English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI)
Module 1: Task 1 – 4 Video Lectures
Video 1.4: *Assessing Student Needs for Learning in an EMI Course*

Welcome to our video on Assessing Students' Needs for Learning in an EMI Course. I'm Dawn Bikowski from Ohio University. In this video, we'll discuss how you can gather the information you need about your students' English level in order to plan your EMI course.

There are four main things we can do to assess students' needs. The first is to educate yourself about common difficulties that students have when learning content in a second language. Maybe you have already begun to talk to other lecturers, read up on this topic, or ask students about their experiences. If not, that's fine. You're beginning to learn about students' needs in this online course, so in fact, you've started on this step.

The next thing you can do is to give students a questionnaire about their experiences learning in EMI courses. You could give them just one questionnaire after they have had at least one EMI course, or you could give them two questionnaires—one at the beginning of the course with questions about what they think the EMI course will be like, challenges they think they'll encounter, support they think they will try to find, etc. You can then ask the same questions at the end of the course, but putting the questions in the past tense. And you can add open-ended questions asking for students' advice on what helped them the most or what recommendations they have. In this way, you can discover students' experiences throughout their learning process.

A third way to identify students' needs is to use a language assessment. You can give them one at the beginning of your course, or you can use the results of a test they took in the recent past. But remember that language tests only show a partial picture of how well someone can actually use the language for communication or learning. In other words, don't rely too heavily on the language test scores. But you can use them as part of an information package you put together.

The fourth and final way to identify students' needs is to have students complete an anonymous self-assessment. For example, after a lecture you can ask them questions such as "Overall, how well did you understand this lecture?" And give them options such as "I understood very well," "I understood fairly well but not everything," or "I did not understand much at all." Students will be more likely to give you accurate information if you tell them they don't have to include their name. For reading, you can do something similar and ask students to answer questions about how well they understood a reading they did for homework or during class time. Collect the self-assessments and use that information for future classes on what to help students with. Give students these self-assessments periodically during the course so that you can check how well they are doing over time. If you want to identify needs with their speaking, remember that the goal of an EMI course is not to produce error-free communication or

native-like communication. The focus is that the student can communicate in a way that others can understand. So don't worry about perfect pronunciation or about errors in speaking—focus on the overall comprehensibility of the student.

Once you have collected information about student needs, you can use this information to plan your courses or to revise them once you start teaching, for instance by deciding to add more vocabulary support or to distribute reading outlines to your students. You can also use the information to look around your university to see if any support services already exist. If so, you can tell your students about those services and get them in the habit of getting the help they need. For example, if you have a tutoring center, you can send students to that, in addition to giving them the in-class support that they need and meeting with them during office hours. Or maybe your library has extra support available. Some institutions are creating extra support services for students in EMI courses, using the extra money that EMI courses often bring in (such as through increased tuition or larger enrollments). You can also create tips sheets for students, giving them suggestions for how to learn in English.

All of these strategies work together to create a student-centered learning approach in our course. With student-centered learning, students are very active in their own learning process. They don't just listen passively to lectures during class or only do the homework problem sets assigned to them. Instead, they participate during class such as through group work, discussions, or presentations, and they explore ideas together, using critical thinking and applying knowledge to their own situations. Having a student-centered learning classroom will help you motivate and educate your students in your EMI course.

Ok, that concludes this video. We talked about four main ways you can gather specific information on student needs that you can use in your own teaching. This online course will discuss and give many examples of strategies you can utilize to use the information you gather about student needs. Thanks for watching!