

Guide for Visiting Lecturers Using English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI)

Introduction

This guide is intended for both native and non-native English-speaking lecturers who will be presenting at our university, where most students are German-speaking. Teaching in English to students whose first language is not English is known as English Medium Instruction (EMI). If your audience consists of a culturally diverse group of people with different levels of English, you may need to adapt your lecture style accordingly. This guide offers some practical suggestions or doing this, based on student feedback and research into EMI.

Preparation and Managing Expectations

- **State your learning goals:** Do this both in your proposal and during the lecture itself. In this way, the students know what to expect and what has been achieved.
- **Know your audience:** Check with the programme director about what students already know about your subject. Tailor your lecture to their level of knowledge and interests.
- **Student proficiency:** While students' English levels may vary, most will have at least a B2 level on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). They should be able to grasp the main points of your lecture, but may miss some finer details. To help, consider providing a glossary of key terms and helpful references or web links.
- **Interactive teaching:** Our students are used to a variety of teaching styles and tend to enjoy interactive elements, even if it's just a Q&A session. However, some students might need more time to respond in English.
- **Group activities:** If you plan to include group work, check with the organisers to see if the classroom or lecture hall has flexible seating arrangements.
- **Practice makes perfect:** Rehearse your lecture with a colleague or friend to get constructive feedback on clarity, pacing, and delivery.

Designing Your Slides

- **Keep slides simple:** Avoid overcrowding slides with too much text. It's hard for students to read and listen at the same time. If you need to include a long passage, give students time to read it, then summarise the key points. For important details, consider distributing handouts.
- **Use visuals:** Charts, diagrams, and images can often communicate your ideas better than text alone.
- **Emphasise key terms:** Highlight important concepts by making them bold or using capital letters.
- **Check for errors:** Double-check spelling, grammar, and formatting (e.g., the way numbers are written in English).



During the Lecture

- **Slow down:** Speak a bit slower than usual to give students more time to process the information. Use stress and intonation: Emphasise key points by varying your voice.
- **Repeat main ideas:** Repetition helps students to remember the main points.
- **Pause for effect:** Pause briefly after presenting a key point, giving students time to absorb the information.
- **Use practical examples:** Relate abstract ideas to concrete examples that are easier for students to grasp.
- **Speak naturally:** Avoid reading directly from your notes or slides. Engage with students by speaking conversationally.
- **Keep language simple:** Use everyday language that most students can understand. Avoid idioms, slang, jargon, and abbreviations that could cause confusion.
- **Don't worry about mistakes:** Minor language errors are unlikely to distract your students, so don't be concerned about them.
- **Clear instructions:** Provide instructions both orally and in writing, so students can refer back to them as needed.
- **Check understanding regularly:** Instead of just asking "Is that clear?", ask specific questions to gauge students' understanding. Encourage them to summarise what they've understood, and invite them to ask questions.
- **Be mindful of humour:** Avoid jokes that rely on wordplay or cultural references that might not be understood by everyone.
- **Use your culture as a learning opportunity:** Students will be interested in your context and how it influences your topic. Invite discussion about cultural differences.
- **Cultural difference in applause:** If students knock on their desks at the end of your lecture, don't be alarmed! In Germany, this is a way of showing appreciation.

Sources

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