



Five College Center for World Languages

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3A: Preparing Lessons

3A: Preparing for the First Session

Step One: Study the Assignment

Before your conversation session, go through the material assigned for the session. Make a list of the types of language usage and vocabulary that are covered. Based on this list, what speaking skills do you need to practice with the students? Also, consider what speaking skills covered in earlier sessions should be reviewed?

Step Two: Make a Plan

You should always go to your sessions with a written session plan. You may find you need to adjust your plans during the session, but you need to start with a written plan. Your plan should include practice of new language skills and also include some review activities.

Your plan should also include notes about certain vocabulary, expressions, or usages you will target for special attention during the session. For example, if your students are learning the names for foods, you should have a list of the specific food names they are learning so that you can make sure that those food names are used repeatedly during the session. Having a list will also help you avoid introducing food names different from the ones the students are officially learning.

Your First Session with Absolute Beginners

If you are working with absolute beginners, your preparations should include a list of expressions you expect to use during the sessions. These expressions will help you stick to the expressions and phrases the student is learning on his/her own. Include expressions for greetings, partings, and words or expressions you have noticed in the study materials that the student has been using. By creating a list of “target” expressions for each session, you will have a list of phrases/sentences/words that you want to make sure you use and have the student or students use during the session.

Practice Speaking Slowly for Beginning Students

Remember to practice speaking slowly before your first sessions. Practice speaking slowly with a few words and phrases you expect to use during your first few sessions. Work on a clear pronunciation of syllables and letters. It helps if students can clearly see how your lips and mouth move to form the sounds. You may want to practice in front of a mirror. This will take some time getting used to, so be

sure to practice. As your students become more accustomed to the sounds of the language, you can gradually speed up your speech.

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