

# Blended Teaching Design of College English Based on POA Theory

—Take *After Twenty Years* as an Example

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**Abstract:** In the background of informatization, the way of "teaching" and "learning" has changed greatly. The online and offline blended teaching mode has become a common phenomenon in college English teaching. The study is the teaching design of text B in Unit 3 of *New Century College English*. The design is based on Professor Wen Qiufang's POA theory which will show the curriculum design of *After Twenty Years* from three dimensions: teaching objectives, teaching procedures and multiple evaluation. The story is the representative work of the famous writer O'Henry. It is noted for its vivid language as well as its unique connotation. This teaching design is intended to improve students' comprehensive language proficiency and thinking ability. It will establish correct outlook on life and values while improving humanistic quality through vivid language carriers. This study is conducive to comprehensively improving the quality of mixed teaching courses and the quality of talent training in colleges. It not only enriches the quality evaluation system of blended teaching, but also has certain reference significance for college English teaching.

## 1. Introduction

The public basic course of Comprehensive English is a compulsory course for freshmen and sophomore students. 64 class hours is arranged in each semester. The course has the characteristics of high general knowledge and strong practicality for the majorities. It aims to cultivate students' linguistic knowledge, linguistic competence and literary knowledge. It is necessary to reform and innovate this course to improve the quality of student training. As teaching objectives, students in these two grades have strong desire for knowledge but lack of initiative in learning, which puts forward higher requirements for the quality of teachers.

According to "Guidelines for College English Teaching", the goal of college English teaching is to cultivate students' English competence and enhance their cross-cultural communication awareness. In addition, students are required to develop self-directing learning ability and improve their comprehensive cultural awareness. By doing this way, they can effectively use English in various aspects such as study, life, social communication, and future work, and meet the needs of the country, society, and personal development. Modern information technology not only makes teaching more convenient, but also promotes changes in teaching concepts, contents and methods. Therefore, college English should vigorously promote the integration of the latest information technology and curriculum teaching and continue to play the important role of educational technology, especially information technology in foreign language teaching.

According to the requirements, although teachers optimize the teaching content in classroom, sometimes they are still unable to create a harmonious learning atmosphere<sup>[1]</sup>. Blended teaching mode breaks the limitation of time and space, solves the problem of rich curriculum content and limited teaching time, and improves students' learning enthusiasm<sup>[2]</sup>. By using blended teaching mode, the teaching design integrates information technology means into classroom teaching. Through online learning platform (WE learn, Xuexitong), students can take a promotion towards active learning, independent learning and personalized learning. Based on POA theory, this course is designed to observe the law of foreign language learning, guide and help students master learning strategies

according to the characteristics of teaching content. Meanwhile, it provides students with independent learning paths and rich self-help learning resources.

## 2. An overview of POA Theory

Production-oriented approach (POA) is proposed by Wen Qiufang Professor, which consists of three components: teaching principles, teaching hypothesis and teaching procedures<sup>[3]</sup>. As theoretical guidance, teaching principles include learning-oriented theory, input-output integrated theory, cultural exchange and key competencies. The teaching hypothesis includes output-driven, input-enabled, selective learning and assessment being learning. The teaching process is composed of N-cycles, including three parts: motivating, enabling and evaluating. Each learning activity has several teaching circles, and the specific number is determined by the teacher.

The teaching design of this lesson is based on POA theory, highlighting the teaching principles of learning-oriented, input-output integrated, cultural exchange and key competence. In the process of students' task implementation, teachers play a guiding role, assign valuable driving tasks, guide students to analyze processing materials, and urge them to think actively and complete tasks.

In addition, the after-class design is closely related to the tasks in the pre-class and in-class. It focuses on output, and provides effective evaluation after class, forming a closed-loop teaching and learning mode of "motivating, enabling and assessing". See figure 1 as follows:

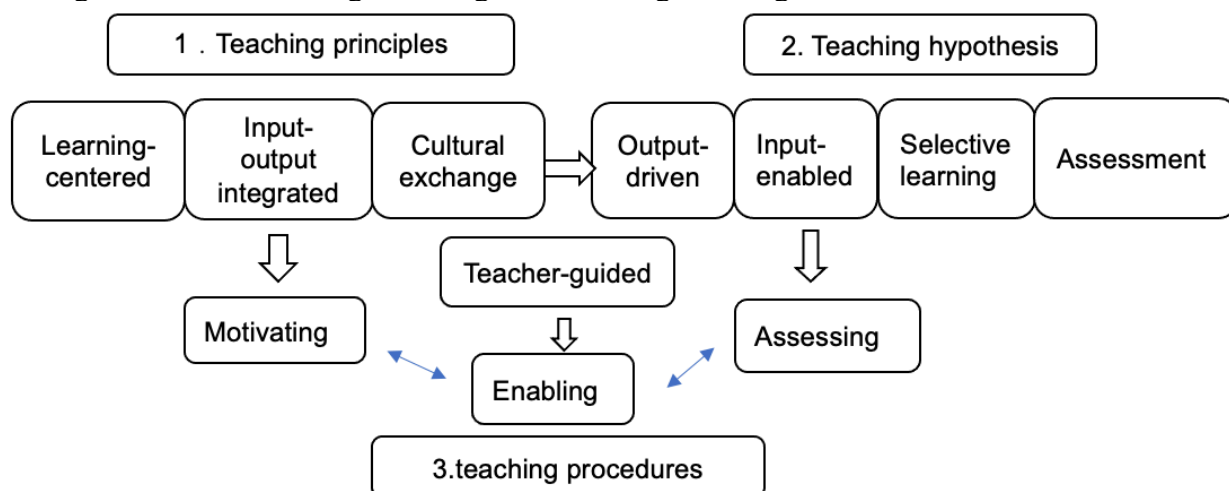


Figure 1 Theoretical system of POA.

## 3. An overview of blended teaching

With continuous development of information technology, more and more scholars pay attention to blended teaching and apply it to classroom. The concept of blended teaching is put forward on the basis of blended learning theory. Its essence is to combine face-to-face classroom teaching with online activities.

At the 21st century, the definition of blended teaching gradually became more specific. Sloan Union further refined the concept of blended teaching, clearly standardized the proportion of face-to-face teaching and online teaching, and proposed that "in the process of blended teaching, online teaching should account for 30-79% of the total teaching content". It is believed that the blended teaching strategy of mutual evaluation among students can improve their learning enthusiasm<sup>[4]</sup>. In recent years, with the development of information technology, many network platforms have gradually emerged and become mature. The increase of technological media has broadened the way of students' blended learning, which injected new vitality into the research of teaching.

## 4. Teaching objectives

The teaching objectives of this lesson are divided into knowledge objectives, ability objectives and

emotional objectives. The knowledge objective is to be able to master the basic vocabulary and language chunk, be able to use words that are related to social phenomena and laws for translation and writing exercises.

The ability objective is to improve the logic of storytelling and be able to use vivid and delicate verbs to achieve oral and writing output activities. Besides, the students are required to understand the writing characteristics of O' Henry's "unexpected ending" and the contrast in the article. What's more, they can master the reading strategies like predicting and inferring. They can also get a picture of the profound changes in various aspects of American social life in 19th century.

The emotional objective is to promote socialist core values in solving such problems and enhance cultural self-confidence. By analyzing the protagonist's practice in the article, students can establish a correct outlook on life and carry forward the "three ox spirit". Students are encouraged to seek innovation and development like "pioneering ox", to hard work and have the willingness to endure hardships like "persisting ox", and to serve people with selfless commitment like "serving-the-people ox". The teaching goal can cultivate students' ability to solve problems from multiple perspectives through unit theme discussions. It is aimed to cultivate a holistic education through developing students' potentials.

## **5. Teaching procedures**

According to College English Curriculum Requirements, the teaching design combine teaching and education in the aspects of literature and communicative instrument. In the teaching process, the teacher is required to guide students to deeply understand the text, including the plots of the text, language style, writing techniques, writing intention and so on. As a teacher, it is suggested to cultivate students' critical and innovative thinking.

*After twenty years* is a famous short story written by O. Henry who was "the father of the modern short story" in the United States. Most of his works are consisted of dramatic plots. The ending is always out of expectation but reasonable. After learning this lesson, students will be able to flexibly use the relevant words and expressions listed in the text, and briefly talk about the novel from the aspects of plot, character, ending, etc., and can also continue to write their own surprise endings and perform them.

### **5.1 Online teaching before class**

For students, it is an online autonomous learning stage. The teacher provides students with rich self-learning materials *The Gift of the Maggie* and *The Last Leaf* and uploads them to the WE learn platform. On the one hand, according to the learning materials and teaching objectives, students can complete the preview task of relevant knowledge points. They will compare these three novels and summarize their common points and make PPT to share online. The preview task can make students easier to understand the writing techniques of this novel and arouse students' interest in O. Henry's writing techniques

On the other hand, the students feedback the preview task to the teacher, so that valuable classroom time can be left for the objectives that need more guidance and help from the teacher, which can meet the needs of students for personalized and autonomous learning. Based on the teaching concept of student-centered, students have changed from passive learning into active learning, which greatly improve the efficiency of classroom teaching.

### **5.2 Offline in-class teaching**

Classroom teaching should be an occasion for students to think effectively and illustrate their learning achievements. Therefore, this stage requires not only the teaching of the teacher, but also the active participation of the students. The teacher provides targeted guidance in the whole teaching process, and guides students in correct values. According to the content and objectives of this course, the teacher needs to design classroom activities that closely combine output and input, so that English receptive knowledge can be converted into productive knowledge. Meanwhile, the teacher provides feedback to help students improve their critical thinking. It is a stage of classroom facilitating learning.

Step 1: The teacher gives the key words, and the students are asked to retell the story briefly according to them. In this way, language input can achieve oral output. By reviewing the plot of the novel, the students can consolidate existing knowledge and prepare for the writing skills in this lesson.

Step 2: With a new question and answer section, the teacher asks the students about the three elements of the novel, which can improve the literature attainments and prepare for the study of the contrast writing skills.

Step 3: The teacher summarizes the characteristics of the end of the novel and guides students to have group discussions and presentations. This step can inspire students to summarize from the details, so as to stimulate students' enthusiasm for reading.

Step 4: The teacher assigns tasks and provides guidance in the process. At the same time, the students are asked to fill in the "Peer assignment". The results is used to consolidate the knowledge and skills learned by students. It can enhance the awareness of cooperation, cultivate students' thinking ability and build up true values. See table 1 as follows:

Table 1 Peer assignment.

Rate the speaker on each point:						
5 stars-Excellent 4 stars-Good 3stars-Average 2 stars-Fair 1star-Poor						
Content	Level					Suggestion
Clear topic	★	★	★	★	★	
Detailed content	★	★	★	★	★	
Well-planned organization	★	★	★	★	★	
Efficient evidence	★	★	★	★	★	
Concise language	★	★	★	★	★	
General conclusion	★	★	★	★	★	

### 5.3 Online consolidation after class

Based on the blended teaching mode, this stage still needs to be completed with the help of the network platform. In addition to assigning expansion tasks and guiding students to carry out practical operations, teachers should also supervise students to complete tasks after class, such as online discussion, and consolidate knowledge through teacher-student interaction. On the other hand, due to the limitation of teaching time, it can also make up for the lack of thinking in the traditional classroom.

### 5.4 Multiple evaluation

Relying on the development of information technology, this lesson adopts a mixed teaching mode combining online and offline. With the help of WE learn and Xuexitong learning platform, the teacher uses diversified evaluation methods such as formative evaluation and summative evaluation to realize an online and offline evaluation system throughout the whole learning process. See table 2 as follows:

Table 2 Multiple evaluation

Evaluating mode		Evaluating content	Evaluating form	Evaluating times
Formative evaluation	input	Pre-class reading tasks	Oral evaluation	More than once
		Self-study on MOOC courses	WE Learn platform; Xuexitong platform	More than once
	output	Oral activities	Oral evaluation; peer evaluation;	More than once
		Group task	Teacher's immediate evaluation; inter-group evaluation	More than once
		Culture presentation	Teacher's oral and immediate evaluation	More than once
Summative evaluation	Translation task	written evaluation of the teacher	Once	
	Learning reflection	Self-evaluation	Once	

The evaluation subjects include teachers, online groups, peers and inter-group evaluation. The communication between teachers and students can effectively enhance the learning atmosphere in the

English course study<sup>[5]</sup>. Through the evaluation system, the teacher can timely intervene learning condition and improve teaching quality. Inspired by the process evaluation, the teacher would reasonably arrange students' seats to facilitate group discussion and improve students' participation. The teacher plays the role of scaffolding and provide targeted guidance during learning process. What's more, the teacher would also guide students to analyse the writing skills and complete the internalization and absorption of knowledge. Students can effectively use the knowledge and skills learned in this lesson to express their views. By discussing of the content and theme, the students will improve their thinking ability and establish a correct value orientation.

## 6. Conclusion

Through learning and discussion, this lesson will help deepen students' thinking about true friendship and establish a correct view of choosing friends. Through writing exercises, students are guided to deal with problems comprehensively and analyse problems dialectically, so as to find solutions to problems and improve their ability to solve problems with critical thinking.

Blended teaching and learning break the teacher-based model and gives full play to students' dominant position in the learning process. In China, blended learning has gained more and more practice in the field of teaching after more than ten years of rapid development. This learning method is essentially an exploration of the integration of information technology and curriculum<sup>[6]</sup>.

As university teachers, it is required to adapt to the development of higher education and the new requirements of the curriculum system. Under the background of informatization age, teachers should constantly improve professional theories. In addition to mastering the knowledge of the subject, it is believed that the teachers should have the awareness of the construction of various courses. They need to master the ability to select teaching content and freely adjust teaching methods during the teaching process. Only by cultivating students with multiple comprehensive abilities can they meet the needs of the development of the era in the future.

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