



Five College Center for World Languages

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Quick Reference for Conducting Conversation Sessions

Language Use

Language of interchange is both English and the target language. The goal of the tutorial is to answer student questions and correct student errors. Use whichever language is best for clear, concise explanations. This will vary from student to student.

A good tutorial follows the following format:

- Begin with a warmup. Greet the student as s/he enters the room and make small talk to put the student at ease for a minute.
- Begin the tutorial by looking over the homework that the student has prepared. Remember that the student will leave the homework with you to be formally graded; you are looking over the homework with the student to identify problem areas in the student's comprehension of the material.
- Questions usually arise while perusing the homework, so a large portion of the tutorial may be spent with the homework on the table. Your answers may well lead to further questions.
- The homework or your explanations can also lead into cultural discussions. These will often take place in English. This interchange is most appropriate and will help the student use the target language correctly. Remember that you are the only person who can help the student understand traditions or cultural history that informs the target language. This is time well spent.
- If the student has no further questions and there is still time remaining in the tutorial, you can give the student further practice on the material covered for the week by creating drills (either vocabulary-based or structure-based drills).
- A conversation between the two of you is an excellent way to end the session. It allows you to determine what the student has been able to internalize that week and, because you are manipulating the conversation, you can make sure the student leaves the session on a positive note.

Difference Between a Class and a Tutorial

Remember that you are not teaching a class. You are responding to the student's questions and making certain that the student has understood the concepts in the lesson. You do not lecture – you respond.

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