



Five College Center for World Languages

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Working in Pairs

Having students work in pairs is one way to ensure that all students are participating at the same time. Listening to and interacting with a native speaker (the conversation partner) is a different exercise than listening to and interacting with a peer. Both are useful exercises.

Working in Pairs I (Turkish)

Here the conversation partner assigns a “conversation” and chooses a pair to improvise it. The rest of the group serves as consultants and decisions are made with input from all. This can be extremely useful. Everyone is involved instead of two acting and the rest watching. Note how the students discuss the register of the improvisation and they ask, “should it be in the formal?” They reason that if one is asking the other’s name, then the two don’t know each other, and thus the interchange should use formal address.

Working in Pairs II (Turkish)

Here the conversation partner does a picture exercise by dividing the students into pairs. Each student describes the picture to the partner and the two try to determine differences in the pictures among themselves.

Working in Pairs III (Swahili)

Here the conversation partner has students ask questions of each other.

Five College Center for World Languages

79 South Pleasant St, Suite 100

Amherst College, AC Box 2264

Amherst, MA 01002

USA

[FCCWL website](#)

p: 413-542-5264

e: fclang@fivecolleges.edu



