

Texas Learns: Proposed Five-Step Lesson Model

This model was adapted from the original Five-Step Model developed some 15 years ago by early-childhood educators Dr. Elizabeth Quintero and Dr. Ana Macias. Over the years, numerous staff members, including Barbara Baird, Ann Savino, Sara Martinez, Kay Taggart, and others at the El Paso Community College have adapted the model to fit adult learners in different contexts. We have found it a good tool for standardizing our approach and making sure we are covering all of the bases when planning and implementing lessons. This model is flexible and not prescriptive. There is plenty of room within the model for teacher and student creativity to emerge.

Initial Inquiry

The Initial Inquiry introduces the lesson focus. It is a chance to activate prior knowledge through brainstorming & discussion. During the Initial Inquiry, the teacher asks questions to help students begin to think about the topic. The questions should be open-ended and should elicit critical and creative responses. If the class speaks the same native language, and if the instructor is bilingual, some of this discussion may take place in the native language. This will allow students who are learning English to verbalize some of their more complex ideas without struggling or remaining silent. The instructor acts as a scribe, taking notes on a flip chart. Key vocabulary that emerges during this step can be used in the subsequent components. The instructor may need to translate key words verbalized by students in their native language.

Additional notes on Initial Inquiry:

- ♦ Teacher involves the class in a discussion regarding the specific topic or theme.
 - Get the conversation going
 - Get excited
 - Involve everyone
 - Help them realize what they already know

- ♦ Teacher models language behaviors such as questioning, expanding or reinforcing.
 - Explore relationships
 - Probe
 - Share
 - Make hypothesis

- ♦ Open-ended questions are vital and participants are encouraged to join regardless of limitations of knowledge.
 - Validate ideas
 - Listen and learn from each other
 - Help them realize they already know a lot

- ♦ During the discussion, vocabulary words can be identified, written on the chalkboard, discussed, used in context, and written into notebooks.

For example, if the course is designed for customer service in the retail environment, the topic may be **Welcoming Customers: Meeting and Greeting**.

The instructor may ask students to think about their own experiences as customers in a retail setting. The instructor may ask:

- How do you prefer to be greeted when you enter a store?
- What types of greetings give you a positive impression?
- What types of greetings give you a negative impression?
- Describe a good experience you have had when first entering a retail establishment.
- Describe a bad experience you have had when first entering a retail establishment.
- What role does body language and voice tone have on "meeting and greeting"?

As students share their experiences, the instructor jots notes on flip chart paper, underlining key vocabulary that emerges.

The instructor refrains from lecturing or giving her/his perspectives. When the discussion winds down, the instructor should offer a summary of key points.

Learning Activity

This component may take many forms, depending on the target content. Specific vocabulary and language structure instruction can often occur at the beginning of this step. However, this should not be the sole focus of the lesson. The learning activity should include a dynamic component that prompts students to use the new vocabulary in simulated "real-work" settings. Good learning activities often are collaborative, involving students to work with partners or in groups. Listening and speaking skills should take priority in the learning activity, and role-playing may be primary.

Additional notes on Learning Activity:

- ♦ Focuses on learning objectives.
 - Relate to ideas explored in Initial Inquiry
- ♦ Increases student knowledge in subject area.
- ♦ Uses active learning activities and strategies
- ♦ Extends oral language
 - Keep talking
 - Continue to explore
- ♦ Facilitates connection between oral and written language.

For example, in the lesson **Welcoming Customers: Meeting and Greeting**, the instructor may explicitly teach key vocabulary and language structures such as:

- Good morning (afternoon, evening)!
- Welcome to _____.
- Are you looking for something special today? May I help you?
- May I help you find anything special today?
- Please let me know if I can be of service.
- We are having a sale on _____.
- I think you'll find some great discounts in our store today.

Explicit teaching may focus on the structure of questions in English, and the use of "may" and "can." Students may brainstorm important phrases, and the teacher may provide them as well.

After the explicit teaching, students may be asked to work in pairs to develop a simple role-play between a retail salesperson and a customer. Pairs will have a chance to practice and then "perform" for their peers.

Assessment in this component may take the form of a simple rubric that provides students feedback on the clarity of communication, appropriate use of body language and intonation, etc. Peers may participate in providing feedback.

Integration of Math Skills: The learning activity will be a good place to integrate naturally correlated math skills. In this example, the instructor may provide a math lesson relating to sales, and the use of “percentage off” and/or “half-price.”

Reading in Context

During this component, students should have an opportunity to read contextual material relating to the topic. Key vocabulary may be revisited, and instruction may include decoding skills, fluency-building, and comprehension strategies.

Additional Notes on Reading in Context:

- ♦ Read what others have written about the topic.
 - Relate
 - Comment

- ♦ Directed reading-thinking activity.
 - Different interpretations are possible
 - Comprehension over decoding words

- ♦ Teacher models appropriate reading behaviors and strategies.
 - Predict
 - Visualize
 - Paraphrase
 - Describe
 - Interact with text
 - Share thoughts
 - Have fun

- ♦ Students apply strategies while engaged in reading.

- ♦ Students are encouraged to discuss, question, predict, interpret, summarize, and relate reading to own experiences or prior knowledge.

For example, in the lesson **Welcoming Customers: Meeting and Greeting**, students may read a segment of a customer-service manual that provides company policy on "meeting and greeting." Or, students may read a simple narrative that describes a customer's positive experience entering a store. Or, students may read a description of the way in which body language affects the impression one gives to customers. (Some of these texts may be included in the student text we develop for the course, and the instructor will be encouraged to incorporate other text when available.)

The instructor may deliver a simple decoding skill "mini-lesson," such as the long-e sound made by the <ee> (as in "meet" and "greet"), and the two sounds made by the <oo> (as in good & look, and as in tool & pool). Or, the instructor may discuss closed syllables (cvc) and the expected short vowel sound in conjunction with the "exception" found in the word "find," which has an unexpected long vowel sound. Or, the instructor may choose to focus on the unusual sound of the <ci> letter combination found in the word "special," and give other examples. Instructors can tailor their explicit instruction to the needs of the students.

The instructor may provide several opportunities to read text, including echo reading, choral reading, "ear-to-ear" paired reading, and independent reading. This will help build fluency. Teachers may use this opportunity to assess some or all students using running records.

Comprehension activities may include simple questions and answers, or invitations for students to paraphrase what they have read. (*Additional comprehension activities that include writing using graphic organizers may be used in the next lesson component.*)

Note: The Reading in Context and Writing in Context (below) may be re-ordered to include the Writing component prior to the Reading component. Let the lesson content dictate the order for best student benefit!

Writing in Context

This component can follow closely, or even meld with, Reading in Context. Students may participate in activities that help them transfer to paper some of the targeted key ideas and concepts. Instructors may find the use of simple graphic organizers dovetailing from the reading activity to be particularly useful. These strategies also can improve reading comprehension, and may even serve as assessments to gauge comprehension.

Additional Notes on Writing in Context:

- ◆ Uses the writing process to further comprehension of the lesson's theme.

- Get it down on paper
- Revise
- Edit
- Share
- Expand
- Clarify

- ◆ Further develops learners' listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

- Communicate
- Take risks
- Create

For example, in the lesson **Welcoming Customers: Meeting and Greeting**, students may develop a simple web to express the variety of phrases that can be used to initially greet customers.



**Greeting
Customers**

Integration of Technology: The writing component can be a great place to integrate technology into instruction. In this example, students may develop graphic organizers using word processing, or create a PowerPoint presentation designed to teach others the "language of greeting."

Or, students may work in small groups to generate a chart describing positive and negative examples of customer meeting and greeting.

Meeting and Greeting		
	Positive	Negative
Body Language	shoulders and head high smiling gesturing making eye contact	slouching frowning arms crossed reading a magazine chewing gum looking at watch
Voice Tone	warm helpful speaking up, but not shouting	sounding annoyed sighing while talking mumbling
Phrases	May I help? Are you looking for something special? We have a great sale going on today in appliances!	What do you need? What do you want? You should check out the stuff on aisle five. It's been marked down.

Instructors also may ask students to maintain a learning log or journal, in which they write a simple "debriefing" describing what they have learned in the day's lesson, and its value.

Instructors may use any written piece for assessment purposes, checking for correct spelling, accurate usage, etc.

Summation and Extension

It's always good to begin the extension assignment with a simple summation of what the class has worked on during the period. "OK, class, today we've accomplished a lot. We learned about . . . We developed new vocabulary that will enable us to . . . We read . . . We worked together to write a . . ." As the class becomes accustomed to this summation, instructors should encourage students to take the lead and summarize the day's learning aloud. This helps students appreciate all they have done in one class period.

Integration of Employability Skills: The summation segment is a good place to insert a discussion about how the day's lesson topic impacts students' abilities to become and remain employed. For instance, in this example, the instructor may want to lead discussion about the retail professional's ability to appropriately "meet and greet" customers, the impression this makes on management and coworkers, and the implications for job retention and advancement.

Extension activities are designed to help students take the knowledge they have gained past the boundaries of the classroom. This is not traditional "homework," but rather assignments that prompt students to connect what they have learned to the broader environment.

- ♦ Activities to do at home with families and children.
 - Explore ideas
 - Think
 - Relate
 - Incorporate
 - Expand

- ♦ Activities are extensions of class theme and skills.
- ♦ Activities are designed for more practice.

For example, in the lesson **Welcoming Customers: Meeting and Greeting**, the instructor may ask students to visit a retail establishment, observe what type of “meeting and greeting” they observe, write a short description, and share it with the class during the next meeting.