



## English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI)

### Module 2: Task 2 – Complete 5 Readings

#### Article 2.2: *Strategies to Support Students as they Begin to Learn Content in English*

Supporting students as they study in an EMI course is crucial. Students may struggle with a range of issues, from studying in a second language to participating in an active learning environment to maintaining high motivation during challenging and stressful times.

The following case study highlights strategies that Lecturers can implement in order to help their students learn content in English. This case study features a course where there were no minimum English proficiency guidelines stated for enrollment, a situation which is not uncommon in many universities. This Tourism Management Lecturer shares her enthusiasm for teaching and problem-solving in order to help her students meet their goals. She offers seven strategies for EMI Content Teachers. Consider how you might apply these ideas in your own situation.

#### **Case Study background**

- **Name:** Liên Phan, Lecturer in the Faculty of Economics, Department of Tourism Management, Nha Trang University: More information [here](#)<sup>1</sup>
- **Nha Trang University (NTU):** In addition to strong international programs, NTU also serves many rural or regional students who have had less access to English language training. The university is in a major international tourism location, however, so students in tourism know that they have a better chance to find a good job if they can communicate in English.
- **Course:** Front Office Management



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- **Student entry requirements:** No specific student entry English proficiency requirements for this EMI course, but students intentionally chose this section for the purpose of further developing their English communication skills.

Read this advice from Ms. Phan:

### **Seven Strategies to Students as they Begin to Learn Content in English**

#### ***1. Strategically develop a multilingual, not monolingual classroom***

I didn't try to create an English-only classroom. For my students, I didn't think this would be the best start to the course, given their English level. So at beginning of the course, I first spoke to my students in Vietnamese so that I could get to know them, and I encouraged them to use Vietnamese in order to get to know each other. I then introduced English gradually into the course. Before long, I started class in English for lecturing, with all the PowerPoints in English as well. Then I would take a break and repeat the content in Vietnamese. I started asking students which language they preferred and took a vote. Eventually, I always lectured in English, using PowerPoint slides with supporting text and pictures or visuals.

For group work, I asked students to only speak in English—since they said that was why they chose this course. If they asked me questions in Vietnamese, I would pretend I didn't understand and ask them to repeat—in English. This way, the mood was lighter and they could see we were all trying. I did tell them to ask questions and use resources. But I reminded them of the importance of using the language whenever they could.

#### ***2. Help students become active learners***

Whenever I teach, I view myself as a company manager, facilitator, or leader, not as an expert who is telling my students what to do. I think this way in my classes I teach in Vietnamese or in English. In my EMI course, I had to help the students with their own learning and setting goals. I used technology to help me out. I created a Google Spreadsheet for the class and asked all my students to write in their goals during the first week. We could all read them and share. Then every couple of weeks, I would ask them to update their goals and think about how they are doing, what they like in class, and what they want to do differently in class. I could use that information to plan future lessons, and I would talk to them in class about their goals so that they knew I was reading and cared. At the end of the course, they could see all the progress they had made, which was really motivating for them.

#### ***3. Prepare students for in-class activities***

My students had a hard time with following lectures and having the vocabulary they needed for class. So, before lectures, I gave them key words in Vietnamese and English and told them to search those concepts in either or both languages and then bring that knowledge to class. That way, they had more background understanding on the topics so they could learn the English and the content at the same time.

#### ***4. Vary activities during class***

My students couldn't listen to an hour of lecturing in English (or Vietnamese!), so I would lecture for about 15 minutes and then do a more interactive activity. We did role plays, in-class interviews, or individual and team presentations. For the presentations, I recorded them and posted the recording for the class. I posted them on a Facebook page I made, but you could use other tools that were private too. Next time I teach the class, I plan on making a rubric that students can use for self-assessments and that I can use for assessing them too. I also developed an activity I call "Reaction"—where I ask a question in English and students have to answer as fast as they can. They have to just answer, without worrying if their grammar or pronunciation or English is right. That way, they feel less nervous about just speaking in class and they see that they just have to try it. This helped them feel more confident.

#### ***5. Use technology to motivate students***

I used different technologies, but one that students like is Facebook, since they're all on it anyway and they like it. I created a page open to anyone and I share lots of my class activities there, for Vietnamese or English courses. I post their presentations there so they can see them and share with friends—and it motivates them to practice! Using Facebook helps get their attention and keep them connected to class. Then during class, I bring up what I've shared on the Facebook page or anything students have shared. That way they know I'm paying attention.

#### ***6. Develop and utilize authentic assessments***

I tried to create assessments that were connected to what they would need to do with English for their jobs after they graduate. One of the assessments I did was I gave them 2 or 3 questions to write answers to in English. They had to do that during class. Then, after they finished writing their answers (and they couldn't use the internet when they wrote), I had them each come to my desk and explain their answer in English. It was a one-on-one conversation that way, and they could prepare with the writing part. That way, I could assess their writing skills and also their listening and how well they could speak their answers. Next time I teach the course, I'll have a rubric for their written answers and their spoken ones.

#### ***7. Keep notes and keep revising***

Every time I teach a class I try to improve it from the last time. For the next time I teach this EMI course, I will try to add in more of the details, like the rubrics or the directions. I want to help my students with critical thinking and deeper learning so that they can be more professional, so that is what I will focus on for next time. I kept my notes and will go step by step.

#### ***Conclusion***

Liên said that she had to be realistic with herself to teach this EMI course. She knew she would have to cover less material in this class, but she made sure they covered the most important things and that they improved in their communication and confidence in English. For advice for other EMI teachers, she said, "If you have motivation and really want to do it, you'll find a way. Find a way to make it work." Liên

also reminds us of our own opportunities to learn: “Don’t be too hard on yourself and don’t judge yourself too much. We all grow with our students; grow with them.”