Dear Reader,

In this month’s newsletter, we first tackle language issues by briefly delving into some tricky words whose meanings slightly differ. Then, on the classroom front, we dedicate a few worthwhile tips to formulating and communicating explicit learning objectives to your students. Doing so at the start of each lesson helps students to better recognize what knowledge and skills they should be working on in order to do well in your course.

Enjoy and stay sharp! – Gregg, Louise and Susanne

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**EMI Language Tip of the Month – Commonly confused words**

**historic vs. historical**

The word **historic** is an adjective meaning a very important or watershed moment in history.  
Example usage: historic passing of a law - a historic discovery which affected the trajectory of a field

The word **historical** is an adjective simply meaning ‘in the past’.  
Example usage: historical documentation - historical perspective of a concept

**benefit vs. profit**

The word **benefit** means to gain in general.  
Example usage: to benefit from training – health benefits from a balanced diet – to benefit from a new tax law

The word **profit** also means to gain, but in a financial sense.  
Example usage: to profit from personal investment – company profits increase due to higher revenue

Check out this Oxford dictionary link to see numerous other examples of such words.

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**International Classroom Tip**

In last month’s newsletter, the importance of lesson structure was addressed as a key factor students seek in a lesson. When teaching and/or learning in a foreign language, structure is even more important than usual to ease the cognitive load. One teaching tool that can help build structure into a lesson is the use of **explicit learning objectives**.

Let’s use the learning objective below to highlight three key points to keep in mind when you formulate learning objectives for a particular lesson:

*By the end of today’s lesson, you will be able to describe the Multiple System Estimation method used to calculate dark figures in human trafficking*

1. Formulate the objective from the **student perspective**, i.e. what the students will be able to (better) do at the end of the lesson. Learning objectives are NOT the same as teaching goals, e.g. *I will explain the ....*
2. Use an *action verb* to communicate the ‘skill’ students should be able to demonstrate when being assessed, e.g. on a test. Avoid using passive verbs like *know* or *understand*, which are vague when the teacher measures student learning, i.e. a teacher measures a student’s knowledge or understanding by having him/her explain, compare, analyse, calculate, critique, etc. *Such verbs describe the essence of student performance!* 

3. Be as specific as possible with content. *Name the method and its context or quantify the steps in a particular measurement process.* Simply stating that students will be able to understand *some key political theories* leaves too much room for interpretation.

When you communicate learning objectives with these three key points at the beginning of a lesson, your students have a clear idea of what they need to learn. Even if they have not reached these goals by the end of your lesson, they can go back and work towards them BECAUSE they have been given explicit learning objectives.

**Food for thought**

“Students who can identify what they are learning significantly outscore those who cannot” – Robert Marzano (educational researcher and trainer)

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