



English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI)

Module 3: Task 2 – 4 Articles

Article 3.3: *Case Study: Students as Authors and Peer Readers*

Students have many opportunities to read in English. They can read a textbook, a course packet, or online sources. But there is another type of reading they can do. They can read each other's writing, and then they can write their own comments and ideas. Having students read each other's ideas is useful because, first of all, it shows you as an instructor what problems they might be having with understanding material. Secondly, this activity helps keep students interested in the class. Having students write on topics and then comment on each other's ideas allows them to choose ideas that they care about and find interesting. They can also relate stories or examples from their own lives into what they write. And it helps keep them interested because they can get to know their peers better and make connections in class. This type of reading and writing is real communication, in addition to adding to students' learning of course content and providing a sense of class community.

The following case study highlights a strategy to have your students read and comment on each other's work. This Dean from Foreign Languages in Ho Chi Minh City shares his ideas for involving students and his analysis of the different ways this activity helps them get engaged. As you read this, consider how you might implement any of these strategies in your situation.

Case Study

- **Tin T. Dang, PhD**, Dean, Faculty of Foreign Languages
- **University of Education and Technology, Ho Chi Minh City (HCMUTE), Vietnam:** HCMUTE has 13 Faculties and 1 Institute, with strengths in science, engineering and technology. They have bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs, as well as joint international programs. They offer over ten programs taught in English.
- **Student entry requirements:** EMI programs require Common European Framework of Reference for Languages level B2



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Steps to Help Students to Read and Respond to their Classmates' Work:

1. Use your university's course management system.

Using your university course management system (CMS) is useful because it is free, students and



instructors have access to it, and it is stable. If you don't have a university CMS, other options are social media (such as Facebook) or free CMSs (such as Edmodo or Schoology). Before you assign this online discussion activity, assign smaller tasks to complete in the CMS so that they can become used to it.

2. Create case studies or questions for students to discuss, and ask students to comment on them in the online discussion forum area of your course management system. Also ask students to write a response to a classmate.

The case study or question you write should have these characteristics:

- *Questions should be interesting to students.* Questions should be related to their lives or future careers. For example, if you are teaching a unit on Ethics in an Engineering or Technology course, then you can write case studies or questions that are related to interesting topics from class but that also relate to their lives.
- *Directions and grading should be clear.* Tell your students what you expect them to do, specifically. Also be sure you include grading criteria.

Sample case study question: "You are on a team working on a new project related to facial recognition and you realize that your team members are gathering data and images of faces from shoppers in a nearby store without asking them for their permission. What would you do in that situation? Would you report your teammates to a supervisor? Would you forget about it and assume it is fine? Would you tell a co-worker? State what you would do and explain your answer in at least 50 words. Also, use at least one source from class (the textbook or a reading) in your answer. Post a comment of at least 3 sentences on a classmate's post. You will receive full credit if your answer is related to the question, the length is at least 50 words, you include at least one source with the citation, and you post at least 3 sentences on a classmate's post."

3. Extend this activity by inviting students to write questions or case studies.

Ask students for volunteers to write questions for the class to answer. It is a good idea to check their questions before they post them to the group, to make sure their questions make sense and are related to class content. Then be sure to go online yourself and post some comments to student questions so that the whole class can see how important it is to join this online conversation.

4. Lead in-class discussions with students about the online discussions.

In class, you can answer any questions that students have, and also periodically explain to them why it is so important to reply to other classmate's comments. Students who are only focused on the content and task need to remember that when they participate in online discussions, they are building a feeling of community in the course, which helps all of them learn. Also, discussing the topics in both the class and online helps ensure that students with different communication styles feel connected. Some like to discuss more online and others like to discuss more in class. This way, everyone gets a chance. Finally, you can point out to your students that their reading is improving.

This case study from Dr. Tin shows how reading can be used in class to build connections and as real communication. Students can see that reading is not just a boring school activity—it is an important way to learn content and connect with others.