

Multilingual Support Services (MSS)

[Camosunmss.opened.ca](https://camosunmss.opened.ca)

Camosun College - Winter 2024

Clear Lectures for Multilingual Learners

Territorial Acknowledgment



Kwatsech Park, ləKʷəŋən territory

I would like to acknowledge that I am an uninvited settler on the traditional lands of the ləKʷəŋən and ƆSÁNEĆ peoples. I am committed to learning more about these lands and their traditional owners, and to decolonize my teaching practices.



Introduction

My lectures are understandable, right?

- 37% of international students in Canada report some or significant issues understanding presented information in class.

(Canadian Bureau for International Education, 2021)

- EAL students often avoid asking for clarification due to embarrassment and/or cultural barriers to asking questions to instructors.

(e.g., Ryan, 2000)

- Students' encouragement from and positive interactions with instructors are crucial sources of linguistic confidence and social adjustment.

(Oneyiyi et al., 2019)

Let's Consider

- What comprehension challenges have you noticed with learners?
- What difficulties can instructors have with lecturing clearly?
- What can help make your lectures comprehensible?





Goals

Ease your students' comprehension burden by meeting them halfway. Use clear speaking strategies for your lectures.

- Understand primary challenges for learners
- Identify strategies for increasing your lectures' comprehensibility



Areas to Consider

- Clear speaking
- Vocabulary and grammar
- Supplementing clear lectures



(1) Clear Speaking

Student Challenges

- ❑ Inability to understand parts of lectures
- ❑ Listening exhaustion
- ❑ Resistance to request clarification / repetition



(1) Clear Speaking

Instructor Strategies

Slow down



Instructors tend to speed through familiar lectures

Give time



Give students time to process

Share necessary context but avoid over-talking

Be patient waiting for responses (embrace silence!)

Monitor your habits



Notice your reduced forms (“woodja” “dyawanna”)

Recognize intonation challenges (“OK” = yes, new topic, that’s enough, agree, disagree...)

Organization



Preview

Transitions / signposting

Mini summaries / repetition

Establish patterns – students know what to expect

Build in breaks, vary activities

Check understanding



Anonymous posts; mini quizzes (e.g., Kahoot); pair/group reviews

Avoid “Do you understand?” or “trap” questions (“So you think...?”)

Permit same-language “side-talk” with classmates



(2) Vocabulary & Grammar

Student Challenges

- ❑ Technical vocabulary
 - Non-standard meanings (“minutes,” “be subject to”)
- ❑ Idioms, phrasal verbs, slang/jargon
 - Take up, take out, take over, take in, take on... Oh my!!
- ❑ Complex grammatical forms
- ❑ Assumed cultural knowledge
 - Example: “saucer” during UK exam (Ryan, 2000)
 - “Eh,” “Double double,” hockey, toques, saying “sorry,” inferiority/superiority vs U.S....
- ❑ Humour
 - Catching irony and sarcasm in tone (e.g., “Great” = not great).
 - Instructor silliness = loss of credibility in many cultures
- ❑ Acronyms
 - B.C., B.A., M.Sc., A.P.A., C.B.C., ...

(2) Idioms

Think English idioms make sense? Try some French ones!

(Bow Valley College, 2015):

1. I'll try to finish my homework tonight, but it is the finish of the green beans.
2. I have a date tonight with Jean. I hope he won't leave the rabbit.
3. I'm enjoying the party tonight, but I hope I won't end up with a wooden face.
4. He is known for making the tobacco.
5. My favourite jazz musicians are the ones who can make beef.
6. My dad really broke the pipes last night.
7. Every time she sees the Smiths, she puts the little plates in the big ones.

Suggested answers (from a bilingual friend): 1. I've had enough
2. stand me up 3. a hangover 4. being successful 5. jam/improvise
6. got angry 7. makes a big effort

(2) Vocabulary

▶ Instructor Strategies

Monitor vocabulary level

- Be aware of idioms and phrasal verbs
- Preview/define essential technical vocabulary and jargon; use the same terms consistently.
 - Example: connecting words / cohesive devices / signposting words / organizing phrases / adverbial markers... **Choose one!**
- Compile “living” glossary with practice site(s)

Monitor cultural references

- Explain – can be valuable teachable moments

(2) Grammar

Instructor Strategies

*For more details on linguistic modification, see the Materials Analysis workshop at camosunmss.opened.ca

Use active voice

- **Passive:** “An issue that is being highlighted in this chapter is digital technology.” X
- **Active:** “This chapter is highlighting digital technology.” ✓

Short sentences

- Break long, complex structures into simple, short sentences.

Here and now (be wary of abstractness, e.g., “if” and “would”)

- **Abstract:** “If one of you were to miss an appointment, that would inconvenience other members.”
- **Here and now:** “Try not to miss meetings. It’s inconvenient for other members.”

Front topics

- “For **customer complaints**, there are three options”

(3) Supplementing Clear Lectures

All students benefit from...

Replicating information in other forms

- Use board/screen to write key words/concepts
- Provide handouts
- Visualize information (graphs, infographics, diagrams, videos)

Sharing materials on D2L

Incorporating skills learning (e.g., note-taking)

Recording

- Privacy concern? Record yourself → embed in D2L → erase after limited time



Conclusion

Speak Clearly

- Slow down
 - Pace & pauses
- Monitor your words and grammar
 - Define if needed
- Organization & repetition



Scaffold Lectures

- Share topics & materials on D2L
- Use different forms (visuals, text)



Questions
and/or
comments?

Thanks for joining!

Ways the Multilingual Support Services (MSS) team can help with clear lectures:

- Coming soon: Clear Lectures tip sheet
- Consultation to address specific-course needs
- Vocabulary practice materials
- Language clarity review of instructional materials

Visit our website for more information:

camosunmss.opened.ca



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