

COURSES IN ENGLISH? Yes, with caution...
A homemade decalogue

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As a preamble

- With standard courses you compete locally;
- With courses in English you compete at continental level;
- The number of students capable or willing to follow courses in English is limited
- **And they are footloose!**

1° Motivation

- **Motivation needs to be strong, easy to understand and to explain.**
- Don't set up a course in English just because:
 - a) It is fashionable** (everybody is doing it);
 - b) Someone will give you a rabbit**
(ok, some money is difficult to resist, I know, I know....., but try);
 - c) You want to build resources you don't have**
(if born badly it seldom recovers).

2° Language skills

- Set up an appropriate language level at entry and **stick to it**
(waver at first and you'll never upgrade it, students and colleagues will fight you to death);
- Assessment only through Internationally recognized **tests or certificates**
(local courses/exams of English are no guarantee of STANDARD);
- Set an International Certificate as a **requirement** for graduation
(allow credits for it in the study plan, good for the student's CV and the reputation of the course) .

3° An International Class

- Local faculty who teaches local students in vague English is a joke.
- **Use Erasmus, university scholarships (hopefully) and whatever you can think of to get at least some International students.**
- Make sure they do not know the local idioma at entry.

4° - And/or an International Faculty

- This is a big asset
- It gives the course a **real** International flavour
- And it greatly improves its attractiveness
- Obviously both an International class **and** an International Faculty is «**a very good thing**»

5° - No Incentives for Resident Faculty

- Every self-respecting academic naturally maximizes at the margin
- Provide incentives for professors and you'll have the queue at your door to teach in the course
- Don't and you'll have to beg your colleagues
- **A much better solution.**
- If you can't avoid an insistent bad one put his/her course as an alternative to a good one;
- Students will take care of the problem

6°- Didactic flexibility and experimentation

- A course in English allows/obliges you to experiment a new didactic organization and teaching methods;
- **Go for it, boldly!**
- But the administrative staff will take it personally;
- Breathe deeply and prepare yourself to fight every inch of the way.
- Tell them the minimum;
- And possibly only after.

7° Build the Class

- More is not always better;
- Resist the urgings to increase the number of students;
- **30-35 is the maximum size of a class;**
- If you have more create a second curriculum;
- And remember: students learn as much interacting with each other as with the professors.

8° - Build the students' CV

- Drill into the students' mind the following key question:
- **«Once graduated, what will distinguish me from all the others with the same grade?»**
- Encourage them to build windows of specific personal knowledge/experience;
- And help them to do it

9°- Provide International Experience to the Students

- Erasmus, Double Degrees, Special Programs are invaluable tools to enhance the Students' CV and their employability;
- EU education policies are big on them;
- **Spend time and resources to set them up**
- They are crucial for the success of your students and ultimately of your course

10° - Keep Running, Competitors are catching up

- In Europe the supply of courses is growing daily;
- The number of students is not;
- In some EU countries Universities are already being downsized
- **Don't relax if your course is successful;**
- The only way to keep it so is to improve its attractiveness every day

Instead of conclusions

- It is a hard job
- You need to be tough
- You don't do it neither for love nor money but just for the mirror
- And this is enough

Good luck!