



English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI)
Module 5: Task 1 – 3 Video Lectures
Video 5.2: *Facilitating Student Interaction and Group Work*

Welcome to our video on Facilitating Student Interaction and Group Work. I'm Dawn Bikowski at Ohio University.

Getting students to participate in class and in group work can be both challenging and rewarding, regardless of the language of instruction. This video will discuss strategies you can try in your EMI course to get your students to participate in discussions and group projects. You can put students in groups based on where they sit or by their last name, but you can also group them in other ways, such as by their knowledge of the content, English proficiency level, or personality type, grouping more talkative students with more quiet ones or stronger students with weaker ones. Experiment with different grouping structures and see what works for you and your students—each grouping scheme has benefits and drawbacks that are influenced by content, culture, student personality type, etc.

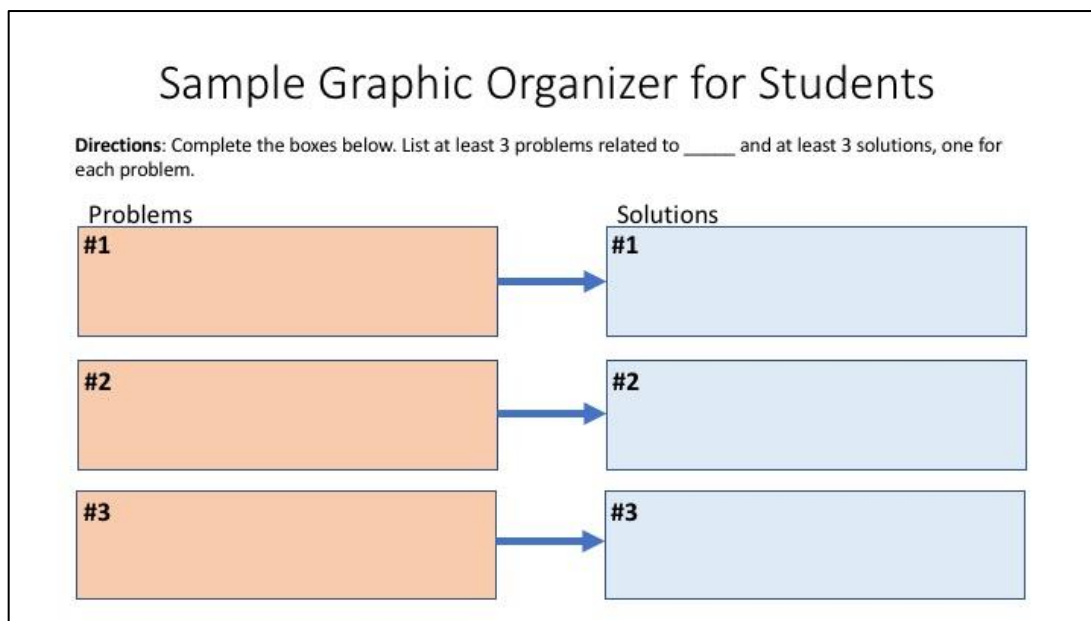
The first strategy is to get students engaged in the content and ideas. Students are more engaged when the questions or group project is related to their current lives or to their careers. For activities or questions related to careers, be sure that you make the connection explicit and clear to students. Often, they don't fully understand the jobs they will be doing, so it helps when you give them background and details. When students share their own examples or questions with each other, they help each other learn. If you can create discussions that get students to listen to new ideas from each other, this can help them expand their understanding and critical thinking. For example, you can ask students to share an example of how a particular topic relates to jobs related to the class you are teaching.

The second strategy is to engage students in critical thinking. You can do this by avoiding display questions. Display questions are ones where students generally know the answers. Teachers use them to review material, but to students the questions are either boring or obvious. If you're teaching a course on ethics, a display question might be: "How would you feel if your best friend stole money from you?" Obviously, everyone would feel bad. That's not a natural question. Instead, ask higher order, open-ended questions. With these, students often don't know the answers and they have to think more deeply about the topic. For example, they might have to make connections between different aspects of a topic. An example of a higher order question is: "How would different aquaculture methods result in financial difficulties for a fisheries farmer?" This question requires students to give longer answers and make connections between different topics—fish farming, economics, social concerns, etc. Students need more time to answer higher order questions. You can let them discuss their answers in small groups for 5 minutes, ask them to write their answers down, and then have groups share answers with the larger group, leading to further discussion or clarification if needed. Be sure to write these higher-



order questions on the board, give students positive feedback when they do try to answer these types of questions, and ask follow-up questions as needed to ensure that they learn the content.

The third strategy is to create specific and detailed activities or prompts. Give the students specific questions to answer. Put the questions on the board or the screen. Tell the students how long they will have to discuss. You can also give them something to complete, like a grid, table or graphic organizer. See the example here. Students can work in small groups or pairs to complete a graphic organizer, helping them to know what is expected and to stay on task.



“Sample Graphic Organizer for Students” by Dawn Bikowski is licensed under the [CC0 license](#).

The fourth strategy is to circle the room and check on students. When students are doing group work, you want to walk around. This shows them that you care what they are doing and are interested in their learning. That will help them stay on task. You can also encourage them to use English, answer any questions they have, and check to see how well they understand the material. Walking around allows you to judge how much more time is needed for students to complete a task. Finally, when you walk around you can ensure that groups are working well together and that students are being polite and respectful in their communication and sharing. If you notice any problems, you can join a group as necessary and talk them through any misunderstandings.

The fifth strategy is to correct students’ English only when necessary. Students will often feel less self-conscious and nervous about their level of English if you allow them to speak and share ideas without correcting their English. Sometimes it is necessary to correct them—usually this is when meaning is not clear. If a student gives an answer that you think will not be understood by their classmates, or that you don’t understand, you will need to either re-state the answer in a way that is clear and understandable,

or you can ask the student to re-state the answer. If you are concerned that the student cannot re-state it clearly, it is usually best to re-state it yourself. Do not correct students' pronunciation or grammar as long as everyone can understand them. With time, students' English will improve. What they need is practice speaking and sharing ideas.

We've discussed five strategies to facilitate student interaction and group work in your EMI course. I hope you've found this video useful and can implement these in your own classes.