking students with detailing a picturesque scene from their hometown. The scenario prompts students to recount their hometown's attractions in response to a foreign friend's inquiry about potential sightseeing spots in China. This production task seamlessly integrates language objectives, skill development targets, and ideological-political education, guiding students towards effectively narrating Chinese stories.

3.2. Teaching objectives

The text "Half a Day" serves as the inaugural lesson in Comprehensive English course, tailored for first-year English majors. After completing their high school education, students can acquire initial insights into college life, discerning the distinctions between high school and university experiences while harboring idealistic perceptions about their new surroundings. The primary aim is to facilitate students in swiftly adapting to their roles and proficiently managing the challenges of their college years. Consequently, the teaching objectives for this text within the unit are categorized into three tiers: linguistic, cognitive, and ideological-political.

Linguistic objectives encompass mastering foundational vocabulary, phrases, and key sentence structures, and applying them in practical contexts. Additionally, students should comprehend the essential components of narratives and craft a basic narrative embodying these elements. Further language objectives involve recounting the text's story and scrutinizing its stylistic attributes, thereby recognizing its vivid and expressive characteristics.

Cognitive objectives include understanding the definition and benefits of the "sensory imagery" writing technique and acquiring the four specific techniques encapsulated by the 4S model: "Specific; Show, don't tell; Senses; Simile". Moreover, students should be capable of utilizing criteria to make self-assessment and engage in peer assessment of English compositions, nurturing critical thinking abilities.

Ideological-political objectives encompass grasping the text's theme and deepening understanding of the concept of "cherishing time," comparing its portrayal in ancient Chinese and English literature, and refining cross-cultural communication proficiency. The prescribed writing task related to "Great Beauty: My Hometown" aims to foster students' patriotic sentiments, fortify cultural confidence, and cultivate the capacity to adeptly narrate Chinese stories in English.

3.3. Procedural Steps

The teaching hypothesis for this unit is underpinned by the "learning-centered principle," "learning-using integrated principle", and "whole-person education principle". The entire teaching steps align with the principles of "motivating, enabling, and assessing." During the "motivating" process, the teacher introduces communicative scenarios and assign tasks with "potential communicative value," aiming to help students recognize shortcomings in their language expressions[4]. This approach ultimately triggers their potential motivation for language development[5]. During the "enabling" process, the teacher offers appropriate input materials for the production task, directs students in selective learning, and facilitates task completion. The "assessing" stage involves immediate or delayed assessment of students' learning outcomes from both in-class and out-of-class

tasks, serving as a robust means to ultimately enhance teaching quality. A detailed breakdown of this approach is presented in the following table 1:

Table 1: POA procedural steps for teaching the text "Half a Day".

Teaching stages	Teacher's role	Teaching principles
Motivating	setting the writing assignment titled "Great Beauty: My Hometown" instructing students to fulfill the task and submit their completed assignments to the online platform Rain Classroom	Learning-centered principle: emphasizing that students must approach writing tasks with a positive mindset and utilize online resources Whole-person education principle: fostering love for their hometown and building cultural confidence
Enabling	encouraging students to discuss the challenges they face in writing as part of their writing tasks fill-in-the-blank exercises and word guessing from pictures to achieve language training objectives analyzing students' writing samples and introducing the 4S writing model so that students can master the "sensory imagery" writing technique guiding students to delve deeper into the text's content and writing style by explaining the "sensory imagery" writing technique and exploring relevant paragraphs and sentences within the text	Learning-using integrated principle: applying the vocabulary and phrases they have learned to their real life, demonstrating "selective learning" Whole-person education principle: selecting new and distinct examples to enhance the initial draft to foster students' innovative thinking
Assessing	Pre-class: The teacher conducts an initial assessment of students' first draft to establish the overall teaching approach. In-class: The teacher presents exemplary written work, integrating immediate classroom assessment with peer feedback. Post-class: Students produce a video recording incorporating teacher assessment, peer feedback, and self-assessment. The teacher then provides a final score along with additional evaluative suggestions.	Learning-centered principle: various forms of assessment are centered around promoting learning, which in turn facilitates the achievement of various educational objectives. Whole-person Education Principle: during peer assessments, students can identify highlights or learn from peers' compositions, fostering mutual assistance and cultivating a spirit of collective collaboration among students

3.4. Specific implementation

Regarding teaching implementation, it is segmented into three stages: pre-class, in-class, and post-class. The explorative path of ideological-political education implementation, based on POA, is detailed.

Before class, students are assigned the output task "Great Beauty: My Hometown" . They attempt to complete this task, document encountered difficulties, and upload their work to the homework submission section of Rain Classroom platform.

In class, the first step is to review vocabulary and phrases previously discussed. These vocabulary and phrases are specifically selected based on the topic of the assginment "Great Beauty: My Hometown". Students have engaged in relevant preview activities outside of class. Two methods are used for in-class checking. Firstly, providing the first letter and English definition of a word, requiring students to complete the word spelling. Secondly, using pictures and incomplete English descriptions to test if students can flexibly use relevant expressions. For example: "a____ village". This visual approach deepens students' memory of relevant vocabulary. The selected vocabulary and phrases include "scent, long-awaited, boom, expansion, picturesque, race, caress, harmonize with, brush against, sun-kissed".

Teacher's guidance is specifically demonstrated through the following steps. Firstly, the teacher guides students to actively think about and elaborate on the sensory imagery writing technique, utilizing specific words and descriptive language, through a "synonym replacement" exercise. The teacher explains the technique's definition and provides examples to aid students' comprehension. Additionally, the teacher reviews the first part of the text, identifying corresponding language points and inviting students to compare general words with specific words. Secondly, the teacher continues to use one student's writing sample to explain the second writing technique "Show, don't tell". By comparing "I was very excited" with "My eyes widened with wonder," students naturally appreciate the visual subtleties of the latter expression. The teacher supplements more examples while linking these techniques to the description of the school in the fifth paragraph of the text, aiding students' understanding of how the author portrays the kindergarten. Lastly, the teacher focuses on a particular sentence, analyzing the rhetorical device used in it. Using simile in rhetoric makes descriptions vivid and concrete. The author of the text likens his school to a high-walled fortress, and therefore, the teacher encourages the students to use similes to describe their own school. To assist students in this task, the teacher provides a sample text, gradually familiarizing them with the rhetorical technique of simile.

3.5. Pedagogical assessment

The assessment for this lesson is grounded on the principles of POA, emphasizing a "learning-centered" approach that prioritizes students' self-assessment, peer assessment, and teacher-student collaborative assessment (TSCA). The teacher demonstrates typical writing output, blending real-time classroom assessment with peer assessment. TSCA represents a novel approach within POA, designed to address contemporary teaching challenges while complementing traditional teacher's assessment, student's self-assessment, peer assessment, and machine-aided automated grading. In the final stage of POA classroom instruction, TSCA assesses tasks completed by students both during and after class, involving students, teachers, and a machine-aided automated scoring system in the assessment process. Assessment content aligns with the unit's teaching objectives, focusing on the quality of achieving communication goals and assessing the practical application of language forms and discourse structures learned by students during the "enabling" stage. Particularly, TSCA involves three stages: pre-clas, in-class and post-class. Before class, the teacher selects a few samples and critically reviews them based on the learning objectives of the unit. In class, students make critical comments on the selected samples independently, exchange their views in pairs/groups, and have teacher-guided discussion while the teacher may offer the revised version prepared in advance[6].   The evaluation method is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Method of Assessment.

stages of teaching	Method of assessment	Digital Tools for Assessment
Pre-class	Automated grading; Teacher's Online assessment; TSCA	"iwrite" platform
In-class	TSCA; Combination of Students' self-assessment and peer assessment	Offline instant assessment
Post-class	Automated grading; Teacher's Online assessment; TSCA	"iwrite" platform

4. Conclusion

Based on the concept of ideological-political education in the Comprehensive English course, this paper adopts POA to design the first unit of the course. The design includes five aspects: teaching content, teaching objectives, procedural steps, specific implementation, and pedagogical assessment. In the teaching design, various means are used to integrate elements of ideological-political education into the class, such as the topic of the writing assginment and sensory imagery writing technique. These elements are clearly presented through short writing exercises and deepened through multiple assessment methods to internalize students' understanding. Through this teaching approach, the objectives of knowledge impartation, skill development, and values shaping can be effectively achieved. However, it is important to recognize that ideological-political education places higher demands on English teachers. Teachers need to continuously learn, improve their ideological-political awareness and literacy, and enhance their ability to transmit knowledge and ideological-political elements.

Acknowledgments

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