



Five College Center for World Languages

Published on LangMedia (<https://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu>)

[Home](#) > [Five College Center for World Languages Conversation Partner Training Tutorial](#) > [Section 2: Activities](#) > 2A: Types of Activities

2A: Types of Activities

2A: What Activities are Used in a Conversation Session?

Format of a Conversation Session

You will want to prepare ahead of time what activities you are going to use and when you are going to use them during the conversation session. You may have only one or two language learners in the session. Therefore prepare activities that you can use with one person and can adapt them to use with two or more. Dialogues and role-play are particularly useful in creating authentic conversations as well as vocabulary games and activities.

Warm-up Activities

Plan to have one or two activities that can be used at the beginning of the session. It may take some time for the language learner to adjust to speaking in the target language. Make sure these activities are not too challenging and are in keeping with the material the student is covering in his/her syllabus. Warm-up activities may include asking how someone is doing, a small vocabulary game, and maybe practicing different types of greetings (informal, formal). A vocabulary game can be as simple as bringing in a set of pictures that correspond to the vocabulary words and asking the student to tell you the correct vocabulary word for each picture.

Role-play and Dialogue Activities

Role-play and dialogue activities can include activities such as the examples below. In a conversation session with only one student the conversation partner will need to participate in the activity, whereas, in a situation with two or more students, the conversation partner can divide the students into pairs and work with one student if there is an odd number.

- You play the seller and the student is the customer. Role-play a scenario in which different customers come to you to buy different items that you have brought in.
- Role-play a dinner party situation in which everyone must introduce her/himself to the host (the conversation partner) and explain where s/he is from, what s/he does, and how happy s/he is to meet the host.
- Ask simple questions as a warm-up activity. These questions should require short and easy answers. Questions may include "Do you study at Smith?" "Where do you study?" "What is your major?" "Where are you from?"
- Using the present tense, ask the student to describe his/her daily routine.

- Practice numbers! Bring in pictures of different objects that show multiples of the specific objects. For example, a picture of five houses. Then, ask the student how many houses are in the picture.

Some activities may need additional props such as pictures from a magazine or the internet, a copy of a country's map etc. Some number games or vocabulary activities are more effective with visual images. These materials are helpful and reinforce a language learner's use of the target language. Use what you think will work in helping encourage conversation and speaking.

Be sure when you are reenacting a dialogue or role-play with a student that both you and the student are standing up, greeting each other, and using appropriate body language and gestures to recreate a more authentic context. Act out the dialogues rather than remain seated. Try to establish real conversations.

Identity Cards

Identity cards refer to a set of index cards (or sheets of paper) that have information related to different "identities" on the card. These cards are useful in letting language learners practice speaking to different people in different contexts. It builds upon their ability to address people of all ages and social stations. Here is an example of what may be included on an identity card. Keep in mind that, the more the student learns in the language, the more information you can start to add to identity cards.

Sample identity card for a complete beginner:

Name: Rose Thompson
Age: 45
Occupation: teacher

Sample of an identity card for a beginner with more grammar experience:

Name: Rose Thompson
Age: 45
Occupation: teacher
Favorite opera: La Traviata
Hobbies: singing, running, and cooking.

In the second example some more attributes about Ms. Thompson were added because the student is now able to utilize this information correctly in a conversation.

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



