

# *Instructional Design of Front Vowels in College English Listening and Speaking Course Based on BOPPPS Teaching Model*

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**Abstract:** As playing a significant role in high efficiency and strong logic, BOPPPS teaching model has been widely accepted and used by College English teachers. This model mainly includes six teaching steps—Bridge-in, Objectives, Pre-test, Participatory learning, Post-test, and Summary. It is of great significance to mobilize students' participation and explore the development and application of the combination of online and offline teaching mode <sup>[2]</sup> in College English listening and speaking course.

## 1. Introduction

College English listening and speaking course is a basic general education course for non-English majors aiming at improving students' listening and speaking skills based on English language knowledge and applied skills and learning strategies. Students are required to actively participate in the course to achieve this purpose. It also means that BOPPPS teaching model is appropriate for the teaching design of this course for its high efficiency and strong logic. However, It is worthy of study how to use this model effectively in actual College English course. Therefore, now we take listening and speaking parts in Unit 1 and Unit 2—the Front Vowels /ɪ/ /i:/ /e/ and /æ/—on College English book named *Newstart College English* <sup>[1]</sup> as an example. This has profound meaning when teachers apply BOPPPS teaching model to this course, explore some ideas and provide some strategies for English instructional design.

## 2. Instructional design based on BOPPPS teaching model

BOPPPS teaching model is an effective instructional design model with six elements, which abbreviated by the initial letters. It has a complete teaching procedure which contains six steps.

**B (Bridge-in):** Starting a learning cycle that draws the learners' attention, increasing interest and motivation, and explaining the importance of the course.

**O (Outcomes):** Specified and clear teaching outcomes or objectives of the course, including what content should be understood, thought, judged, or operated by the learner under what circumstances and to what extent before the end of the course.

**P (Pre-test):** To realize how much the learners have already known about this point of

knowledge.

P (Participatory Learning): This is the main content of the whole teaching activity. Learners actively participate in it as much as possible, using a series of learning strategies and learning projects designed to help learners achieve the previously set outcomes or expected objectives.

P (Post-test): To test the learners formally or informally whether the learners have mastered the content of the teaching, and to test the learners directly whether the teaching goal is achieved.

S (Summary): Give learners the opportunity to briefly review the lesson and summarize it.

These six teaching steps are as follow extracted from the listening and speaking parts in Unit 1 and Unit 2—the Front Vowels /ɪ/ /i:/ /e/ and /æ/ —on College English book named *Newstart College English* <sup>[1]</sup>.

## 2.1 Step 1: Bridge-in

The first step named Bridge-in is to attract students' attention and increase their learning interest. The Bridge-in part should be concise and be targeted. For example, after watching the English video about Artificial Intelligence, students should make a conversation between their dreams and scientific advances. Students know about what vowels they are going to learn about during this English listening and speaking course. The purpose is to create active classroom atmosphere and activate students' knowledge in English listening and speaking course.

## 2.2 Step 2: Outcomes

This course is intended to help the Chinese EFL learners (especially for application-oriented College English learners) to improve English pronunciation, so that they will be able to communicate more effectively, as well as to be a supplement to the College English course *Newstart College English* <sup>[1]</sup>.

There is a chart below which can describe the Front Vowels including /ɪ/ /i:/ /e/ and /æ/ in Unit 1 and Unit 2 in this textbook. The correct pronunciation of the Front Vowels in Figure 1 can be clearly distinguished from the position of the tongue.

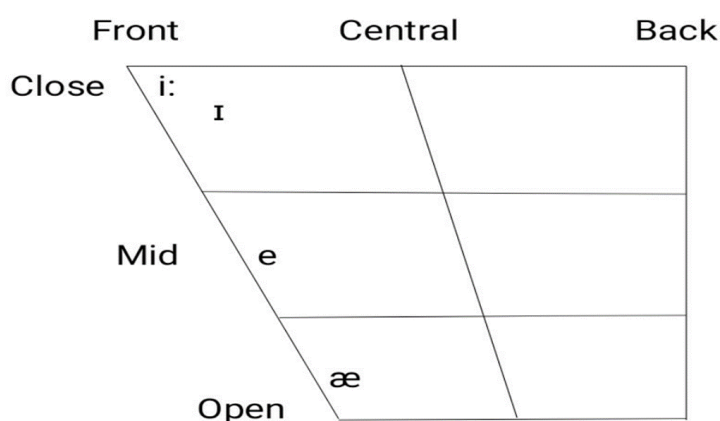


Figure 1: A description of Front Vowels

## 2.3 Step 3: Pre-test

Through pre-test, students can not only review the knowledge they have learned, but also see if

the implementation is consistent with our goals. Through practice, thought, reflection, discussion, and evaluation, teachers can master the existing knowledge base of students and facilitate to adjust the content, progress and knowledge of classroom teaching breadth, depth, etc. There are various ways of pre-test, including questioning, brainstorming, interview, examination paper and group discussion and so on.

Students would be asked to listen to a short dialogue between two classmates and then role play. Then ask students to discuss the English pronunciation problem. Students are different individuals. So we should take all the students into account. Teachers should collect overall students' feedback on the teaching topic. Understanding students' learning situation by pre-test can lay exactly a foundation for English learning in class.

## 2.4 Step 4: Participatory learning

Teachers should understand and realize students' learning objectives and procedures in the teaching process. Front Vowels can be clearly presented and distinguished from the following 5 tasks in participatory learning process.

Task 1:

Show the students two different Front Vowels /i:/ and /ɪ/ in Unit 1 on textbook *Newstart College English* <sup>[1]</sup>, and distinguish the correct individual speech sounds of English to students.

/i:/ this vowel involves only a little bit of jaw drop. The tongue tip stays behind the bottom front teeth, and the middle/front part of the tongue arches up towards the roof of the mouth. It doesn't touch the roof of the mouth, but it is very close, diminishing the space between the tongue and the roof of the mouth. Teachers should ask students to do this with as little jaw and tongue tension as possible. The corners of the lips pull a little wide, sort of like a smile — they're not quite relaxed. The tongue position brings the resonance up a little bit. Students would feel the vibration between their tongues and hard palates. But, as always, students should keep it connected to that lower placement at the base of the neck and upper chest.

/ɪ/ is one of the hardest sounds for non-native speakers. The jaw drops a bit more than /i:/, which means the arch of the tongue isn't as close to the roof of the mouth. The tongue tip is forward, lightly touching the back of the bottom front teeth, and front/mid part lifts up towards the roof of the mouth. The lips, and the corners of the lips, stay relaxed.

Group discussion on these two specific vowels should be raised by the class. And students get to construct their own cognition through discussion: For /i:/, the vibration is along the front half of the hard palate, however, for /ɪ/, it's more in the middle of the mouth.

Task 2:

Ask students to watch a video from the foreign teacher, then follow.

Task 3:

Teachers show the other two different Front Vowels /e/ and /æ/ in Unit 2 on textbook *Newstart College English* <sup>[1]</sup>, and ask students to draw a clear distinction between these two individual speech sounds of English.

To pronounce /e/, the jaw drops a good bit for this vowel. The tongue tip is forward and down, lightly touching the back of the bottom front teeth. The middle/front part of the tongue lifts towards the roof of the mouth.

To pronounce /æ/, the jaw drops quite a bit. The tongue tip stays forward, lightly touching the back of the bottom front teeth. The back part of the tongue stretches up. This can be a hard sound for students.

Task 4:

Teachers ask students to watch another video from the foreign teacher, then read after it.

### Task 5:

Students would be asked to read some words and sentences in Table 1 through these Front Vowels /ɪ/ /i:/ /e/ and /æ/ together. The purpose is to make students practice Front Vowels /ɪ/ /i:/ /e/ and /æ/ and have solid foundation and overall knowledge of them.

Table 1: Some words and sentences in participatory learning

words	sin -seen fill-feel sick-seeK pitch-peach
	bag-beg gas-guess said-sad land-lend
sentences	A friend in need is a friend indeed.
	Finish it quickly. It isn't difficult.
	Better to do well than to say well.
	Handsome is as handsome does.

### 2.5 Step 5: Post-test

If learners define their goals at the beginning of the course, it is necessary to re-examine these goals in some way. The purpose is to fulfill their English learning process. In the eyes of the learners, post-testing is a way of answering the question, "Did we do what we said we would do?"

The other purpose is to improve their ability to analyze and summarize the information they've learned in English listening and speaking course, as well as make students have a further understanding of Front Vowels.

However, how to choose the best ways of post-testing are influenced by the following factors: First, learner's knowledge, skills and attitudes;

Second, institutional norms for teaching;

Third, the degree to which the instructor applies the technology;

Fourth, facilities and equipment for teaching environment;

Last but not least, other operational or logistical issues.

No matter which way of post-testing is used, the summary section is usually concise. It also can provide English learners with instant feedback, including correcting the learners for their weaknesses and praising the learners for their efforts and achievements.

So, before the end of the course, teachers encourage students to practise more in English listening and speaking course. For example, teachers can ask students to read the tongue twisters to their partners in Table 2 to practise more about the Front Vowels including /ɪ/ /i:/ /e/ and /æ/.

Table 2: Tongue twisters in post-test

tongue twisters	Feeling ill or feeling well, Victor will hardly ever tell.
	We eat meat, sweat peas, green peas, great beans and cheese for meals in the evenings.
	Every Tuesday evening, Tim listens intently to the "Fifth Symphony" for thirty minutes.
	How can a clam cram in a clean cream can?

### 2.6 Step 6: Summary

At the end of the course, teachers give opportunities to students to briefly review the lesson and have a brief summary of the Front Vowels including /ɪ/ /i:/ /e/ and /æ/. English learners review and briefly comment on how far they have reached their goals. Thus, a brief review of the content and the main points of this course can help the learners achieve the effect of "closing the learning cycle" through integrated learning. The summary part packages the learning experience of the class as a

whole to create the feeling of completion. It also helps learners to reflect and integrate what they have learned.

### 3. Conclusion

In conclusion, the framework of BOPPPS teaching model is very clear and logic. In this instructional design above, through six different teaching arrangements, BOPPPS teaching model is naturally integrated into English language learning. But in actual classroom context, teachers, at first, need to think deeply about what kind of activity should be conducted appropriately. Furthermore, video and brainstorming can arouse students' interest and make them engage in active learning and critical thinking. Participatory learning can help students make corresponding adjustments by repeated practices. Post-test consolidates students' overall knowledge of Front vowels in English listening and speaking course<sup>[3]</sup>.

However, there are still differences between the instructional design of a lesson plan and the actual implementation based on these six steps—Bridge-in, Objectives, Pre-test, Participatory learning, Post-test, and Summary. Through observing students' performance in class and after class, BOPPPS model is feasible. Although classroom teaching results based on BOPPPS model are excellent, but this method is also challenging. For example, it remains a challenge for some students to find out the correct English listening and speaking connections, which means more tasks and guidance of the combination of online and offline English learning<sup>[2]</sup> need to be designed to help them in the real teaching situation.

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