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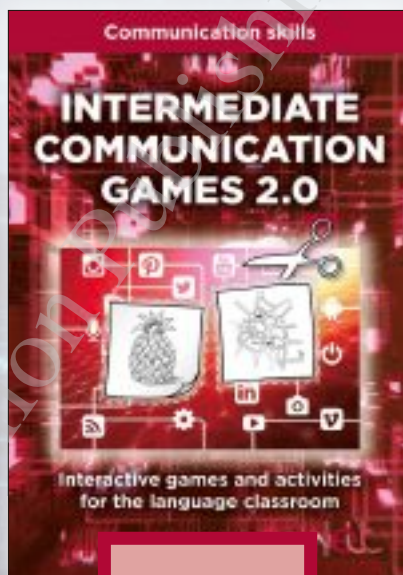
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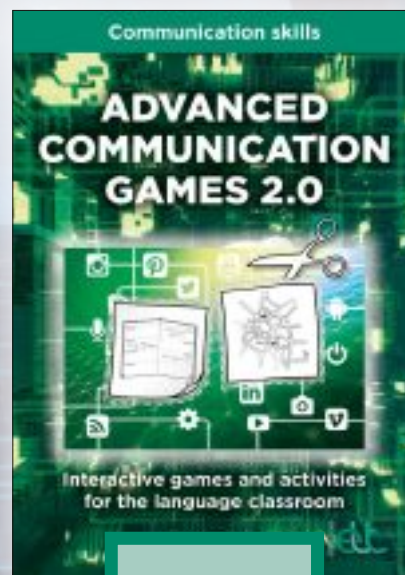


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NOW**

Editorial

A note from the editor

Welcome to the May issue of the magazine and wherever you are I hope you are having a good time teaching. Passing on knowledge of the language and how to really use it is what we all trying to do in all our classes.

Sometimes our learners need more than just the language, however, they need the content as well. When you are teaching content *in* English, it becomes a completely new game. Over the time I have been teaching, more and more people have needed an education delivered in English whether at an international primary school, at a vocational college where they are learning a trade or at an Ivy League college where they are studying a serious academic subject. So this is the topic of this issue, what people call English medium education (EME). What I don't want to do is feel that any of our readers are excluded, so I wanted to include all of those lessons, subjects and courses where the aim is to study something in English, not just English for its own sake.

Primary school teachers are an interesting case in point. All over the world they are trained and employed to teach a wide range of skills and subjects to children. Teachers are not taken on for having a particular strength in one subject but usually for their all-round skill set and personality. One subject they are often required to teach is a foreign language, often English. Training them to take on this challenge can be difficult, so it is interesting to read one of the ways this is gone about in Italy where story telling is used. Taking a classic English story and telling it to a class is an obvious way to practise the language at this level, another equally valid approach is to take a story which is known locally and deliver it in English. Look out for both approaches described in this issue.

Talking of using fiction as a way to teach English brings me to the most famous writer in English history, William Shakespeare. For many years he was dismissed as out-of-date and complicated. With the four-hundredth anniversary of the publication of his *First Folio* last year, he got a new lease of life all over the world. Seven years after his death, this was essentially the first time his complete works were published and there were between eight hundred and one thousand copies – of which around 230 remain. On the last day of my recent trip to New Zealand, I got the chance to see a version at the Auckland

Library. It was amazing to turn to various pages of plays such as *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet* in a book printed such a long time ago and still in brilliant condition. As a writer, he was responsible for numerous words and expressions which remain in use to this day, even something as simple as *bedroom!* *Downstairs*, *gossip*, *critic*, *hurry* and *manager* are all attributed to this great playwright and poet. In our next issue of the magazine, we will have more on how we can use Shakespeare in our English classes, particularly at secondary level.

When we talk about EME, we usually mean at university level; and a number of our contributors describe challenges and solutions they have come across in countries such as Turkey, China, the UK and Japan. This international nature of our profession is one of its most exciting aspects and I am always conscious of trying to cover as much of the world as we can in our magazine. I might live just outside Oxford but the English language belongs to the whole world these days.

So whatever age of student you are teaching and wherever you are doing it, I hope this issue has ideas for you to think about and take into your staffrooms and classrooms. Colleagues and the help they can give us is actually the topic of my talk at IATEFL this year and by the time you read this, I will have delivered it. My main point is that not all of us have physical contact with colleagues these days and so our access to tips and ideas has to come from other sources than the staffroom. Obviously the internet provides a lot of sources of advice via websites, blogs and apps – but don't forget books and magazines too! Each issue this year we are providing ideas from the ETpedia series which is celebrating its tenth birthday this year. Not quite as established as Shakespeare yet, but give it time!

Wishing you a great May and June – enjoy your teaching and don't overthink it! As Shakespeare wrote in *Hamlet*: 'There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.'



Robert McLarty



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A warm welcome!

Welcome to the latest issue of *Modern English Teacher*! 2024 is flying by, but don't worry, there are still three more issues still to come this year.

A huge thank you to everyone who filled in our *MET* survey. Your feedback is greatly

appreciated and will help us plan for the future. We always appreciate hearing your thoughts, to make sure *MET* works for you.

If you would like to get involved with *MET*, then don't forget that you can write for us! Whether you want to submit a full article or if you would like to share a smaller idea, thought or activity in our *Global Voices* or *It works in practice* sections, we would love to hear from you. Upcoming topics include diversity, equality and inclusion, classroom management and Young Learners, so do get in touch with ideas on these topics! As always, we also welcome articles on any other areas of teaching for every issue.

We hope you enjoy this issue!

Best wishes,

The Pavilion ELT team



Correction: In the Jan/Feb issue of *MET*, we featured a review of the International House Teacher Portal, but there was an error in the specified pricing. It should have stated that members can access all courses as part of their subscription (£6.49 per month). Non-members can access this course for £225.



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Resources Online

Go to [modernenglishteacher.com/resources](https://www.modernenglishteacher.com/resources) for your extra printable resources, ready for use in class.



Resources online

Examples of my self-made Year 2 peer review checklists

Y2SPE Essay Success Criteria

Student Writer: _____ Student Reviewer: _____

Focus	Success Criteria	For X	Comments
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully answers the question within the given time Examines 2 aspects of the problem Describes 2 negative effects of the problem Supports 2 opinions Supports opinion with explanations, examples, statistics & facts Clear on topic and information is relevant 		
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows a clear logical essay structure Paragraphs 2, 3 & 4 follow a clear paragraph structure Supporting Sentences Clear linking words Clear linking words connect ideas within and between paragraphs Clear, appropriate & highlight each cause, negative effect & solution 		
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear & easy to follow for the reader Clear grammar and punctuation accurately to express identified meaning Clear complete sentences e.g. "I" clauses, relative clauses Clear use of range of vocabulary and accurate spelling Clear appropriate academic register 		
Things done well		Action Points	

Resources online

Introducing philosophy to learners

1. Use this reading and speaking lesson to introduce philosophy to learners.

2. **Discussion** Each action came from philosophers as you know which one would be most useful to you? (Students discuss)

3. **Roleplay** You have to work with your partners.

4. **Debate** You have to work with your partners.

5. **Debate** You have to work with your partners.

6. **Debate** You have to work with your partners.

7. **Debate** You have to work with your partners.

8. **Debate** You have to work with your partners.

9. **Debate** You have to work with your partners.

10. **Debate** You have to work with your partners.

Individual Student Progress Record

English Name: _____ Student ID/Ethnic name: _____ Roll No: _____

Performances	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(A) Mid Semester Assess/Exam and Overall Class work			
(B) Final Semester Assess/Exam			
Participation/conduct			
Final reported mark: _____			

Individual Student Progress Record

English Name: _____ Student ID/Ethnic name: _____ Roll No: _____

Performances	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(A) Mid Semester Assess/Exam and Overall Class work			
(B) Final Semester Assess/Exam			
Participation/conduct			
Final reported mark: _____			

Individual Student Progress Record

English Name: _____ Student ID/Ethnic name: _____ Roll No: _____

Performances	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(A) Mid Semester Assess/Exam and Overall Class work			
(B) Final Semester Assess/Exam			
Participation/conduct			
Final reported mark: _____			

Spotlight on past resources

In this issue, our *English Teaching professional* throwback resource is:

Drawing out language Worksheets

Accompanies 'Drawing out language' by Stephen M Silvers, page 8, <https://www.modernenglishteacher.com/drawing-out-language>

You can find other past resources from *ETp* in this section too.

Examples of my self-made Year 2 peer review checklists

Accompanies 'The PAH continuum: a new approach in EAP?' by Siobhan Cronin, page 16 https://www.modernenglishteacher.com/media/43031/met333_resources_the_pah_continuum_siobhancronin.pdf

Teaching English through philosophy

Accompanies 'It works in practice' by Dan Costa, page 47 https://www.modernenglishteacher.com/media/43030/met333_resources_teaching_englishthroughphilosophy_dancosta.pdf

Individual student progress record

Accompanies 'Seizing ephemera' by Rob Harris, page 77 https://www.modernenglishteacher.com/media/43029/met333_resources_seizing_ephemera_robharris.pdf

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First thoughts

Robert McLarty

Throughout my career I have answered the question 'What do you do?' with the answer: 'I teach English.' It is a good generic response which covers most of the jobs I have had in English language teaching: tutor; teacher trainer; school principal; materials writer; publishing manager; to my current role as editor. If the follow up of 'But what do you actually do?' comes next, then I can always supply more information but – whoever and wherever I was teaching – it has always been *in* English. On top of the language there has always been an extra set of skills to teach, whether it was helping sales teams negotiate, clinical researchers present their findings or students learn how to write academic essays. This issue shows that I'm not alone in this. There are teachers all over the world who are experts in the language, the content, pedagogy or any combination of these. It is impossible to judge which of the three is the most important without knowing the context.

For all teachers trying to combine language and content in their lessons it is probably not enough to talk about the language level they need but also other specific skills such as communication and classroom management. **Cristina Nicolaou** looks at this whole area in her article and draws some interesting conclusions as to what need to be the objectives of specific training for this type of teacher.

All over the world people are keen to study academic subjects in English – such degrees offer increased chances of employment in a wider range of places. To have a reasonable chance of participating in such a course, the language of all participants needs to be at a certain level. The level will depend on the situation and the complexity of the subject being studied. In certain situations, no participants are L1 speakers of English, nor is the person delivering the teaching. This is more common than it might first appear and has its advantages as well as disadvantages. Other contexts will have a mix of participants some of whom



are L1 speakers and others who are not. Whatever the context, preparatory programmes or pre-sessionals are advised to get potential candidates up to a level they can participate properly, both for their own good and that of classmates. **Daryl York** explains some of the issues involved in such programmes and describes the steps taken in his institution to bridge the gap from preparation to proper academic study. He argues that the preparation should not only be linguistic but also behavioural in terms of activity type, study skills and developing thinking.

Other examples of handling the challenges of these preparatory courses come in the article by **Matthew Gordon**. In this context he has a monolingual group being prepared for an academic course. With such a group there will be errors and misunderstandings which recur regularly. He looks at the mistakes made as a starting point for his teaching. **Siobhan Cronin** feels that she needs to alter her approach as she teaches her undergraduate students. She experiments with giving her students more autonomy as they transition from quite a strict high-school pedagogy to the university system which requires them to

become more independent. Again all of this has to be achieved in English.

Preparing future teachers is another area where English-medium teaching can be challenging. In many countries, primary teachers have to take on the role of English language teacher despite not necessarily having a very high level of the language themselves. The article by **Patricia Barzotti** looks at ways of dealing with these issues in Italy by using storytelling. In Indonesia teacher trainees are encouraged to put their own e-books together using the English language as the medium for local folk stories. In **Debora Flora's** article you will see how taking advantage of available technology is a vital part of teacher training.

One other aspect of teaching taken up by **Dan Costa** is a return to the classics; he advocates philosophy as an area of study which might help our learners develop their English skills. We all know that the ability to think and listen to other views is a key part of the language-learning process, so why not take it a step further and encourage study of thought itself? Teaching in English has many aspects, I hope you will find one or two of the articles give you food for thought.



Empowering EMI teachers

Cristina Nicolaou

offers a practical approach for effective English language development.

Lebanon, land of . . . different languages?

It seems English as a medium of instruction (EMI) has become a hot topic in the last couple of years; EMI (also known as English as a medium of education [EME]) refers to when subjects are taught in English in countries where people don't speak English as their first language. It shouldn't be confused with CLIL which refers to teaching content through any foreign language. Interestingly, teaching content in another language has been a distinguishing educational feature of Lebanon since the 1990s, with English or French being the mandatory medium of instruction for mathematics and sciences for all schools in most cycles – but English is slowly taking over. For example, in the school year 2008–2009, 'French as a medium of instruction decreased to 44% (of schools), while English as a medium of instruction increased to 56%' (Awada & Diab, 2016). As a French national residing in Lebanon for over 19 years and an English teacher and teacher trainer, I was privileged to observe classes in private and public schools conducted in both languages; but, considering most of my teacher training has focused on English, I am hoping to find a way to help EMI educators in Lebanon.

Problems, problems, problems

The success of EMI programmes resides mostly in the teacher, due to their knowledge of the subject matter, their teaching pedagogy and level of English (Martinez & Morgan, 2020). However, one of the most prominent obstacles to the successful implementation of EMI in Lebanon, in the Arab world (Al-Khasawneh, 2010) and all around the world (Doiz *et al.*, 2013; Werther *et al.*, 2014; Bradford, 2016), is the low linguistic level of L2 English-speaking teachers (Wang, 2021). This is because language proficiency informs teachers' self-confidence, which is a key indicator of teachers' teaching performance and ensures self-efficacy (*idem*). This, in turn, leads to productive teaching while helping to improve students' learning success (Klassen & Tze, 2014). The underlying assumption is that the stronger the command teachers have of the language, the more likely they are to use English in the classroom. Plus, the teacher being the model (or one of a few models) of the language that learners are exposed to, means they need to speak the language to an appropriate level for the purpose of education. Conversely, low language competence of English-speaking teachers negatively impacts instruction (Lei & Hu, 2014):

such teachers are likely to encounter difficulties within the classroom and have issues with low self-esteem and self-efficacy (Wang, 2021).

Surprisingly, considering its importance, teacher language development in EMI seems to have received very little importance (Margić & Vodopija-Krstanović, 2018). The emphasis placed on the global implementation of EMI seems demonstrably at odds with the importance of the proficiency level of EMI teachers. Considering the lack of importance ascribed to the proficiency level of EMI teachers compared to other aspects of EMI, it should not then come as a surprise that there is no concrete consensus on what constitutes the necessary proficiency level of the EMI teachers (Martinez & Morgan, 2020). A scroll through various research papers seems to indicate a C1 Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) level being the minimum English proficiency level required for effective teaching (*idem*). This is based on the assumption that teachers should be one level higher than their students, who, supposedly in EMI education, average a B2 level (Klassen & Bos, 2010). However, no real empirical basis exists for the C1 postulate. Some studies focusing on tertiary education actually lean towards a B2/B2+ level (Martinez & Morgan, 2020). This is based on the idea that teachers'

subject and domain-specific vocabulary expertise, as well as their teaching experience, would compensate for their linguistic profiles (Dimova, 2021).

A more prosaic point is that having a limited pool of highly proficient teachers will also influence the decision regarding the level of proficiency required in certain countries. Whether you are in the C1 or the B2 camp, one problem still remains: either level is generally unachievable for most teachers due to lack of time and resources on the teachers' or the schools' parts. The prevailing opinion is that 100–200 hours of guided learning are required for motivated learners to go from one CEFR level to another (Cambridge, 2023). Most school teachers simply cannot devote this amount of time and, let's be honest, expense to improving their language proficiency. A five-days-a-week English course from a reputable language centre in Lebanon is the equivalent of roughly 10% of the average monthly Lebanese salary, with courses ranging from USD \$150–160. Additionally, in the Lebanese context, many schools won't participate in training for professional development, even when free, if it takes longer than a day (Shaaban, 2019).

Wait – what?

However, did I, in fact, ask the wrong question? If my aim is to improve teachers' ability to teach using language in the EMI context, should I really be focusing on finding ways for teachers to reach either B2/B2+ or C1 or should I redirect my attention towards the *type* of proficiency teachers actually require?

To answer this question, it is necessary to realise that the C1 (or B2) level requirements are based on the CEFR and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines (Freeman *et al.*, 2015). These are general language proficiency frameworks which were never meant to (nor do they) actually target the very specific language requirements within the classroom and the particular professional needs of the EMI teachers. I think we need to redefine English for EMI teachers not as just a language but as a practical tool to achieve specific communicative goals (*idem*). EMI proficiency should be viewed not just as a single measure but as a multifaceted approach, related to four different types of language in use in the classroom (Gierlinger, 2013).

- General English
- Academic language
- Subject- or domain-specific language
- Classroom language

General English is only one aspect of what the EMI teachers require. In order to make an impact on the actual performance of teachers in the classroom, the proficiency of EMI instructors should be aligned with actual classroom language which can fulfil actual teaching purposes, such as: understanding and communicating the lesson content; managing the classroom; or answering questions for example (Katz in Freeman & LeDrean, 2017).

To achieve this would mean moving towards a language for specific purposes

(LSP) approach when helping EMI teachers achieve higher proficiency in classroom language. LSP means the content and focus of the instruction target either a specific context or even a defined set of skills and tasks (Trace *et al.*, 2015). It, therefore, views teacher language proficiency as a specialised subset of language skills required to properly prepare and deliver a lesson (Freeman, 2017). Connecting what EMI instructors are learning to what they are actually doing in their own classroom with their own students will make the language more relevant and more attainable. It will be a more efficient and effective use of whatever little time and resources the teachers are actually able to devote – not just in my adopted country but around the world.

Different programmes exist on the market at the moment, but I decided to focus on the one created by Freeman *et al.* (2015) because of its methodology and design. They have termed this course English-for-Teaching which is 'the essential English language skills a teacher needs to be able to prepare and enact the lesson in a standardised (usually national) curriculum in English, in ways that are recognisable and understandable to other speakers of the language' (Young *et al.*, 2014:5). Its main appeal, in my opinion, is that it is essentially a functional approach that targets three areas of language knowledge:

1. Managing the classroom
2. Understanding and communicating lesson content to students
3. Assessing students and giving them feedback.

Each domain encompasses a multitude of classroom tasks where the teachers can perform the specific language (Katz in Freeman & LeDrean, 2017). See Table 1 for specific example. The language is presented through classroom-based scenarios for each functional area and is accompanied by different practice activities such as tasks that the teachers carry out.

The participants are also asked to design and practise the content (*idem*) which reinforces learning.

One key advantage of this approach is that it doesn't just rely on sets of phrases

English-for-teaching domain	Classroom routine / teacher task	Nature of language involved	Language exemplar
Managing the Classroom	Organising students	Directions to students to settle down and begin work	<i>Please go to your seat. Work with a partner.</i>
Understanding and communicating lesson content	Setting up a learning activity	Instructions and explanation for doing an activity	<i>Look at the picture. Circle the correct word. Use your notes to write a paragraph.</i>
Assessing students and providing feedback	Responding to student oral output during a role play activity	Feedback on target language, e.g. grammar, vocabulary, register	<i>That's right. Nice work. Look at the example in the chart again. Those are great ideas.</i>

Table 1: Classroom-based scenarios for functional language (Katz in Freeman & LeDrean, 2017)

to memorise but on those aforementioned tasks which involve communication happening through the language, the aim being to develop interactive communicative competence. This means the language the teachers learn has a direct impact in their classroom. The monitoring and events, such as workshops and group meetings, are also a real plus and help improve engagement (Katz in Freeman & LeDrean, 2017). Furthermore, the assessment component targets the language skills embedded in the teaching tasks the teacher actually performs in a classroom, and not some general English questions unrelated to their working environment. Another key benefit is that it includes over 45 units and a pre-course planner; the teachers complete this prior to the course and then receive a personalised programme highlighting which of the 45 units to pay particular attention to. This makes the programme extremely adaptable.

This approach isn't without critics, though. Some mention the seemingly impoverished input this approach would provide by limiting the language the students are exposed to. However, in my opinion, this doesn't take into account the relative low level of proficiency of the students, who would actually benefit from more (albeit impoverished) comprehensible, instead of varied, input (Freeman, 2017).

So it wasn't that complicated after all?

Due to its LSP methodology and functional approach to the classroom language, this programme has an immediate and concrete impact on teachers' linguistic ability. Plus, as noted above, teachers rarely have several hundred hours of free time to spend in language institutes to improve their proficiency. Providing a similar course online and making it self-access, as the authors have done, means teachers have the flexibility to decide when, where and how to study. This does ensure wider and more equitable access (Freeman, 2017).

This approach has been successfully implemented in several countries around the world, such as Vietnam, but

success in one country doesn't guarantee success in another; therefore, it would be beneficial to find ways to adapt it to more specific contexts such as Lebanon and the Middle Eastern area.

For example, as Lebanon has been facing an energy crisis, continuous electricity supply is still an issue and internet connectivity can be extremely patchy in most regions. It might be a good idea to offer a version of this course through WhatsApp which most people (84% in 2018) have access to. Plus, as some elementary teachers here have an A1/A2 level, it might be judicious to divide the course into levels, maybe one level to go from A1/A2 to B1, one from B1 to B2 and finally one from B2 to C1. The judicious use of L1 at times could also be looked at to ensure a lowering of the emotional barriers in students and foster better learning.

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Addressing major challenges of preparatory programmes

Daryl York

considers issues with English preparation for an academic course.

Preparatory – or ‘Prep’ – programmes (PPs) provide intensive language instruction in countries where English is not the national language; they’re for entrants to home-country universities at which courses are taught in English. At such English medium of instruction (EMI) universities, PPs are typically one-year programmes mandatory for all new students who cannot demonstrate sufficient English proficiency to take on a degree course. However, this provision of intensive language study throws up significant challenges both for students and practitioners. The largest of these is how to maintain the engagement of learners in PPs, when

many are unhappy even to be there. After necessary explanation of the place of PPs in the world of EMI, and the difficulties they face, the article will describe how challenges have been successfully addressed by the PP at Abdullah Gul University (AGU) in Turkey, where predicted motivational shortfalls were mitigated in the programme’s very design.

PPs in the world of EMI

Large numbers of students undertake a year of PP English, even though it entails delaying their entry to degree-level study, in order to be able to benefit from the growing world of tertiary EMI. Many universities feel compelled to offer EMI, even in countries where the main language is not English.

Two Turkish universities started offering EMI and PPs to cater for it in 1956 and 1957. Reasons for this EMI provision are numerous. McMullen

(2014) explains how tertiary English PPs developed in the 1960s in Saudi Arabia in direct response to government-articulated needs for its citizens to attain language skills for international communication, and for them to acquire English proficiency sufficient to enter employment. Elsewhere, research aims are also cited as a reason for offering tertiary EMI programmes, particularly to the extent that students become scholars in areas of research that align with the national interest.

The setting up of other state EMI universities outside the Anglosphere has been driven by similar national aims, from the mid-20th century up to the present day. Tran and Phuong (2019) report that, as part of a national directive, university EMI programmes are currently being set up in Vietnam. Furthermore, it has become increasingly common for state-driven tertiary EMI initiatives to be imitated at proprietary institutions.

Universities that rely on fee-paying students may strive to offer what can be promoted as invaluable opportunities for globally recognised qualifications and enhanced employment potential, both abroad and, increasingly, at home. Alternatively, an EMI undergraduate degree may lead to postgraduate study in an Anglophone country, leading again to greater opportunities.

EMI provision is bound up with perceptions of prestige. English is itself a prestige language; an EMI university may be proud of the fact that it is able to employ bilingual or international staff. Wächter and Maiworm (2014) argue that programmes in English may be offered to attract international students. It is a fact that many students who can attend neither university in Anglophone countries nor tertiary EMI programmes in their own

countries enrol in university programmes in English in a third-party country such as Turkey, where my own university is located. Newer EMI universities are often modelled explicitly on older EMI institutions that are traditionally perceived as prestigious within their national system. And, whether proprietary or not, by offering students demonstrably boosted life chances, any EMI university will become more sought after and gain prestige and status, not only domestically but also in the international education market.

However, within a wider world of tertiary EMI, PPs are no longer the only route to English language preparedness. Since the inception of PPs seven decades ago, when students would typically enter a home-country tertiary EMI programme with no English, the provision of English language teaching (ELT) has been vastly

expanded in schools. Furthermore, there has been a sharp growth in pre-tertiary EMI; it has become more common for schools themselves to conduct the teaching of content through English. Some students may have been lucky enough to have attended international schools, where the whole curriculum is taught through English; a growing number of students are likely to be the products of domestic schools which have taken steps to self-internationalise – to turn themselves into *de facto* international schools by providing education that is all or partly bilingual, assessed by internationally recognised examinations.

Thus, the road map of the various routes to linguistic preparation for tertiary EMI crystallises into a distinct hierarchy, within which PPs are situated at the bottom. The full pecking order is summarised in Table 1. At the very top, no English language instruction would be required for a university entrant embarking on EMI courses, if they are fortunate enough either to have English as their first language or to have been through an international school system. Going down one level we come to the self-internationalising schools, whose graduates generally emerge ready for tertiary EMI without entering a PP. Then there are school systems which pride themselves on their ELT provision being sufficiently effective for school leavers to enter tertiary directly. Such systems have traditionally included those in the Netherlands and northern Europe; Airey *et al.* (2014) provide a detailed evaluation of how this works in Scandinavia. These countries are being joined by other national systems trying to move into this bracket, including those of Turkey and the UAE, where large investments have been made to strengthen English language provision in schools; Gobert (2019) describes how the UAE is banking on its flagship ‘English in Schools’ model to remove the need for PPs altogether. Then, finally, we come to the educational contexts where school ELT is so weak that the need for PPs cannot be avoided. One clear example is Turkey, where the surprisingly high number of students leaving with practically no English knowledge is that it is not assessed as a subject in the national university entrance examination.

Type of student	Possible route to readiness for tertiary EMI study		Tertiary EMI
	EMI preparation in school	PP after school?	
First-language English speakers	In Anglophone countries Learn English for learning content as a matter of course during school life	NO PP	Greater likely need for a Prep year Undergraduate programmes taught through the medium of English
Other-language speakers with access to international schools	International school EMI Learn English as a matter of course through international, English language curricula	Direct access to tertiary EMI	
Other-language speakers with access to internationalised schools	Internationalised school EMI Learn English for learning content as a matter of course at bilingual schools that offer international curricula as an add on	GENERALLY NO	
Other first-language speakers who go through school systems with very strong ELT provision	Strong school ELT Traditionally in Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands, emulated more widely, such as by the UAE	Direct access to tertiary EMI is usual	
Other first-language other than English speakers	Weak school ELT In countries such as Turkey and Vietnam	YES PPs are necessary for most students	

Table 1: Routes to readiness for tertiary EMI

■ The impact of these issues is that many PP students are demoralised by feeling stuck, with little sense of agency, in a programme that borders on the unrealistic, all of which leads to self-doubt and greater risks of dropping out. ■

Difficulties faced by PPs

PPs have never been easy to design and run, and I believe that the number of problems besetting them is growing. They may be outlined as follows, with consideration of both learner sentiment and curriculum issues.

a. Learner sentiment

As they take on the curricular challenges outlined below in b., learners' progress is often hampered by feelings of inadequacy brought on by a number of affective factors.

Student feelings of frustration

Students placed in PPs feel held back from doing engineering or architecture, or whatever they really enrolled at university to study; PPs are perceived

by them not as an opportunity but as a serious obstacle which is costing them time.

Stress in the face of a single, overarching goal

Most PP students, sooner or later, feel daunted by the magnitude of the task facing them. Those less adept at self-management and goal setting feel insufficiently equipped to achieve the essential, monolithic, long-term goal of just getting through the programme, where the ultimate stamp of language proficiency approval is often dependent on a single, all-or-nothing assessment, with all the magnified stress that entails.

Self-esteem issues

PP learners are further discouraged by:

1. being told (in effect, by having been placed in a PP) that their language level is insufficient and that their

efforts towards learning English at school did not count;

2. feeling inferior and socially marginalised when comparing themselves to students who had more exposure to effective EFL or EMI training by having gone to a 'better school';
3. feeling treated as if they are still in school – PPs often feel less like a university: with students in fixed classes, with language *teachers* (not *professors*), working through routine language curriculum reminiscent of English lessons at school.

Furthermore, with no course choice, students have no feeling of agency, which both damages morale and constitutes a risk to a learner's drive and study habits; young people made to feel like school students may sit back passively waiting to be taught, rather than actively strive themselves.

b. Curriculum issues

Unrealistic scope

The fundamental issue facing any PP curriculum is that teaching beginners – in just 28 weeks – means the amount of English required for tertiary academic work is difficult. Most students cannot manage this; only a tiny number of students who do not already have some functionality in English get through in one Prep year, with many obliged to stay



longer in the programme, which has a further negative impact on the issues of learner sentiment described above.

Increasing complexity

It is no longer standard for PP entrants to have uniformly low English levels. Depending on the amount of English accomplishment they bring from school, students now enter tertiary EMI with heterogeneous proficiency, which causes difficulties in placement, planning and curriculum design.

Time pressure and students left behind

With the high pace of curriculum coverage, pressure is quickly felt. Students get behind, and irretrievably so; many lose the thread within six weeks of the start of the year. Then, because in most PPs progress is assessed by means of an all-or-nothing 'proficiency' examination at the end of semesters, sometimes at year-end only, students who cannot keep in touch and thus fail assessments waste inordinate amounts of time, as they are forced to wait to start again in the next semester – or even at the beginning of the next year. When do they start again? Where should they start from? Even if they start again from the beginning, there is no guarantee that they will fare better the second time around.

To summarise the issues facing PPs, two things are clear. Firstly, the magnitude of the task facing PP learners must not be underestimated. Secondly, the view of PPs as a monolithic curriculum, which is generally perceived as an extension of school, seems no longer viable. The impact of these issues is that many PP students are demoralised by feeling stuck, with little sense of agency, in a programme that borders on the unrealistic, all of which leads to self-doubt and greater risks of dropping out.

PP systems radically re-imagined

To mitigate the issues described above, my university AGU created a PP system that was radically re-imagined. This re-imagining explicitly aims to counter the perception of PPs as being overly schoolish. In contrast, the new vision launches a PP that explicitly looks like part of a university, which it does by design principles derived from the axiom

Type of student					Other standard courses
Reading	Writing	Listening	Speaking	Language awareness	University Transition
Level 0	Level 0	Level 0	Level 0	Level 0	English for Maths
Level 1	Level 1	Level 1	Level 1	Level 1	The World Around Us
Level 2	Level 2	Level 2	Level 2	Level 2	The Environment
Level 3	Level 3	Level 3	Level 3	Level 3	Presentation Skills
Level 4	Level 4	Level 4	Level 4	Level 4	Summarising
Electives					
English for Biology	English for IT	English for Physics	English for Politics	English for Psychology	The World of Money
Notable Structures	English for Organisations	English for Manufacturing	English for Art & Design	English for Chemistry	

Table 2: Courses in the AGU Preparatory Programme – the Credit System

that university students must perceive themselves as being treated as such. The two general design principles are:

- The structure of a PP will resemble the structure of an undergraduate (UG) programme;
- PP students must, as UG students and thus as adults, be afforded opportunities for learner agency.

To achieve this, AGU:

1. broke down the monolith of one year of amorphous English study into more manageable chunks, by dividing the curriculum into smaller pieces – 42 of them – and by dividing the semesters into shorter terms;
2. allowed students to earn, according to their strengths and interests, different combinations of chunks; and
3. created a system of credits, which enables students to feel they can gain interim returns on interim investment of time and energy. This means that even if they do not complete the PP in a year, they have achieved progress on the record that can be saved. This allows them to resume in the next academic year without having to go back to the beginning.

Thus, the AGU PP became the totality of 42 mini-courses, with students taking

up to eight each seven-week term. The successful completion of each course gains a student two credits towards a required minimum credit count of 52 for immediate graduation from Prep. The programme is organised as follows.

Firstly, every student is offered learning opportunities at five successive levels in five areas of traditional ELT learning: reading, writing, listening, speaking and language awareness (which deals with syntax in conjunction with some treatment of lexis and discourse features).

Secondly, all learners are offered the following six courses: University Transition; English for Maths; Learning Vocabulary; The Environment; Presentation Skills; and Summarising.

Thirdly, each learner has the opportunity to study three elective courses. While space does not permit a full description of a justification for, or design of, the non-main courses, Table 2 offers a visual overview of the composition of the AGU PP, showing clearly its pluralistic nature.

Some advantages of this approach become immediately apparent:

Short-term goals

The splitting of the programme into 42 mini-courses leads to deliberately short-term learning goals that suit the