



English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI)

Module 1: Task 2—Read 5 Articles

Article 1.4: *Strategies to Build Student Motivation to Learn Content in English*

You might have heard a student ask, “Why should I bother to learn English? I’m busy! I don’t need English in my other classes! I’ll never learn English! It’s too hard!” For many students, gaining the English proficiency they need for EMI courses can be overwhelming. Even for students who want to learn English, they may face low motivation or frustration as they pursue their goal. EMI instructors can create supportive, motivating classroom environments for students and can support them through these challenges.

Helping Students See the Benefits of Taking an EMI Course

In general, students become more motivated with any course when they feel that the content is related to their current lives or their futures or careers. Next time a student in your course expresses a lack of motivation to learn English, try reminding them of the many reasons to learn English by giving an appropriate example from the list below. Whenever possible, provide examples for your students, such as through guest speakers/experts, job advertisements, or promotional materials from multinational companies.

You need English in order to access professional sources, manuals, or materials.

- You need English to read the most recent and up-to-date materials.
- You need English to find and read materials that are most accessible online. Many online materials are free or offered at a low cost.
- You need English to read materials that reflect top industry standards.
- You need English to get assistance from help centers and companies via phone or online support.
- You need English in order to read manuals so that you can operate the most high-quality machinery or equipment.

Having a higher proficiency in English will help you find a more high-paying job.

- English helps you get an international certificate
- English helps you get a job with an international company, inside your own country.
- English helps you move to another country and find a good job, if you want to move.
- English helps you in your career. Globalization brings greater competition—you are competing with the world.



Strategies to Help Students Connect with English

- Invite well-known professionals or community members to graduation or the opening ceremony and allow students to ask them questions or hear about the importance of English in the field
- Invite experts or outside professionals to classes or to department for workshops
- Hold video conferences with experts, and encourage students and the experts to use English during the interview
- Use technology to connect with students or classes around the world, where the only shared language is English; projects can be long- or short-term and should be focused on the course content that they are likely to need in their careers

Read the following case study from Phan Thanh Hung, a lecturer in the English Linguistics & Literature Faculty at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Consider how he helps motivate his students in his EMI course, and reflect on how his situation is similar or different to your own teaching circumstances, and how you might try out some of these ideas.

Ways that I Help Students Stay Motivated to Learn and Speak in English

~ Phan Thanh Hung

I am a lecturer in the English Linguistics & Literature Faculty at the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. I have been teaching content in English for 20 years now. I like teaching this way because it helps the students advance in their careers. If you are starting out in teaching your content in English, here are some recommendations:



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- **Involve your students in class, keep them engaged:** I start my class with students doing presentations. I have all students send me their presentations before they present them to the class so that I can check their work. Then after they present, I give a summary of the main points and clear up any confusion. In addition to presentations, I try to involve students by having class discussions. I ask questions that relate to students' experiences and their lives. I also choose topics that are practical and relevant to the course topic. Students participate more when the topic is practical and not too theoretical. A third way I have them participate is with case studies. They can discuss these in large groups or small groups. I use case studies from my own experience or that I read about. The students really like it when I bring in real examples from my own experience. I think the more experiences a lecturer has, the more they can share those experiences with the students, and the more motivated the students will be.

- **Grade students' participation in class:** The overall grade in class includes exams like the mid-term and final, but also the presentations. This way, students have to work hard. Also, they are graded on making their presentations interactive and interesting. They need to lead discussions or have questions or competitions for their classmates. This way, they all stay more motivated.
- **Help students prepare:** At the beginning of the course, I give students a list/syllabus of how they should prepare for each class, of what they should read. I tell them to read the materials and check any words they don't know before class so they can learn more during class time.
- **Help students with words they don't know:** Most of my students will learn the English words if I use them a lot in class, so I try to repeat new words a lot. If students still don't know words, they will ask or maybe I can see that they are confused. Then, I stop the activity and explain the word and give examples. I usually don't use Vietnamese since the students usually can understand the English. But if they are still confused, I will explain it in Vietnamese.
- **Focus on education:** If students make a mistake, like with copying words too close and plagiarizing, I focus on teaching them the right way to do it. Students do a better job in class if they know I care about their learning.

I hope these suggestions are useful for when you teach your content in English.
