



English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI)
Module 4: Task 1 – 3 Video Lectures
Video 4.2: *Lecturing in English—Delivery Considerations*

Welcome to this video on ways to maximize student understanding when lecturing in English; this video focuses on your delivery. I'm Dawn Bikowski at Ohio University.

Here are 5 strategies to help students understand EMI lectures.

1. **First, be sure to speak slowly and clearly.** Students are trying to understand what we are saying, take notes, and learn the points we are talking about. This takes time. So slow down and pause between key points. Also be sure that you use vocabulary and grammar structures that are familiar to your students, speaking in shorter sentences. Don't worry about any small mistakes you might make while lecturing in English; the goal is to speak clearly and with main points.
2. **Second, and related to number one, is to give students time to take notes during your EMI lectures.** Only about half of students in EMI courses, according to research, can take notes and listen to a lecture at the same time [on screen: (Mulligan & Kirkpatrick, 2000)]. So, pause—don't give important information while students are taking notes from the last piece of important information you just gave them. Here is a quote from a student in Mulligan and Kirkpatrick's study, to showcase this point: "Some lectures are too difficult for note taking. We can't think, just put our heads down and write what he's saying. ... It's hard to identify the main ideas because we only write."
3. **The third strategy is to use clear organizational signals.** The purpose of organizational signals is to keep our students on the same path of our lecture. Research shows that about a quarter of students from non-English speaking backgrounds can't at all follow the organization of lectures in EMI courses, and another 50-60% can only sometimes follow the organization [on screen: (Mulligan & Kirkpatrick, 2000)]. You want your students to know when you are giving them a main point vs. an example or smaller detail. You can use either explicit or implicit signals. Explicit signals are words or phrases such as "The second main point is..."; "To conclude... or In summary..."; or "The important point here is..." Implicit signals are less obvious to students. For example, when you use synonyms to explain a point in greater detail, you are signaling to students that it is not a new point—you're elaborating on the same point. Or another implicit signal is using nonverbal signals, such as moving a few steps to signal a new topic, or stressing key words when you move to a new point.
4. **Fourth, explain or clarify key terms.** Key terms can be clarified through giving or paraphrasing a definition, a synonym, an example, or an illustration/picture. Remember to repeat key terms several times during a lecture so that students become more familiar with the new and



important words. Don't avoid key terms, since students will need them in their future courses and careers.

5. **Fifth, ask questions that are clear and direct, and give them time to answer.** Earlier I referred to lecturing as communication. Asking students questions that promote engagement and critical thinking is one way that you can encourage communication in your classroom. Allowing enough time for them to think of what they want to say and answer is important as well. About 70% of students in EMI courses who are from non-English speaking countries report that they either never or only sometimes understand questions asked by their professor [on screen: (Mulligan & Kirkpatrick, 2000)]. So, it is important to ask questions that students understand. This means questions that are related to the content for the day that they prepared, that use words that students are familiar with, and that have answers that interest them. Asking comprehension questions that require elaboration from students helps ensure that students have understood the content you are telling them about. Questions such as "Is that clear?" or "Do you understand?" are not as effective in checking comprehension as are questions that require students to actually demonstrate that they understand.

I hope that these 5 strategies will be useful in your own situation. Thinking of lecturing as communication is one way to add your own strategies to these as well. The more we remember the needs of our listeners, the better the chances our students learn from our lectures.

Reference¹

Mulligan, D., & Kirkpatrick, A. (2000). How much do they understand? Lectures, students and comprehension. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 19(3), 311-335.

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