

# A Practical Study on High School English Writing Classroom Based on the "Production-Oriented Approach"

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**Abstract:** This study aims to enhance senior high school students' argumentative writing proficiency by addressing the misalignment between traditional writing instruction and the demands of the reformed Gaokao, which emphasizes logical reasoning, critical thinking, and academic language skills. Against the backdrop of China's ongoing Gaokao reforms, the Research is grounded in the Production-oriented Approach (POA). This pedagogical framework prioritizes the integration of learning and application through its three-phase cycle (motivating-enabling-assessing). The study employed a quasi-experimental design, implementing a reading-to-writing instructional model that incorporated (1) schema-building through selected texts, (2) scaffolded task chains for skill development, and (3) multidimensional assessment. Results demonstrated significant improvements in students' discourse construction and argumentation skills, confirming the model's efficacy in bridging the gap between linguistic input and productive output. The findings suggest that POA-based writing instruction can effectively prepare students for the cognitive and linguistic challenges of the reformed Gaokao.

**Keywords:** English Writing; High School; Gaokao; POA; Argumentative Writing

## 1. Introduction of Research Background

High school English writing constitutes a relatively complex component of language learning, aiming not only to articulate viewpoints through written expression but also to enhance students' foreign language proficiency. It serves as a critical juncture for linguistic production and a significant manifestation of comprehensive language output capabilities. However, in the author's

teaching practice, writing instruction often encounters the predicament of high input with low return. An analysis of the underlying reasons reveals several contributing factors: large class sizes and numerous students; after essay grading, the majority of students focus solely on scores rather than addressing errors, leading to repeated mistakes and undermining the purpose of writing practice; the error correction process is perceived as tedious, resulting in low student interest, perfunctory engagement, and even neglect of writing itself; attempts to employ alternative feedback methods diminish students' attention to feedback outcomes; limited background knowledge among students hampers their ability to enrich content, rendering compositions dull and uninspired. Additionally, the author's pedagogical observations have identified a lack of emphasis on neatness in examination scripts, with common issues such as inconsistent capitalization, spelling errors, and haphazard scribbling.

## 2. Theoretical Basis

### 2.1 Teaching Philosophy

To address the prevalent issue of "separation of learning from application" in China's English language education, Wen Qiufang [1] proposed the Production-oriented Approach (POA) as a pedagogical framework for classroom instruction. The teaching philosophy of the Production-Oriented Approach (POA) primarily encompasses three components: the Learning-Centered Principle, the Learning-Using Integrated Principle, and the Whole-Person Education Principle. POA advocates that all classroom activities should serve the purpose of effective learning. Unlike the "student-centered" teaching philosophy, POA emphasizes that teaching must achieve instructional goals and facilitate effective learning. Teachers are expected to select

classroom activities that align with the learning objectives based on practical circumstances. Additionally, addressing the prevalent issue of the separation between learning and application in current educational practices, POA promotes the "Learning-Using Integrated Principle," which encourages integrating learning with application—learning while using, using while learning, and combining the two seamlessly.

Scholarly investigations into the Production-Oriented Approach (POA) in English writing pedagogy have yielded multidimensional insights into its implementation and outcomes in senior high school contexts. Zhang's [2] classroom-based study systematically examined POA's operationalization in writing instruction, particularly highlighting how its tri-phase framework (motivating-enabling-assessing) contributes to the development of students' compositional skills and linguistic competence. Building upon pedagogical experimentation, Chen [3] developed and empirically validated an instructional framework for senior high school English writing grounded in the Production-oriented Approach (POA). The study's quantitative findings confirmed the model's efficacy in enhancing students' writing performance. Complementing this Research, Li [4] conducted a focused investigation into POA's application for writing skill development, particularly highlighting how its task-based methodology facilitates improved content organization and structural coherence in student compositions.

#### 2.1.1 Learning-centered principle

The focus of the Production-Oriented Approach (POA) teaching activities should be on learning to achieve effective classroom outcomes.

In classrooms guided by the "student-centered" teaching principle, students' output influences the determination of teaching objectives, and the role of the teacher shifts to that of a consultant and facilitator for student learning. While it may appear that students can grasp key knowledge points through group interactions [5], in reality, the absence of teacher guidance often compromises the efficiency of learning in the classroom.

Unlike the traditional "student-centered" principle, Wen Qiufang argues that the "learning-centered" principle aims to achieve

effective learning by fulfilling the teaching objectives set by the instructor. Various classroom activities serve different teaching goals. Therefore, when designing classroom activities or teaching tasks, teachers should fundamentally consider what students can learn from them.

#### 2.1.2 Learning-using integrated principle

In POA theory, the "learning" in the Learning-Using Integrated Principle refers to the input of listening and reading in second language acquisition. In contrast, "using" refers to the output of writing and translation, advocating the integration of learning and application. In English teaching, adopting the "Learning-Using Integrated" principle ensures that what is learned can be applied in practice. This allows students, regardless of their proficiency levels, to complete appropriate tasks in English. The difference lies not in the completion of tasks but in their complexity. Consequently, the phenomenon of the separation between learning and application in foreign language teaching can be mitigated.

#### 2.1.3 Teaching hypotheses

Building on Krashen's Input Hypothesis [6], POA places greater emphasis on "output-driven" instruction. It positions productive tasks as the starting point of teaching, allowing students to engage in input-based learning to address their deficiencies while completing tasks. Unlike the traditional "input-first, output-later" approach, POA advocates for a cyclical process of "output → input → output." Compared to input-based learning, output-driven instruction is more effective in stimulating students' learning motivation and enthusiasm, thereby achieving better educational outcomes.

#### 2.1.4 Input hypothesis

Krashen proposed the concept of comprehensible input and the Input Hypothesis in 1985, emphasizing the distinction between learning and acquisition in second language acquisition. Learning is a conscious process, while acquisition is a subconscious outcome. The Input Hypothesis explains how language is acquired, positing that the prerequisite for language acquisition is understanding the language, i.e., comprehensible input. The most critical feature of comprehensible input is that the input material slightly exceeds the learner's

current comprehension level, enabling learners to immerse themselves fully in the language learning environment. To elaborate on comprehensible input, Krashen introduced the  $i+1$  theory, where "i" represents the learner's current language proficiency, and "+1" refers to input that is slightly above the learner's current level. Input that is too simple is ineffective.

In addition to comprehensible input, Krashen [7] highlighted that the third element of the Input Hypothesis is the nature of the input material. The more interesting and relevant the input material, the easier it is for learners to acquire the language.

#### 2.1.5 Output-driven hypothesis

The Output-Driven-Input-Enabled Hypothesis originates from the Output-Driven Hypothesis. Therefore, understanding the Output-Driven Hypothesis is essential for comprehending the Output-Driven-Input-Enabled Hypothesis. The Output-Driven Hypothesis posits that output is both the driving force and the goal of language learning. Compared to input, students can perceive the communicative value and recognize gaps in their language skills by completing output tasks, which in turn stimulates their motivation and enthusiasm for learning. Teaching should begin with output as the starting point.

Without language output, even high-quality input may result in insufficient foreign language proficiency. The Output Hypothesis emphasizes the development of learners' speaking, writing, and translation abilities.

The Output-Driven Hypothesis suggests that teachers have three tasks in the teaching process: designing output tasks based on students' current language proficiency, providing learners with accurate input materials, and acting as participants to evaluate students' performance. In the classroom, the teacher is a participant, while the student is the core of the teaching process. Teachers provide learners with appropriate input materials to prepare them for completing output tasks. The closer the difficulty of the input material is to the output task, the higher the students' enthusiasm and learning efficiency. The input material can be singular or diverse in quantity and can take the form of text or audio. Teachers design teaching tasks based on learning objectives and students' abilities. The output tasks should be slightly

above the students' current language proficiency.

Throughout the teaching process, students have four tasks: completing output tasks, learning new language materials, preparing for output, and presenting and analyzing their output. Completing output tasks identifies difficulties encountered during the process and addresses them by learning new language materials. Finally, students achieve language output through presentation and analysis while learning from others.

### 2.2 Teaching Process

The POA teaching process primarily consists of three stages: Motivating, Enabling, and Assessing. Throughout these stages, the teacher plays a mediating role, which is manifested through guiding, designing, and scaffolding. Specifically, teachers guide students in setting goals, design activities that facilitate learning and production, and provide scaffolding to support students in achieving their learning objectives.

## 3. Research Objectives, Content, Methods, Procedures, and Process

### 3.1 Research Objectives

Based on a review of existing literature, this study aims to address the following three questions:

1. What are the respective effects of the process approach and the Production-Oriented Approach (POA) on the English writing proficiency of high school students?
2. What advantages does POA offer in the classroom?

### 3.2 Research Participants

The participants of this study were 116 second-year high school students from Ankang High School, divided into two parallel classes taught by the author. A pre-test confirmed that there was no significant difference in English writing proficiency between the two classes, minimizing the influence of irrelevant variables. Since the students were from the author's teaching classes, the mutual understanding between the teacher and students facilitated the effective implementation of POA and the product approach, enhancing the credibility of the research results. Class 11 served as the

experimental group, where POA was applied, while Class 12 served as the control group, where task-based teaching was used. Both classes participated in 120-minute writing training sessions every three weeks.

### 3.3 Research Tools

To ensure the study's reliability and validity, both qualitative and quantitative research methods were employed to collect data, which were then analyzed using SPSS 26.0. The primary research tools included writing tests, questionnaires, and interviews.

#### 3.3.1 Writing tests

The experiment spanned half a semester, with the pre-test using the first monthly exam questions and the post-test using the final exam questions for the semester. Students participated in classroom writing practice every two weeks, with two different feedback methods implemented in the two experimental classes. Students' writing scores served as the dependent variable.

The pre-test for this study utilized the school's first monthly exam, which required students to write an article for the English Corner of the school newspaper. The topic addressed common issues such as students skipping breakfast and staying up late, prompting them to offer specific suggestions, such as changing dietary habits and increasing physical exercise. The article was limited to approximately 100 words. The exam papers were graded collectively by all first-year English teachers using a unified grading standard, ensuring relatively high reliability of the scores. The writing section was scored out of 25 points, with teachers adhering strictly to the grading criteria of the national college entrance exam. The pre-test data were used to determine whether there was a significant difference in English writing proficiency between the experimental and control groups before the teaching experiment. The post-test was conducted using the final exam of the semester.

During the experiment, both the control group and the experimental class were assigned the same writing topics every two weeks, ensuring 40 minutes for in-class writing and 80 minutes for feedback. The writing topics are listed below:

Writing Session: 1. English Learning Suggestions: Assume you are Li Hua. An

English learning website is soliciting suggestions on how to learn English well. Write a short article to contribute, covering Learning and memorizing vocabulary, Reading more, Utilizing the internet, and English Corner to practice listening and speaking frequently. 2. Traditional Culture Protection: An English newspaper for middle school students is holding an essay competition on the theme of "Protecting Chinese Traditional Culture." After reading the provided article, prepare a submission for the newspaper, including The importance of protecting Chinese traditional culture and your suggestions for cultural preservation. 3. Protecting the Finless Porpoise | Research shows that the Chinese finless porpoise is endangered due to human activities, with fewer than 1,000 remaining. Assume you are Li Hua and write a letter to WWF, asking them to pay attention to this issue and provide assistance. Include The purpose of the letter, A brief description of the current situation of the finless porpoise, and How you hope WWF can help.

#### 3.3.2 Interviews

In addition to quantitative Research, this study also employed qualitative Research by conducting interviews with students using five semi-open-ended questions. The interviews aimed to record students' attitudes and perceptions of the Production-Oriented Approach (POA). Interviews were conducted one-on-one between students and teachers, ensuring that the results did not influence each other.

### 3.4 Research Process

The experiment lasted two months, from October 2024 to December 2024. Overall, the experimental process for both the control and experimental groups can be divided into three stages.

### 3.5 Research Results and Outcomes

Based on the analysis of students' three sub-tests, pre-test, and post-test data, the following two questions were addressed:

1. What are the respective effects of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and the Production-Oriented Approach (POA) on the English writing proficiency of high school students?
2. What advantages does POA offer in the



classroom?

POA was found to be more effective in enhancing high school students' English writing proficiency, as evidenced by the steady improvement in students' writing scores.

A comparison of the pre-test scores between the experimental and control groups revealed no significant difference in average scores, indicating that both groups had similar levels of English writing proficiency before the experiment. However, after implementing the two different feedback methods, differences in performance emerged.

The writing test results showed that the experimental group's average score increased from 13.8 to 15.7, while the control group's average score rose from 13.7 to 14.6. Both independent samples t-tests and paired samples t-tests confirmed significant differences in performance between the experimental and control groups in the pre-test and post-test. Both POA and TBLT effectively improved students' English writing proficiency, but POA demonstrated a more pronounced impact.

These findings align with previous Research. For instance, Li Xiaofei [8] confirmed that POA enhances students' vocabulary, grammar, content, and structure in English writing, with grammar showing the most significant improvement. Sun Shuguang [9] found that increased teacher-student interaction during the evaluation process led to more significant student gains and improved writing proficiency.

The Production-Oriented Approach (POA) demonstrates distinct advantages over the product approach, as evidenced by the experimental process. By comparing the average scores of the two groups, it is evident that the experimental class exhibited a consistent upward trend in performance, whereas the control class showed more significant fluctuations. While the scores of both classes improved noticeably in the third test due to a reduction in test difficulty, the control class's performance remained essentially unchanged in the first two tests, where the difficulty level was stable. This indicates that the English writing performance of students in the experimental class was less affected by test difficulty. In contrast, the performance of the control class was more susceptible to such influences.

Wen Qiufang [10] posits that production is not only a motivation for second language acquisition but also its ultimate goal. In this study, students had two opportunities for production: the first occurred after writing, when they recognized the gap between their language proficiency and the writing requirements, thereby generating motivation. The second opportunity arose after evaluation, where students identified specific shortcomings in their writing through model evaluation, self-evaluation, and peer evaluation, gaining clarity on areas for improvement during revision. In summary, POA is efficacious in improving students' English writing abilities.

**What Advantages Does POA Offer in the Classroom?**

First, POA ensures entire interaction between teachers and students, resulting in higher classroom efficiency. While the product approach employs multiple evaluation methods—such as peer evaluation, self-evaluation after revision, and final teacher evaluation—these processes are conducted separately over extended periods, lacking interaction. In contrast, POA integrates self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and teacher evaluation seamlessly, with continuous teacher-student interaction. During class, the teacher first establishes evaluation criteria, and both teachers and students collaboratively evaluate a model text. This process helps students understand and apply the evaluation criteria while allowing them to verify the accuracy of their understanding. Students' feedback to the teacher also aids in identifying issues within the text. Peer evaluation fosters idea exchange among students enhances independent thinking and broadens their perspectives. It provides a platform for students to express their ideas freely, drawing attention to the form of language production and motivating them to correct linguistic errors in their writing. The students' writing demonstrated marked improvements in logical coherence and linguistic accuracy, evidenced by a higher frequency of cohesive device usage [11].

Second, compared to the TBLT, POA offers a more systematic framework, ensuring progressive improvement. It establishes clear evaluation criteria tailored to the specific content of the writing, emphasizing key

aspects [12]. For language, the criteria are broken down into spelling, grammatical accuracy, and the use of complex sentence structures; for structure, they include paragraph division, prioritization, and overall coherence; and for content, they focus on the use of transitional and connective words, as well as the neatness of the presentation. Each training session highlights different evaluation points, making the process goal-oriented. This enables students to understand each criterion profoundly and apply it to subsequent writing tasks, leading to steady improvement in their writing. This enables students to understand each criterion profoundly and apply it to subsequent writing tasks, leading to steady improvement in their writing.

Third, in POA, teachers play dual roles as participants and guides. "Selective scaffolding" used by teachers [13] during the enabling phase (e.g., immediate feedback on Chinglish expressions) proved most impactful. Before evaluation, teachers specify the focus of the writing evaluation and prepare detailed evaluation content and model texts. During the evaluation process, teachers guide students in identifying errors and help them learn the evaluation criteria. During group discussions, teachers provide professional revision suggestions, further supporting students' learning and development.

#### 4. Existing Problems and Improvements

Through a brief half-semester experiment, this Research has achieved specific results, but it also reveals several limitations.

Firstly, the study's course design has shortcomings. Genuinely understanding the principles of the Production-Oriented Approach (POA) and applying them to practical high school English teaching, particularly in integrating this philosophy into writing classes, involves numerous uncertainties in practice. For instance, determining what questions can effectively serve as classroom drivers to stimulate students' learning motivation, as well as how to design writing activities that can inspire students' input-based learning motivation and requirements, remains a challenge that requires further reflection [13].

Secondly, at the conclusion of students' writing, the evaluation phase necessitates both POA-based evaluation and peer evaluation.

This stage is also subject to various uncertainties, such as inconsistencies in students' English proficiency levels and the potential lack of objectivity and fairness in evaluations. Additionally, the methods of evaluation need refinement. Teachers need to strike a balance between "linguistic form correction" and "content fluency", avoiding excessive intervention that might hinder students' natural writing development.

As a relatively new teaching philosophy, POA requires teachers to continuously explore and refine its application in practice, genuinely comprehending its essence and practical value. This study only conducted a preliminary discussion of POA. Future efforts should focus on further practice, development, and improvement to fully realize its potential.

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