

Your Monthly EMI Newsletter

EMI English Medium Instruction

EMI Language Tip of the Month – Collocations

Collocations refer to a typical combination of words. Let us take a closer look at two general academic words.

analysis

Some typical verbs which collocate with the word **analysis** are: *perform, conduct, do*.

Some typical adjectives which collocate with the word **analysis** are: *thorough, preliminary, detailed*.

Good collocation usage: Our group plans to perform a detailed analysis.

Unusual collocation usage: Our group plans to make a short analysis.

conclusion

Some typical verbs which collocate with the word **conclusion** are: *draw, reach, lead to*.

Some typical adjectives which collocate with the word **conclusion** are: *logical, reasonable, hasty*.

Good collocation usage: We should not draw hasty conclusions.

Unusual collocation usage: We should not do quick conclusions.

Check out the online resource [Ozdic](#) to master your use of collocations. Simply enter a noun and browse through the numerous possibilities. Keep in mind that the site does not list every possible collocation, just the most common. It is a great tool to revise and vary your writing as well.

International Classroom Tip

In last month's newsletter, we highlighted activation methods in the international classroom as one approach to reduce language and cultural barriers. This month, we briefly explore handling student questions. You may have experienced a situation in which a student poses an unclear question. This may be due to an unusual accent in English, inaccurate terminology for the field or simply unclear logic. Whatever the cause, there are some techniques to handle such on-the-spot situations.

1. Give the student an opportunity to repeat the question. Communicate in general terms, e.g. **I'm afraid I didn't hear the question so well. Could you repeat your question?**
2. Focus on the part of the question which is unclear. You may have understood 80%. Communicate to the student the part of the question you didn't get, e.g. **Could you repeat the part about....?** If you get the sense that the question is unclear due to terminology and/or logic, invite the student to elaborate, e.g. **What do you mean by....?, Can you elaborate on what you mean by ...?**
3. Paraphrase/summarize the essence of the question as you understood it and ask whether this is accurate before attempting to answer, e.g. **Just to make sure I got it right, you are asking....**
4. Approach the student (a few steps suffice). This indicates attentive listening, reduces the distance the words must travel, and can subtly indicate to the student the need to crystallize the question.
5. Last, but not least: Once both parties have clarified the question, you may want to invite the rest of the class to comment on it. If a student is checking comprehension, you may want to let other students check their comprehension as well. If it is a difficult question with no clear-cut answer, it could stimulate students to think at higher cognitive levels while giving you the teacher feedback on where students are with certain topics.

Using these broad strategies can help create a learning environment in which students feel more comfortable asking questions in a foreign language. In addition, bouncing one student's question to the rest of the class can indicate to the student that the question is a good and valid one while keeping the other students on their toes 😊.

If you are interested in learning more about some strategies and language for handling student input, check out the EMI [e-module responding to student input](#).

Food for thought

The number of English-taught graduate degree programs has exploded, increasing by 300% between 2001 and 2014. Now a new trend has emerged - undergraduate English-taught degree programs. Since 2009, there has been a fifty-fold increase. To read more, click [here](#).

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