

# Teaching and learning through foreign languages: benefits, challenges and misconceptions

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## Agenda

- Points of departure: Internationalisation of Higher Education & Internationalisation of the Curriculum at Home
- Internationalised learning opportunity for all students
- Teaching and learning through foreign languages – what are the implications in Austria?

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## Points of departure

[**Internationalisation of Higher Education** is] the **intentional** process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the **quality of education** and research for **all students** and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society.

(De Wit et al. 2015:29)

### **Internationalisation of the Curriculum At Home**

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## A misconception

- IoHE does not only comprise programmes taught in English (EMI); any language may be the language of instruction.
- Any HE programme may be internationalised, irrespective of the language of instruction.

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## An internationalised learning opportunity for **all students**

[is] an opportunity for all students, irrespective of their provenance, to learn in an HE setting together with their peers. The alignment of the **content** to be learned, the **teaching and learning activities**, and the **assessment forms** applied will allow all students in the cohort **(i) to meet internationalized intended learning outcomes** and **(ii) to develop international and intercultural graduate attributes** as **discipline-specific or generic competences and skills**. With these key factors in place, **an internationalized learning opportunity** may develop into **a learning experience for all students**, not only those who are mobile.

(Lauridsen, 2020:209)

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## So what are the implications of this in AT?

1. All **students** learn through English or German.
  - The **language of instruction** may be their first or second language.
  - The **benefit**: All students have the opportunity to (further) develop their language and intercultural communication skills during their studies.
  - The **challenges**: All students need to have the sufficient and necessary language skills to successfully complete the programme OR provisions should be made for them to develop these skills.
  - The **work load** may be severe if the language enhancement activities are added to a full ECTS scheme.

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## So what are the implications of this in AT?

2. Are the **provisions in place** so that the students are given the opportunity to develop their language skills?

- Integrated into the curriculum?
- In separate (discipline specific) language courses?  
Languages for Specific Purposes?
- Through collaboration between disciplinary content teachers and language teachers (two teachers in the same module)?

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## So what are the implications of this in AT?

3. Are the **teachers** sufficiently prepared?

- When they teach through their own first language?
- When they teach through their own second (third) language?

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## So what are the implications of this in AT?

4. Are the **teachers** aware of how they may help their students learn through a foreign language?

E.g.

- Do they speak in a pace that students are able to follow? Use clear signposting?
- Do they provide sufficient visual support when they speak?
- Do they consider their students language needs in their didactic choices? Organise adequate learning activities?
  - Study groups; develop discipline specific glossaries; etc.

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## So what are the implications of this in AT?

5. Do the **teachers** themselves have the sufficient and necessary language skills to teach through their second (third) language?

- If not, does the HEI provide language support?
- Does the HEI provide pedagogical support / continuing professional development?
  - See e.g [www. EQUiP.eu](http://www.EQUiP.eu)

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