

# TIPS FOR EFFECTIVELY TEACHING YOUR SUBJECT IN ENGLISH

What if you are expected to teach your subject in English? What to do if it is not your first language? Is it just about clear pronunciation, speaking in grammatically correct sentences and using the proper terminology?

Teaching your subject in English requires much more than simply translating your lecture. As a lecturer, you must not only have the necessary proficiency in the English language but, maybe more importantly, you need the didactical skills to connect language and content.

Student Affairs has designed a checklist with important strategies for effectively teaching your subject in English. This checklist will help you identify which adjustments you may have to make in your teaching style. It also gives you insight into the way learning through a foreign language can impact your students.



# EFFECTIVE TEACHING IN ENGLISH

## 1. INTERACTION

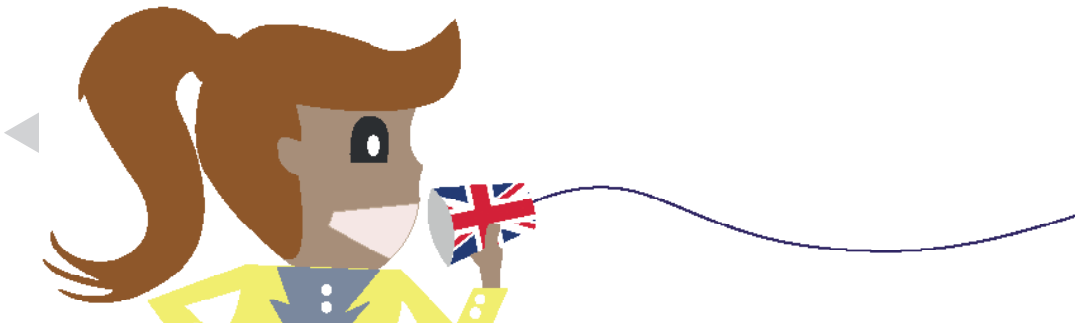
*Teaching in English has an impact on the interaction with and among students.*

- ▶ I ask open and activating questions to frequently check if my students have understood the language and concepts
- ▶ I write down my questions or put them in my slideshow
- ▶ I offer sufficient processing and thinking time for students' response
- ▶ I have students write down their answers or have them discuss these in smaller groups first
- ▶ I offer various communicative activities (e.g. discussions, group tasks, role play) to develop both language skills and comprehension of the topic

## 2. LANGUAGE USE

*As a lecturer you will have to adjust your language to serve the needs of your students.*

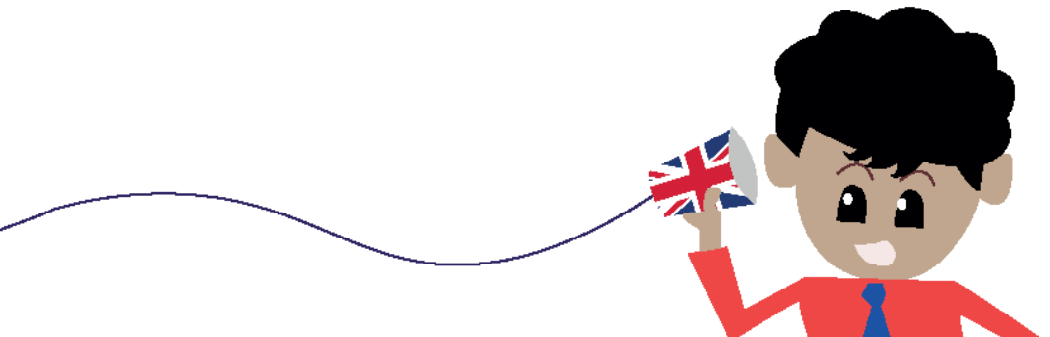
- ▶ I use language that is adapted to my students' language level: comprehensible and slower-paced
- ▶ I use academic as well as non-academic language
- ▶ I use linking words and phrases to structure my lesson content



### 3. LANGUAGE SUPPORT

*When selecting your classroom material, keep in mind that you're not just selecting content learning material, but also language learning material. Think about what kinds of language demands your texts make on your students and decide where they might need more support to be able to understand and participate in the lesson.*

- ▶ I use the whiteboard in addition to my slideshow to write down and clarify terminology or concepts
- ▶ I visually support my content through body language, mind maps, charts, tables, etc.
- ▶ I check if there is technical or specialised vocabulary that my students need to know for the class or to understand the material I provided. I also provide my students with a list of these key words or phrases and their definitions, either in the syllabus, as a handout or on the whiteboard. I regularly repeat them throughout the lecture series
- ▶ I try to use texts that are accompanied by illustrations, have structural markers (headings, sub-headings) and a clear organisation
- ▶ I help students by formulating and paraphrasing their answers, providing synonyms and repeating and summarising the content of the lecture
- ▶ I help my students with language related skills, such as strategies for reading difficult texts and understanding authentic source documents
- ▶ I regularly assess students' understanding of the lecture content, I do this by encouraging student-led discussions, informal mini-presentations and pop-quizzes



## 4. CONTEXT

*When preparing for a lecture, most of us focus on the content we will teach. Often, there is less time spent on bridging the gap between students' existing knowledge and new material. This may cause your students to fail to correctly understand the new concepts.*

- ▶ I introduce new concepts by contrasting them with concepts that have already been learned. In this way I make use of prior knowledge to aid my students in the learning of these new concepts
- ▶ I provide lecture outlines in order to help students follow the larger argument of the lecture. Students can also use them to facilitate their note taking
- ▶ I construct learning objectives for content as well as language

## 5. PRESERVING YOUR TEACHING IDENTITY

*Teaching in English can feel restrictive and may cause limitations in your teaching performance. You might feel afraid or unable to use humour, tell anecdotes or give spontaneous examples. You can overcome part of this by changing the way you prepare your lectures.*

- ▶ I look up the key words and phrases of my story and know how to pronounce them
- ▶ I make a list of standard phrases so I can properly instruct my students
- ▶ I work out the instructions for group work or other assignments in advance. I break them down into small, distinct steps
- ▶ I practice my examples and anecdotes beforehand
- ▶ I look up sayings and expressions



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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