English as language of instruction from year one – why and how

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Environmental Engineering Programme at LTH

- EE is a five-year engineering programme
- Programme structure is 3+2
- First three years: math, physics, chemistry, ecology, geosciences ...
- Last two years diversified: energy, water, environment, risk management
- Students: 50/50 women/men
International – why?

- Graduate employability
- Work outside Sweden
- International work in Sweden
- Sources of new knowledge & information
- Contributing to a stimulating environment
- Attract better students
- Environmental issues are international

International – how?

- Student exchange – outgoing
- Student exchange – incoming
- Teacher exchange
- Research collaboration – take advantage
- Course content
- Linguistic training (a necessary condition for all of the above)
English as language of instruction

- Decision in 2005
- Started in fall 2006
- Now 2007/2008 fully implemented:
  - Yr 1 / 2 courses / 25 ECTS credits
  - Yr 2 / 3 courses / 24 ECTS credits
  - Yr 3 / 2 courses / 22.5 ECTS credits

Support – strategy

- New situation for both teachers and students
- Main focus: pedagogical / learning problems
- We did not want a language course
- Support development should be a shared responsibility
  - Programme management
  - Course teachers
  - Students
  - Pedagogical/language staff
Challenge Analysis Questionnaire

Purpose - Reflect on learning in relation to language of instruction

• Experiences of being taught through English
• Academic challenges
  – Reading comprehension
  – Listening comprehension
  – Written proficiency
  – Speaking
  – Vocabulary
• ‘Social’ challenges
• Important to consider when studying through English

Challenge Analysis Questionnaire

(percentage of students that found the area challenging)

Challenging areas:

• Vocabulary (96.8%)
• Speaking in public (74.2%)
• Written proficiency (67.7%)

Confident areas:

• Reading comprehension (29%)
• Listening comprehension (29%)
• Fluency (22.6%)
• Pronunciation (3.2%)
Modules

1) Study Skills

2) Academic Writing
   - Lecture
   - Linguistic feedback on written material

3) WikiW — online vocabulary bank/dictionary developed by students and teachers

1) Study Skills

• Introduction – attention paid to learning through English vs. Swedish

• Online platform – Learning Styles introduction (James Cook University Study Skills Online)
2) Academic Writing

- Lecture – *The Academic Research Paper* – two weeks prior to deadline for 1st draft of 1st research report.
- Linguistic feedback on 1st draft of research report

3) WikiW

Online platform where students and teachers build the programme’s own dictionary

The WikiW-platform also contains further English language support such as handouts from the ‘Academic Writing’-lecture, Study Skills documentation and blogs where students and teachers can discuss matters related to the language of instruction.