

# The Teaching Practice for Ideological and Political Education of College English Based on “Production-oriented Approach” — A Case Study of *American Society and Culture*

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**Abstract:** The production-oriented approach and ideological and political education of college English guide the teaching content and activity design of the course "American Society and Culture". Besides, they are consistent in teaching objectives. Teachers use the production-oriented approach as a theoretical basis to design tasks comparing the social issues and cultural activities of the United States and China to achieve the effect of ideological and political education; at the same time, they actively summarize teaching experiences and condense teaching effects to form effective cases for English culture courses.

## 1. Introduction

College English courses not only carry the goal of training students' language ability, but also carry the educational goal of shaping their values. In this course of American Society and Culture, teachers should guide students analyze American issues from an international vision and cultivate patriotism based on the comparison between Chinese and American culture. What's more, it is also imperative to innovate the traditional English classroom model into the modern one and stimulate students to improve their language skills by learning and participating actively.

## 2. Teaching Theory and Ideological Guidance

### 2.1. Production-oriented Approach

The "Production-oriented Approach" (POA) is a foreign language teaching theory proposed by Professor Wen Qiufang based on the educational problem of "separation of learning and practicing" in traditional English classrooms. This theoretical system consists of three parts: 1) teaching theories, which includes "learning-center principle", "learning- using integrated principle" and "whole-person education principle", are the foundation to provide professional theoretical guidance; 2) teaching hypothesis covers "output-driven hypothesis", "input-enabled hypothesis" and "selective learning hypothesis" to provide practical support for the teaching process; 3) teaching process, which consists of motivating, enabling and assessing, is the practice of theories and hypotheses.<sup>[1]</sup> Under the guidance of this theory, teachers are expected to set appropriate teaching

objectives in the course " American Society and Culture", design teaching content to achieve output objectives, consider the input of teaching content, and guide students to evaluate output tasks inside and outside the classroom to achieve the common development of teachers and students.

### 2.2. Ideological and Political Education of College English

The Guideline of Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education<sup>[2]</sup> points out that ideological and political education is an important task to comprehensively improve the quality of talent cultivation, and it emphasizes the significance of ideological and political education in colleges and universities to cultivate the humanistic quality of students around the goals of national sentiment and cultural literacy. The Guide to Teaching College English<sup>[3]</sup> further emphasizes the importance of implementing the fundamental task of establishing moral education in college English education, proposes that the college English curriculum should set up with the fundamental task of establishing moral education, improve the quality of the curriculum, satisfy the requirements of first-class curriculum construction, reflect the high level of innovation and challenge, and organically integrate the concept and content of ideological and political education into the curriculum. From this, it is clear that the implementation of ideological and political education is to allow students to master the knowledge and skills of the course, but also implicitly foster awareness of world, values, and life.

Building strong moral character should be taken as a central task of higher education. The teacher is a leader to promote the "ideology and politics in the curriculum",

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the teaching material is the basic guarantee to carry out the ideological and political education, and the teaching method is the way to carry out the ideological and political education in the curriculum".<sup>[4]</sup> The cultural course of college English allows students to learn about the culture and cultural communication of British and American countries, and teaches them to understand and analyze the cultural differences between countries in a more open and dialectical way; while they are familiar with the social norms, cultural customs, lifestyles, ways of thinking and communication of foreign countries, they also compare and familiarize themselves with the political, economic, social and humanistic aspects of China. In addition, they will have the basic qualities as international talents and deepen their understanding and identification with Chinese culture, and achieve the purpose of ideological and political education.

### 3. Teaching Practice

#### 3.1. Out-put Driven Objectives and Design

Teachers create relevant tasks based on the topics to motivate students and achieve the integrated goals of gaining knowledge, improving skills and cultivating ideology. In terms of knowledge, students complete the tasks to understand American society and culture systematically and objectively, and improve their multicultural awareness and intercultural communication skills; in terms of skills, they participate in interactive tasks to enhance their comprehensive language skills and collaborate skills; in terms of ideology, the course integrates ideological and political education, such as Chinese and American cultural comparison and learning, critical analysis, etc., which helps to establish an awareness of cross-cultural communication, enhance cultural confidence and improve patriotism.

Teachers design and integrate the teaching content according to the characteristics of the course and students. On the course side, the teaching content is centered on the topics and appropriately updated with the country's development; at the same time, it combines the concepts of cross-cultural communication to ensure that students understand well and have something to say in class. On the students' side, each unit is designed with activities such as critical thinking discussions, oral presentations, thematic presentations, and scenario rehearsals to ensure that students can complete their sharing. Through the arrangement of tasks, students participate in the whole teaching and learning.

#### 3.2. Input-enabled Implementation

According to the POA, the implementation has three main parts: 1) the teacher describes the out-put task; 2) the students do optional learning under the guidance and check from the teacher; 3) the students complete the out-put task with the help of the teacher which means the teacher plays the roles as a designer, an organizer, a leader, and a director.<sup>[5]</sup> In the Pre-class, in-class and

post-class processes allow students to learn the course and get sufficient input to facilitate it.

##### 3.2.1 Pre-class Learning

Teachers reconstruct the framework of the course based on the textbook and shoot MOOC videos<sup>[6]</sup> with contrast between China and the United States to ensure students watch before the class. At the same time, teachers also set a small amount of objective exercises to effectively help students familiarize themselves with the videos, and prepare for the tasks in and after class.

##### 3.2.2 In-class Teaching

Based on the teaching content, teachers design activities such as questionnaires, critical thinking discussions, and group presentations under the guidance of POA. In Unit 2 Education, for example, we have added "teaching models in American universities, TOEFL, MOOCs and flipped classrooms" based on the original content in the textbook<sup>[7]</sup>; in Unit 6 Technology, we keep the classics of American Lifestyle and American Media, and integrate the topics of "Internet media, transportation, communication tools, and media industry". " Each in-class activity is designed based on the textbook and our videos. Questionnaires, critical thinking discussions, group presentations, and other out-put tasks stimulate students' participation; while face-to-face learning and interactive education concentrate on encouraging students to share their views with English practicing.

###### 3.2.2.1 Student-centered Questionnaire

Teachers design student-centered activities to give them a sense of participation and to lay the foundation for subsequent activities. For example, in Unit 6, a questionnaire about the Internet included questions "How many times a week do you surf the Internet? What do you usually do on the Internet? What devices do you do? What devices do you often use to surf the Internet? What kind of Internet communication applications do you have? Do you think the Internet brings people closer or alienates them?" were designed. When presenting the data, the teacher invites students to share their own experiences. After that, teachers can gradually teach the content and move on to critical thinking to Internet technology.

###### 3.2.2.2 Critical Thinking Discussion

The questions are designed to guide students to analyze social and cultural events in America with an objective, open, inclusive, and developmental perspective while achieving mutual learning and inspiration among students through sharing. Take Unit 6 as an example, teachers invited students to answer "How does the Internet benefit/harm us?". Based on current news a student knows, he shared the problems of cyberspace under the influence of the U.S. cyber hegemony and

expressed their expectation for a safe and peaceful cyberspace. In addition, others cited online education as an example affirmed the breakthrough significance of Internet technology on the limitation of time and space, but also expressed their concerns about the physical and mental health of long-term online, and suggested that peers should arrange the frequency and purpose of use.

Everyone became more comprehensive in their analysis of perspectives, more daring in expressing their views, and also enhanced their sensitivity and awareness of American social news, while also realizing their personal determination.

### 3.2.2.3 Group Presentation

The group presentation exercised cooperation, as well as demonstrated English. Teachers arranged Sino-US comparison tasks according to the teaching content, and the students were guided to prepare for the task step by step. In Unit 2, teachers asked students to compare college life in America and China and cited contents from Chapter 3 of *Understanding Contemporary China*.<sup>[8]</sup> Students shoot a video in English to record various activities related to Chinese culture on our campus, introduced college life on the American campus, and compared both. Then, they shared feelings about why we need to promote Chinese culture on campus as contemporary college students. After scoring in class, some students said that they had never paid attention to or participated in such activities before, and the video helped them be interested in experiencing Chinese cultural activities; others mentioned that the presentation made them firm in their future career direction, hoping to spread the voice of China.

This student-centered task allowed students to discover the beauty of Chinese culture around them; teachers encouraged students to be creative and checked the learning effects in the comparative speech. The Golden Course standards of "High level, Innovation, and Challenge"<sup>[9]</sup>, and ideological and political education were all better presented in the output tasks.

### 3.2.3 Post-class Reviewing

Students are also expected to make full use of the online teaching platform to summarize their learning after class. We also encourage students to watch post-class videos to further understand the society and culture in both countries. Teachers are required to reflect on the rationality of the teaching activity and the offline classroom teaching effects after the class, to further improve the fluency of teaching. At the same time, guidance can be given to students who have problems in the discussion or learning sharing.

## 3.3. Course Assessment

The overall quality of a course should not only focus on the teaching situation and teaching design, but also needs to be analyzed from the course evaluation. By mastering the evaluation data, teachers obtain feedback from

students, reflect on and adjust teaching behavior, and continuously improve teaching performance.

### 3.3.1 Peer Assessment and Teacher Assessment

In the course, we designed in-class activities, group presentations, and other tasks, and we used the peer evaluation system in Xuexitong to record students' evaluations of the groups who conducted group presentations. Teacher' rating and students' ratings count for 50% of the group presentation's total grade separately. Teachers comment the students' presentations and emphasize the content in class again to ensure that the students are clear about the knowledge in students' presentations. Meanwhile, students who listened to the presentation expressed their views directly in the evaluation system. Take an evaluation activity in this semester as an example, Student 1 said the presentation on the comparison of campus culture in America and China was eye-catching, group 1 well prepared their presentation in advance, and the students who gave the speech in class performed well". Student 2 commented on the presentation given by group 2 by mentioning their poster introduction was clear, and the speaker's language was fluent so that I can learn more about Native American culture. Student 3 suggested that the PPT should be polished before the presentation in class to retain an important message. Besides, speakers should follow formal ways of presentation to make it more attractive. All of these comments show the students' pertinent suggestions and serious learning attitude.

### 3.3.2 Course Assessment

During the teaching period when POA and ideological and political education were combined, most students in the class participated in the teaching evaluation and scored according to the evaluation criteria. Take the fall semester of 2022-2023 academic year as an example, 85% of the students gave full marks to the item of "immersion in and ideological and political education, focusing on educating and cultivating", and 94% of the students gave full marks to the item of "encouraging students to express their thoughts, opinions and feelings". 94% of the students gave full marks for "encouraging students to express their thoughts, opinions and feelings".

Students' comments indicated that: 1. the course was able to broaden their horizons to know current America; 2. the teacher provided assistance a lot; 3. the teacher encouraged students to answer actively and interact a lot; 4. the teacher was well-prepared and arranged abundant teaching activities; 5. activities were well-designed in pre-class, in-class, and post-class, and the teacher's lecture content was interesting; 6. the teacher taught the course with sufficient examples to attract me to participate actively.

It is easy to see that there is a high level of recognition that getting the opportunity to express their opinions and that the course learning has been rewarding. Providing students with ample opportunities to express their opinions and encouraging them to think is also an

essential part of the course activities. If students cannot complete the activities as required and follow the guidelines closely, teaching and learning will be much less effective and will not be conducive to the implementation of the POA and ideological and political education. Therefore, it is the result of active and positive cooperation between teachers and students.

Here is a questionnaire (partial data) that collected 91 students' feelings and perceptions. It was as comprehensive as possible covering all stages of teaching and learning activities and incorporating questions related to the POA and ideological and political education with the characteristics of the course.

**Table 1** Q6 Which methods does your teacher usually use for ideological and political education?

Options	Subtotal	Proportion
Lecture method	58	63.74%
Case-based teaching	60	65.93%
Discussion-based teaching	56	61.54%
POA teaching	73	80.22%
Inspirational Teaching	42	46.15%
Culturally Contrasting Teaching	51	56.04%

**Table 2** Q7 Which one do you think would enhance the effectiveness of ideological and political education?

Options	Subtotal	Proportion
Critical Thinking Discussion	57	62.64%
Case Study	74	81.32%
Teacher-explained	74	81.32%
Problem-oriented	60	65.93%
Other	2	2.2%

**Table 3** Q8 The teacher assigns a pre-class task under the "POA" and posts a topic for the group's presentation on the cultural comparison between China and the United States for the assigned group to prepare.

Options	Subtotal	Proportion
Totally agree	51	56.04%
Relatively agree	39	42.86%
Relatively disagree	0	0%
Totally disagree	1	1.1%

**Table 4** Q9 The teacher design teaching activities and contents such as case studies, group discussions, cultural comparisons, etc. to achieve teaching objectives, so that the POA and ideological and political education can be effectively integrated into classroom teaching.

Options	Subtotal	Proportion
Totally agree	54	59.34%
Relatively agree	37	40.66%
Relatively disagree	0	0%
Totally disagree	0	0%

**Table 5** Q10 After class, the teacher provides videos for students to self-learning.

Options	Subtotal	Proportion
Totally agree	51	56.04%
Relatively agree	40	43.96%
Relatively disagree	0	0%
Totally disagree	0	0%

## 4. Conclusion

The cultural course of college English is a course that focuses on cultural sedimentation and emphasizes knowledge accumulation, ability training, and personal cultivation. POA, a new teaching method based on the development of foreign languages in China, has been practiced in the teaching of various foreign language courses. Ideological and political education means exploring the relevant topics embedded in the course and unifying knowledge teaching and value shaping together with the integration of explicit and implicit education.<sup>[10]</sup> By skillfully applying POA in the course "American Society and Culture", and integrating ideological and political education into activities, students are better trained to become glocal (global + local) talents with an international perspective and a sense of patriotism, and their English expression skills are consolidated well. Besides, how to maximize the achievements of grasping knowledge, obtaining ability, and shaping values in such courses needs to be further improved and optimized, and is worthy of further practical exploration.

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