

An Investigation of German Language Teaching Model in Colleges and Universities based on the Production-Oriented Approach

Qiu Zhang*

Tianfu College, Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, Chengdu 610000, Sichuan, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

Copyright: © 2025 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: This study explores the application of Production-Oriented Approach (POA) in teaching German to nursing students in colleges and universities. Focusing on the requirements of the German B1 exam, the study takes the thematic unit of “Movement” as an example, and designs the teaching through the links of “drive-enable-evaluate”. The results show that POA effectively improves students’ speaking and writing output, but there are still deficiencies in reading and listening. Accordingly, this study has proposed the strategies of “vocabulary in-depth facilitation” and “accurate matching of listening and writing” to optimize the input materials and skills training, achieve the goal of “learning and using”, and provide a practical path for teaching German for Special Purposes. This provides a practical path for the teaching of German for special purposes.

Keywords: Production-oriented approach; Nursing; German language; B1 examination; Drive-enable-evaluation

Online publication: Oct 22, 2025

1. Introduction

The theoretical development of foreign language education in China has followed three paths, the introduction and transformation, rootedness in the local context, and integration of Chinese and foreign languages ^[1]. In teaching practice, these three paths cross and overlap. In order to solve the problem of the separation of theoretical learning and practical application in the teaching of foreign language education in China, the research team on foreign language and education in China led by Prof. Wen Qiufang, after more than ten years of exploration, has constructed the theoretical system of “Production-Oriented Approach” (POA) in the two-way interaction between theory and practice ^[2]. Since its introduction, POA has had a positive impact on foreign language teaching. So far, POA has been popularized and effective in foreign language education in colleges and universities. In order to enable German students in nursing colleges to learn German, pass the German B1 exam as soon as possible, and be able to use German flexibly in German hospitals in the future, the authors apply the Production-Oriented Approach (POA) to German language classrooms in nursing colleges and discuss

this teaching model.

2. Guiding principle of the “production-oriented approach” (POA)

The “Production-Oriented Approach” (POA) is the latest teaching theory proposed by Prof. Wen Qiufang, which is generally recognized in English teaching in domestic colleges and universities ^[3]. Output-oriented, all classroom activities are directed to output, and output is both the goal and the original driving force. The “Production-Oriented Approach” (POA) teaching process consists of several cycles of driving, facilitating and evaluating. Instead of the traditional teaching mode of input-output, POA adopts a new teaching sequence of output-input, for example, letting students try to output first, so that they can realize the difficulty of their own output, and then the teacher can provide relevant inputs, and with the help of the teacher, the students can then effectively absorb the knowledge that is conducive to their own outputs ^[4]. In short, through the “output-driven hypothesis”, students’ internal motivation is effectively stimulated, which promotes students’ absorption of new foreign language knowledge on the one hand, and improves their practical application of foreign language knowledge on the other hand ^[5].

In classroom teaching, after the output-driven task, there must be a corresponding input and output tasks to facilitate the successful completion of the output. The input here is targeted, learnable, and facilitative. Evaluation for learning traditional foreign language classroom often belittles the importance of student evaluation, in the POA-based classroom, evaluation is one of the very important teaching links, through the students’ feedback on the classroom, it can make the teacher’s teaching targeted to improve the students’ mastery of the knowledge of the situation have a deeper understanding, so as to further optimize and improve classroom teaching, so as to maximize the effect of the classroom. POA optimizes a new type of teaching process, drive-enablement-evaluation, and each link has interactivity and circularity with each other. Taking German teaching as an example, German teaching is based on a unit, and each unit is designed to have a big output goal, and then the big goal is broken down into small goals, which are the output of each class or the weekly output of each week, and the small goals are combined together to produce the big goal. At the end, the students will then evaluate back, and the teacher will optimize the teaching based on the evaluation, and so on.

The goal of the driving session is to make students realize their own shortcomings, so as to stimulate their internal motivation to learn the language and improve their learning initiative. How to evaluate the effectiveness of the drive session? Classroom tasks or unit tasks need to be communicative and challenging, but not too difficult, otherwise students may lose confidence in learning, and finally, the output targets should be in line with real-life needs.

The facilitation link reflects the teaching concept of “learning and using as a whole”. Students cannot only learn through the facilitation, but also use the foreign language knowledge as a tool. How to express their own opinions and ideas in German and publish them on German websites, realizing the goal of communicating in German. In order to realize the goal of output, the teacher should provide appropriate input materials, for example, screenshots of opinions expressed by Germans on the Internet, and at the same time, the teacher should design appropriate teaching activities to express your opinions about the campaigns in German, which promotes the students to acquire useful knowledge from the materials provided by the teacher and convert it into their own knowledge for output. Read a news article, listen to a dialog, watch a video and so on.

At the same time, the output tasks should be diversified, such as dialogues, writing and so on. Teachers should mobilize students’ multiple senses so as to improve learning efficiency. Unlike traditional assessment

methods, POA proposes “teacher-student collaborative assessment”, which means that students are assessed with the professional guidance of the teacher, and the assessment becomes a material for teachers and students to make progress together ^[5]. In the following, the author will take the POA theory system as a guideline and apply it to the classroom design of German language teaching in colleges and universities, so that would have a deeper understanding of the POA model of German language teaching.

3. The application of production-oriented approach (POA) in German teaching in colleges and universities

German language teaching in colleges and universities should be in line with the application of real life, avoiding the separation of learning and use as well as the pure examination of foreign languages, and should strive for the students to be able to apply their knowledge of German directly to their real life or future work, so as to realize the unity of learning and use. Learning a foreign language is not only about learning a language, but also about learning about the cultures of different countries and ethnic groups ^[6].

While students are learning German, teachers should supplement their knowledge of German national conditions and culture, so that they can learn German and understand German culture from an international perspective. Of course, while students are learning German culture, teachers should also supplement the corresponding knowledge of Chinese culture, so that students can understand Chinese culture better, thus cultivating students’ respect for and learning of the cultures of different nationalities, and their identification with and pride in their own nationality and culture. This will help students to develop their German language skills, learning skills, critical thinking skills, cultural skills and cooperative skills.

Based on the POA teaching concept and teaching assumptions, the textbook “Xinqiu Jing German Intensive Courses Intermediate 1” is used as the teaching material, and Unit 2 “Sport” is chosen as the learning theme, and the output objectives are: to write a composition task explaining why more and more people like to do sports, and to write an oral task explaining what to pay attention to when doing sports. The output objectives including to write a composition task, explains why more and more people like sports and an oral task on what to pay attention to when doing sports. The teaching process is designed according to the POA “drive-facilitate-evaluate” teaching process ^[7].

3.1. Teaching targets and key issues

The author’s students were enrolled in the School of Nursing in 2023. They were now in their second year of college, and all of them have been learning German from scratch since their first year of college. Most of them are at the European Standard A2–B1 level, and two of them are at the European Standard B1 level. The total number of students in the class is 6 (1 boy and 5 girls).

The main problems of the students in learning German are shown below.

- (1) Weak listening and speaking skills, speaking German with single sentence patterns and many grammatical errors, so their listening and speaking outputs are not high
- (2) Weak writing skills, with poor logic and unclear hierarchies
- (3) They have not formed the habit of thinking in German, and often use German to translate directly from Chinese to Chinese in both speaking and writing.

Based on the above problems, students’ German output ability is weak. Even though some students have memorized a lot of words and sentences, when they actually use the German language, the sentence patterns are used in a rigid and single way. In addition to prepare for the German B1 exam, some of the students have plans

to further their studies in Germany in the future, and German will be an important language tool in the process of work and study. Therefore, it is very urgent to improve students' language application skills.

3.2. Output objective

This chapter was based on the textbook “Xinqiu Jing German Intensive Courses Intermediate 1”, and the second unit “Sport” is chosen as the learning theme. The teaching sub-objectives were usually accomplished in two to three lessons, and the overall objective of the unit is accomplished in two weeks' time, and then the driving, facilitating and evaluating process was carried out again based on the overall objective of teaching. The final process of driving, facilitating and evaluating was based on the overall objectives (see **Table 1**).

Table 1. List of output objectives

Overall unit objective	1. Write and explain why more and more people like to do exercise. 2. Orally describe what to look for when doing exercise	Key competencies
Classroom sub-objectives	1. Describe my favorite sport (“Mein Lieblingssport”)	Language skills, cooperation skills
	2. Write a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the sport (“Zusammenfassung”)	Critical thinking
	3. Explanation of the importance of exercise (listening + speaking)	Learning ability
	4. Understand the sports programs offered by German universities (listening) Compare and contrast Chinese and German Sports programs in Germany and China	Cultural competence

3.3. Teaching process design

The teaching process as shown in the figure shows that the teaching sub-objectives were generally accomplished in two to three lessons, the overall objectives of the unit are accomplished in two weeks' time, and finally, based on the overall objectives of the teaching, the process of driving, facilitating and evaluating is carried out again.

The teaching process designation was in **Figure 1**.

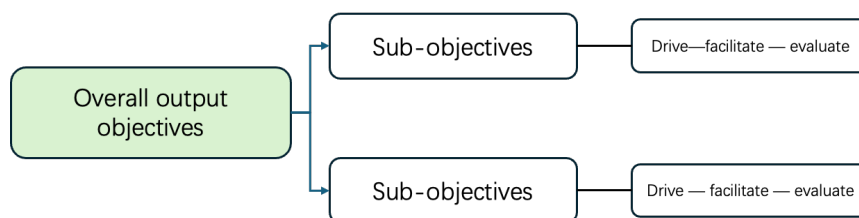


Figure 1. POA teaching flow chart.

3.3.1. Driving

The drive section is communicative, cognitively challenging and output goal appropriate, and all drive activities are designed around these three characteristics. An excerpt from the driver section shows the first sub-objective as well as the driver for the overall objective.

(1) Providing output scenarios (Olympic video + sports pictures)

First, a video of Olympic champion Chinese athletes competing in Beijing Winter Olympics was shown to students to stimulate an interested response, and the teacher asked, “Treibst du Sport? Welche Sportart kennst du?” which means “Do you do sports? What sports do you know?”. The class responds positively in German about the sports they know. Then the students were asked to identify the sport logos while learning to

memorize the new sports name, so as to improve their vocabulary through visual and auditory stimulation of the picture and videos. **Figure 2** shows an example of the materials for students showing various of sports and corresponding illustrations.

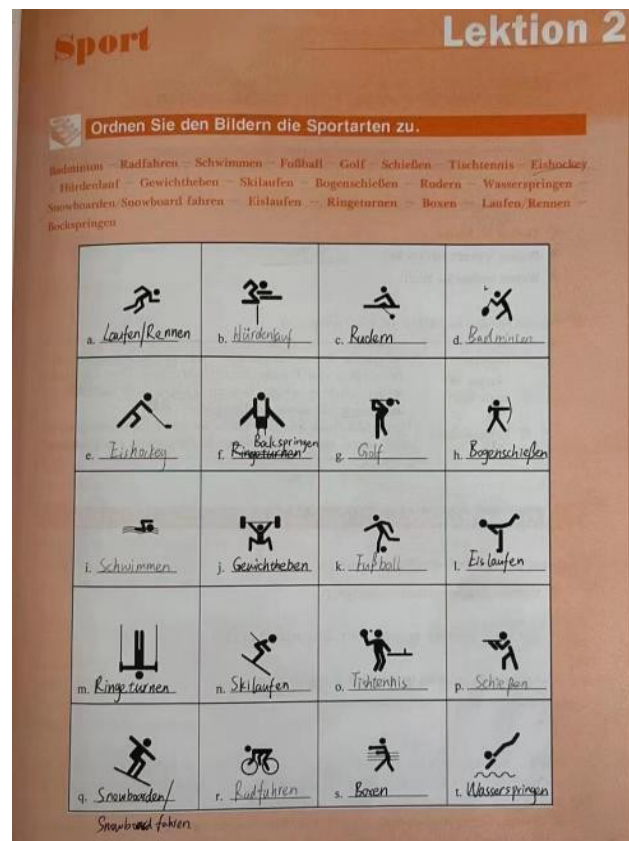


Figure 2. Sports logo chart that used to learn new vocabulary.

(2) Question 1, “Was ist dein Lieblingssport?” (“Your favorite sport?”)

After the students have sufficiently mastered the words for sports, the first sub-target question was posed: “Was ist dein Lieblingssport?” (“Your favorite sport”) with a model answer, “Mein Lieblingssport ist Tennis. Weil ich mit meinen Freunden zusammen kann”. (“My favorite sport is tennis because I can play it with my friends.”)

(3) Students try out the output

Next, students are divided into five groups of four and discuss their favorite sports within the group, then the teacher asks one member of each group at random to elaborate on their favorite sport. Finally, the teacher participates in each group discussion, corrects grammatical errors or pronunciation mistakes, and tries her best to make every student speak up and express his or her ideas. Students have already completed the first round of attempted output in their groups. During the teaching process, it was found that most of the students’ sentences were rather homogeneous, with raw language and some grammatical errors.

(4) Forum driven

The teacher opens the forum to show the German viewpoints on sport and puts forward the general objective of the output, “Warum sollte man Sport treiben?” is translated as (“Why do people do sport?”) Asking students to go to the forum and upload their own views on sport is the ultimate task of this week’s lesson.

Figure 3 below shows a forum named “Gesundheitswissen”.



5. **Sport kilt Ihre Stresshormone:** Zum Beispiel werden Adrenalin, Cortisol und Noradrenalin, Hormone, die Ihnen gewaltig zu schaffen machen können, schneller abgebaut: Ihr Körper und Seele entspannen sich.

6. **Sport strafft Ihre Konturen:** Durch verstärkten Muskelaufbau und Fettabbau schwinden Speckrollen. Ihre Körperkonturen werden „differenzierter“ und straffer. Einerseits können Sie

Figure 3. German language forum.

3.3.2. Facilitation

The facilitation section contains excerpts from the first sub-goal as well as the facilitation of the overall goal.

(1) Video introduction, image introduction, question introduction

At the beginning of the class, students are mobilized through videos, visual and auditory, to attract students' attention, through the combining of sports pictures, learning and memorizing words about sports. After being asked about their favorite sport, the teacher first tries to output, the output should have some gaps for students to add, improve students' logical thinking ability, learn to build ideas, not only a simple description of their favorite sport, in order to exercise, but also according to the characteristics of the sport, to add some specific advantages or benefits of the sport, to more richly describe their favorite sport. As shown in **Table 2** below.

(2) Question introduction, framework construction, and completion of the essay: “Warum sollte man Sport treiben?” (“Why do people do sports?”)

Table 2. A guiding questioning table for students to build logical links

Sports	“Warum” (why)
“Fußball” (soccer)	1. “in der Mannschaft spielen” 2. “Das soziales Verhalten fördern” 3.
“Klettern” (climbing)	1. “Freunde kennenlernen” 2.
“Laufen” (running)	1. “Muskel aufbauen” 2. “Speck abbauen”
Tennis	

After the previous facilitating activities, the students started to study the main text, which is different from the previous way of focusing too much on intensive reading, or focusing on individual words, but focuses on the structure of the whole text, as well as the arguments that can be used as the output of the composition, that is to say, the study of the text is also oriented to the output target, which is orally described first, and then finally implemented into the composition, in order to increase the vocabulary, and to improve the practical use of the language. practical use of language.

After all the sub-objectives have been accomplished, the teacher summarizes the lesson by showing a German forum, where German people evaluate regular exercise. The teacher would summarize the lesson by presenting a German forum where German's comment on regular exercise and asks the final general question: "Warum sollte man Sport treiben?" ("Why do people play sports?") and asked the students to upload their ideas to the German forum. Through the accumulation of the previous class, most of the students exported different views, and then the teacher added the framework of the essay in order to help students organize their thoughts. As shown in **Table 3** below.

Table 3. A table of organized thoughts from students

Paragraph	Description
First paragraph 1. "Abschnitt"	"Hintergrund" Background
Second Paragraph 2. "Abschnitt"	"Vorteile" Advantages
	1. "gesund bleiben"
	2. "das soziale Verhalten fördern"
Third paragraph 3. "Abschnitt"	...
	"Nachteile" Cons
	1. "gefährlich sein"
	"Meiner Meinung nach Ich komme"

3.3.3. Evaluation

The evaluation session is also an important part of the POA teaching process and is the sublimation stage of teaching. Through the evaluation session, the knowledge points are further consolidated and deepened. Teacher-student cooperative evaluation was developed in three steps, teacher's evaluation of students, teacher-student joint evaluation, students' mutual evaluation and teacher's random evaluation. The teacher and students worked together in the evaluation session by referring to the requirements of the German B1 exam, such as vocabulary, logic, use of subordinate clauses and other requirements.

After evaluating the students' compositions, the teacher selected samples, led the students to discuss them in class, summarized some common mistakes with the students, modified the mistakes at the same time, as well as selecting good sentences to summarize and learn from them together. Students carried out mutual evaluation activities, such as the exchange of compositions between groups of students, mutual evaluation and modification, and finally the teacher checks and evaluates.

4. Discussion

There are some problems in POA classrooms. First, the increase in teaching activities sometimes leads to disruption of the classroom rhythm, and some activities may take more time than expected if students are very interested in them, which leads to mistakes in grasping the classroom time. Secondly, the existing textbook is not a POA textbook, so not every unit is suitable for learning by POA teaching method, which creates certain difficulties for teachers' lesson preparation and makes it impossible to follow the POA teaching mode in every unit.

Thirdly, in the evaluation session, when the teacher selects a typical case for joint evaluation with the students, he needs to communicate with the students in time to see if the work can be evaluated openly, so as to avoid negative impacts due to the high self-esteem of the students or their special sensitivity.

Overall, the POA teaching model provides an effective teaching theory support for the German classroom.

German teachers can prepare lessons more effectively according to the teaching theory of POA, take the unit output goal as the overall goal, and then set up sub-goals for each lesson or each summary, and make the classroom activities and learning more efficient through the three links of driving, facilitating and evaluating.

5. Conclusion

The use of POA teaching method in teaching in colleges and universities is helpful to students' learning. Through the POA teaching method, 30% of the nursing class students' compositions have been improved to some extent, grammatical errors have been reduced, and sentence patterns have been enriched, etc. According to the feedback from the students' questionnaires, the students' compositions have been improved. According to the students' questionnaire feedback, 50% of the students think that this method is more efficient for learning German. Teachers in the classroom can also feel that students' interest in learning has been increased, learning goals have been clarified, and the phenomenon of inattention in the classroom has been significantly reduced, and the effective classroom time has been increased because of the teaching-driven or facilitated activities.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Qiu L, 2020, *The Production-Oriented Approach to Enabling Activity Design*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- [2] Wen Q, 2015, Constructing the Theoretical System of "Output-Oriented Method". *Foreign Language Teaching and Research*, 47(4): 547–558.
- [3] Wen Q, 2017, A Theoretical Framework for the Use and Evaluation of Teaching Materials in the "Production-Oriented Approach". *Foreign Language Education in China*, 10(2): 17–23.
- [4] Wen Q, 2018, "Output-Oriented Method" and Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. *Chinese Language Teaching in the World*, 32(3): 387–400.
- [5] Wen Q, 2020, *Output-Oriented Method: Exploration of the Innovation of Chinese Foreign Language Education Theory*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- [6] Zhan X, 2019, Adaptation of German Teaching Materials Based on the Output-Oriented Approach: Enabling the Process-Oriented Design of Activities. *Foreign Languages and Foreign Language Teaching*, 2019(1): 33–42 + 145.
- [7] Zhang L, 2017, Research on the Use of POA Teaching Materials: Teaching Practice Based on Students with Different English Proficiency Levels. *Foreign Language Education in China*, 2017(2): 47–53.

Publisher's note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.