

TEACHER TALKS at RMIT Vietnam

ONE WORLD TRAINING

AI for EMI: Making Complex Content More Accessible

Dr. Dieter Bruhn
President / Vietnam Country Director
One World Training



Who am I?

- Master's degrees in TESOL and International Business; Doctor of Business Administration (DBA)
- 30 years of global teaching and training experience in 20 countries
- Last 5 years in Vietnam
- Married to Miss Talent Vietnam
- My wife and I won Miss and Mister Mighty Entrepreneur International 2025
- Author of *The ABCs of Entrepreneurship*



Quick Survey

Raise your hand if:

- Your students sometimes struggle with complex content in English.
- You sometimes need to explain, adapt, or rewrite course materials.
- You have used AI to make learning materials more accessible.

How can we help students access complex content through English?



What is EMI?

- English as a Medium of Instruction or English Medium Instruction
- Using English to teach academic or professional content
- English is not the first language of the students

How can we help students understand complex content when English creates an additional challenge?



The Challenge

- Students need to learn **complex content** through **unfamiliar** or **complex language**
- This can make learning harder than it needs to be
- It can also lead to stress, confusion, frustration, and lowered participation

So what support do students really need?



What Makes Content Difficult to Access?

- Unfamiliar vocabulary
- Long or complex sentences
- Dense academic language
- New or abstract concepts
- Limited background knowledge
- Difficult text organization
- Too much information at once

Which ones create the biggest challenges for your students?



What Can We Do?

We can provide **scaffolding**

- Activate background knowledge
- Pre-teach important vocabulary
- Use visuals and examples
- Break content into smaller parts
- Highlight main ideas and text structure
- Use guiding questions and comprehension support
- Simplify or adapt the text when appropriate
- Include peer collaboration

How Can AI Help?

- Adapt texts for different levels
- Identify important vocabulary
- Create vocabulary practice in context
- Explain difficult concepts more simply
- Break texts into manageable parts
- Identify main ideas and text structure
- Generate examples
- Create visuals
- Develop comprehension and discussion questions

Same Content. Different Learners. Different Support.



Sample Academic Text

Imagine this is required content for your students.

Globalization has led to an unprecedented level of economic interdependence among nations, with international trade serving as a cornerstone of modern economic systems. Countries now specialize in the production of goods and services where they possess a comparative advantage, thereby enhancing overall efficiency and output. However, this interconnectedness also exposes economies to external shocks, such as global financial crises or supply chain disruptions, which can propagate rapidly across borders.



Group Discussion

- Imagine the students are **high A2 to B1 English users**

- With your partner or small group, identify:
  - Language that may be difficult
  - Ideas students still need to understand
  - Support that might help

Lower-Level Adaptation

AI-Supported Version: High A2/B1

Countries around the world trade with each other. They buy and sell goods and services from other countries. Some countries focus on making certain products because they have the right climate, natural resources, workers, or other conditions. This can make these products easier or less expensive to produce. However, countries also depend on each other. If one country has a serious economic problem, a shortage, or a shipping problem, other countries may have problems too.

What changed?

- Shorter sentences
- More common vocabulary
- Fewer abstract expressions
- *Key ideas remain*

Is this appropriate for these learners?

Sample Academic Text

Let's look at the original text again.

Globalization has led to an unprecedented level of economic interdependence among nations, with international trade serving as a cornerstone of modern economic systems. Countries now specialize in the production of goods and services where they possess a comparative advantage, thereby enhancing overall efficiency and output. However, this interconnectedness also exposes economies to external shocks, such as global financial crises or supply chain disruptions, which can propagate rapidly across borders.

Same Text, Different Level

Now Imagine B1–B2 Economics Students

- Would we make the same changes?
- If not, what would you do differently?

Globalization has made countries more economically connected. This **economic interdependence** means that countries increasingly depend on one another for goods and services. Countries often specialize in products where they have a **comparative advantage**, meaning that conditions allow them to produce certain goods particularly well. This can increase economic output and trade. However, greater interdependence also creates risks. **External shocks**, such as financial crises or **supply chain disruptions**, can begin in one place and quickly affect other countries.

More language support — but more academic terminology remains

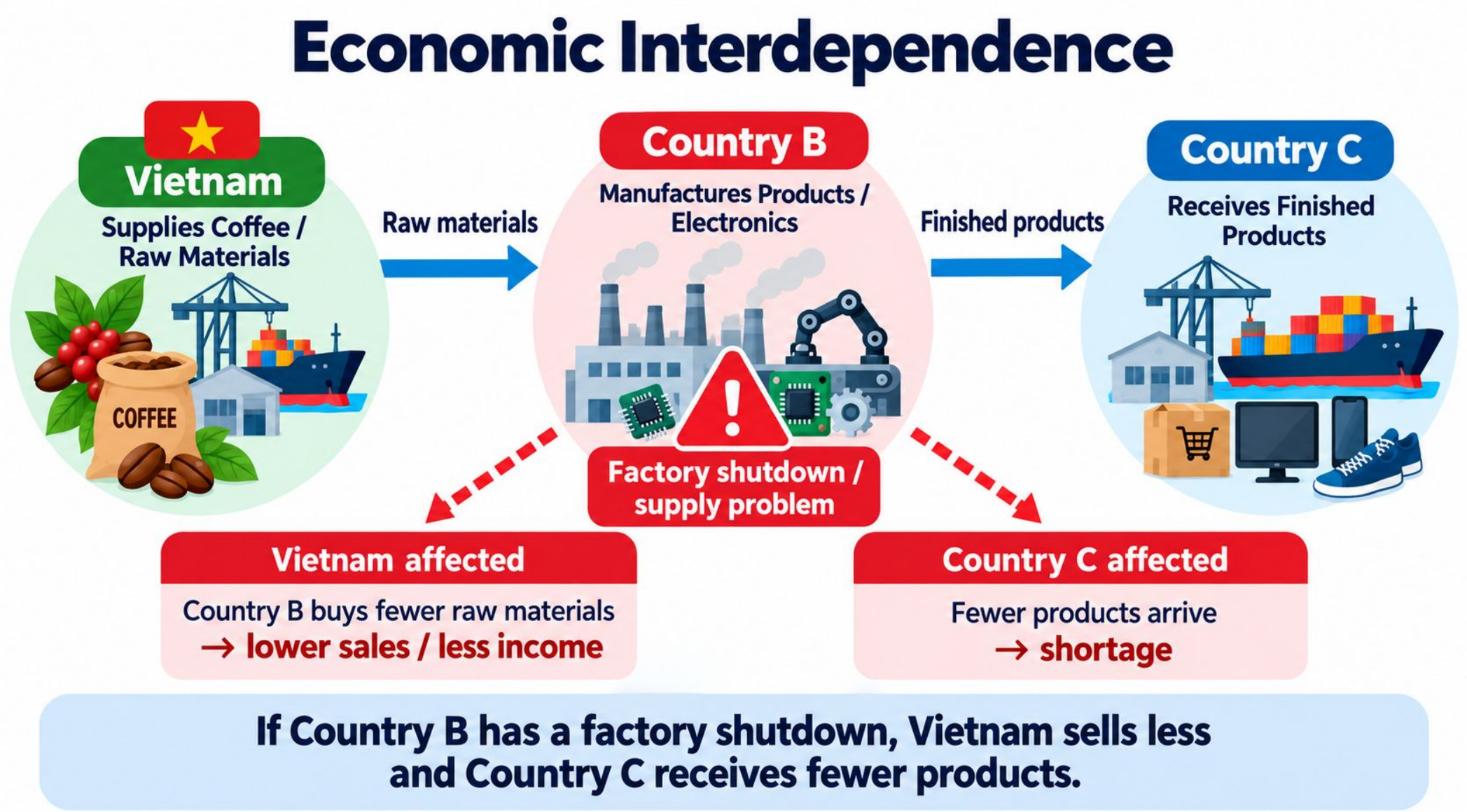


Which Version is Better?

- High A2-B1 version
- B1-B2 version

It depends on the level of students and learning goals

AI-Generated Images



Vocabulary Support

A2–B1 - Focus on words students need to understand the message:

- trade
- depend on
- shortage
- supply

B1–B2 - Introduce more academic or disciplinary terms:

- economic interdependence
- comparative advantage
- external shock
- supply chain disruption

AI can help us decide what to simplify, what to explain, and what to teach

AI-Generated Vocabulary Exercises

Vocabulary in Context

1. Vietnam has a ***comparative advantage*** in coffee production because its climate and growing conditions allow it to produce large amounts of high-quality coffee at a relatively low cost.

What does **comparative advantage** most likely mean?

a) A situation that makes a country especially well suited to producing a particular good
b) A government policy that limits products from other countries
c) A requirement that countries produce all the goods they need themselves

2. A major ***supply chain disruption*** occurred when flooding closed the port and important factory parts could not arrive for two weeks.

What does **supply chain disruption** most likely mean?

d) An increase in the number of products a company produces
e) A change in the price a customer pays for a product
f) An interruption in the movement of materials or products

More Scaffolding Examples

Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading
• Background questions • Predictions • Key vocabulary • Visuals	• Headings or chunks • Topic/main idea questions • Cause-and-effect tasks • Guiding questions	• Comprehension questions • Discussion • Application

CLEAR Prompting Framework

- **C — Content**
  What are you teaching?
- **L — Learners**
  Who are the students? What is their English level?
- **E — Essential Learning**
  What must students understand or be able to do?
- **A — Adapt**
  What language, structure, or presentation can be changed?
- **R — Resources & Support**
  What scaffolding should AI create (vocabulary, visuals, examples, chunking, guiding questions, etc.)?

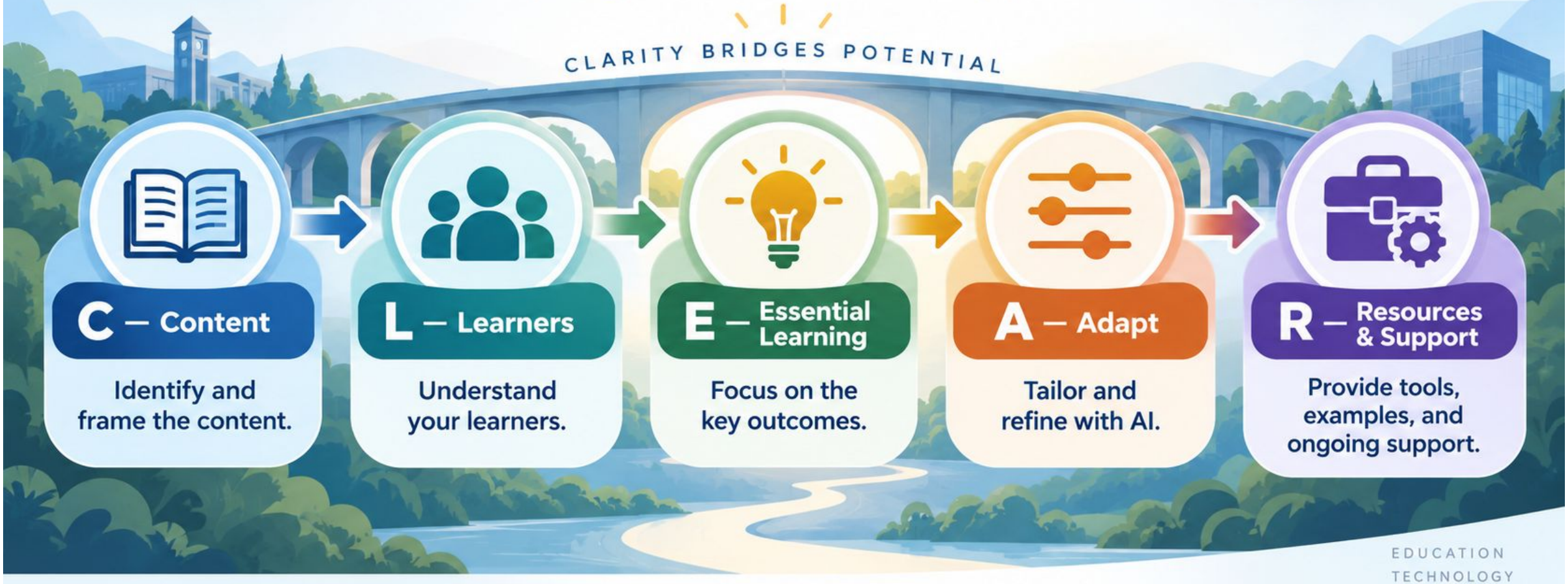
PEOPLE
PROMPTS
POSSIBILITIES
PROGRESS

CLEAR

HIGHER
EDUCATION
BRIGHTER
POSSIBILITIES

A Practical Prompting Framework for AI-Supported Scaffolding

CLARITY BRIDGES POTENTIAL



TEACHER TALKS ELT & EMI Vietnam
ONE WORLD TRAINING

Helping teachers make complex content more accessible.

EDUCATION
TECHNOLOGY
INCLUSION
GREATER LEARNING

CLEAR Prompt - Passage

Original Text

Globalization has led to an unprecedented level of economic interdependence among nations, with international trade serving as a cornerstone of modern economic systems. Countries now specialize in the production of goods and services where they possess a comparative advantage, thereby enhancing overall efficiency and output. However, this interconnectedness also exposes economies to external shocks, such as global financial crises or supply chain disruptions, which can propagate rapidly across borders.

CLEAR Prompt - Example

- **C — Content**
  I teach first-year university economics. Students are learning how countries specialize in producing different goods and how economic problems can spread between countries.
- **L — Learners**
  My students are approximately **B1 English level**.
- **E — Essential Learning**
  Students should understand that countries depend on one another and that problems in one country can affect others. They should also learn the terms **comparative advantage** and **economic interdependence**.
- **A — Adapt**
  Adapt the passage below for these learners. Use shorter sentences and more accessible language, but do not remove the important economic concepts.
- **R — Resources & Support –** Include:
  - brief explanations of the two key terms
  - 3 vocabulary-in-context multiple-choice questions
  - one simple visual idea that could help students understand the concept

CLEAR Prompt – Group Activity

With the members of your group, you will use the CLEAR framework to create an appropriate prompt for the following passage based on one of these levels:

A. High A2-B1 **B. B1-B2** **C. B2-C1**

Urbanization has significantly altered natural ecosystems by replacing vegetation with buildings, roads, and other impermeable surfaces. These changes reduce the ability of soil to absorb rainfall, increasing surface runoff and contributing to urban flooding. At the same time, the loss of vegetation can intensify the urban heat island effect because fewer plants are available to provide shade and evaporative cooling. As cities continue to expand, sustainable urban planning increasingly requires strategies that balance economic development with environmental resilience.

Your output: an adapted passage, one scaffold, and at least one revision you can explain.

Step 1 - Analyze

Before using AI, discuss:

- What may be difficult for your learners?
- What do they already know?
- What do they need to understand or be able to do?
- Which language or concepts may need support?
- What kind of scaffolding might help?

Make the pedagogical decisions first

Step 2 – Create a CLEAR Prompt

Build your prompt together:

- **C — Content**
  What are you teaching?
- **L — Learners**
  Who are your students? What is their English level?
- **E — Essential Learning**
  What must they understand or be able to do?
- **A — Adapt**
  What language, structure, or presentation should be changed?
- **R — Resources & Support**
  What kind of support might help?

Choose your scaffold on the next slide before submitting your prompt.

Step 3 – Choose One Form of Support

Choose **ONE** additional scaffold for your learners:

- Vocabulary in context
- Visual or diagram
- Background knowledge / pre-reading
- Text chunking or headings
- Main idea / text structure activity
- Guiding comprehension questions
- Relevant example

- *Don’t just simplify the text. Add support that helps students learn.*
- *Include this under R, paste the passage, and submit your prompt to AI.*

Step 4 – Evaluate the AI Output

Do not accept the first response automatically, but ask:

- **ACCURACY**
  Is the content correct?
- **LEVEL**
  Is the language appropriate for these learners?
- **ESSENTIAL LEARNING**
  Did the important concepts and learning goals remain?
- **CLARITY**
  Is the material easy to follow and well organized?
- **SUPPORT**
  Does the added scaffold actually help students understand or engage with the content?

AI output is input, not authority

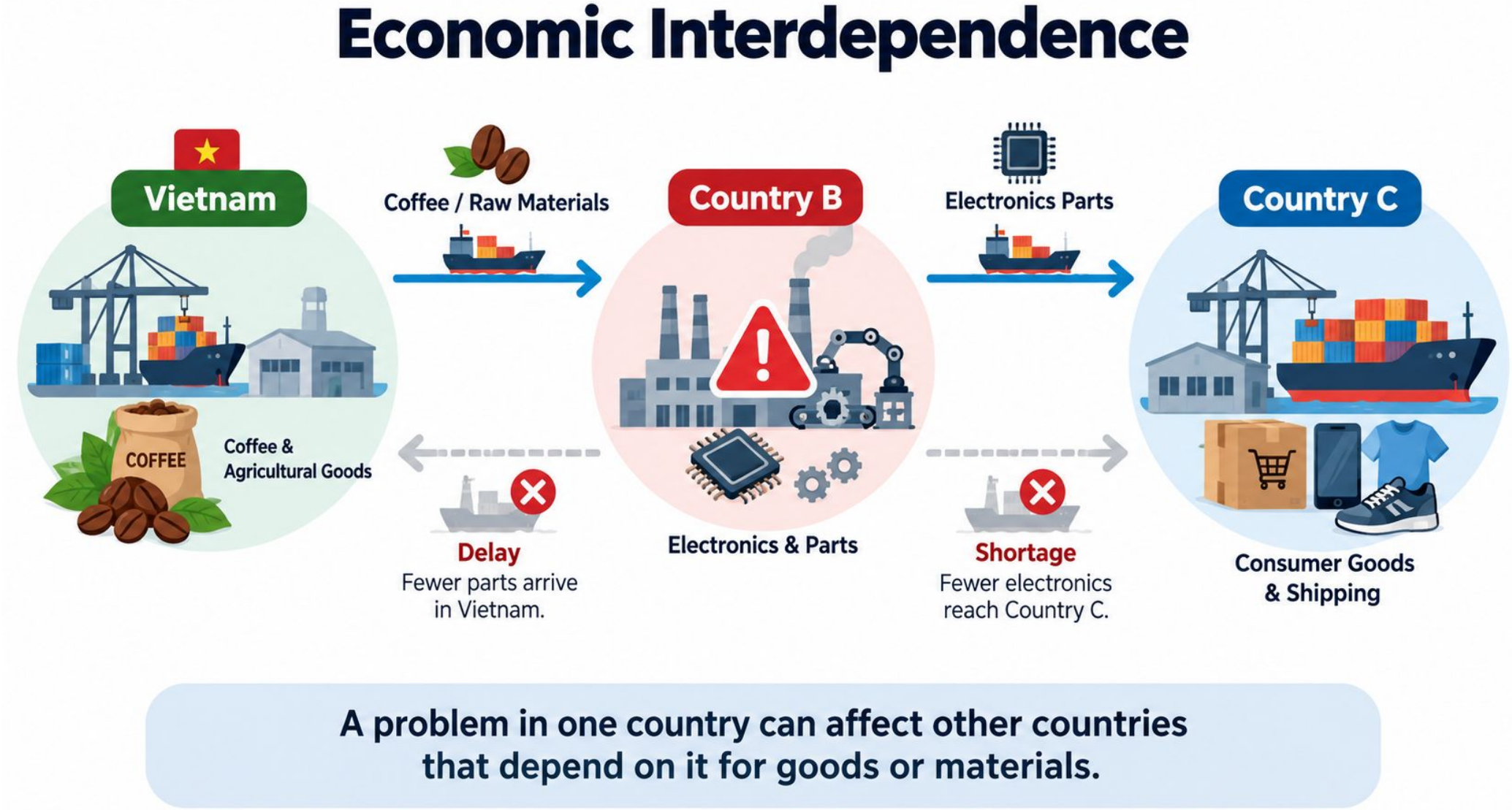
Step 5 – Revise the Output

Find at least **one thing you would change**.

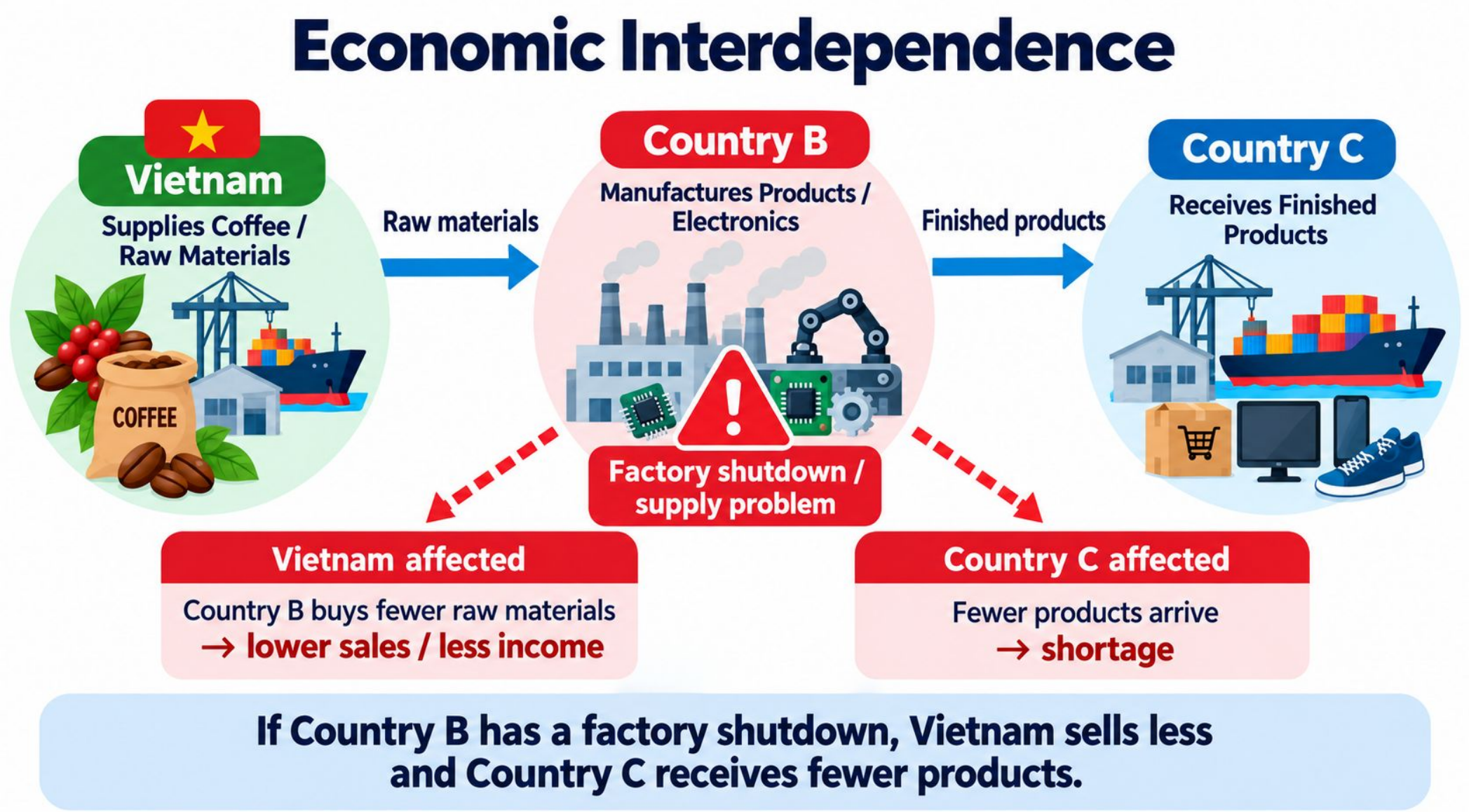
- Simplify something further
- Restore an important concept
- Remove unnecessary language
- Improve an explanation
- Change the vocabulary activity
- Make the visual more useful
- Ask for a better example

Revise your prompt or ask AI to improve the output.

AI Output – First Version



AI Output – Revised Version



Cross-Level Comparison

Let’s hear briefly from at least one group at each level.

- What did you change?
- What did you keep?
- What support did you add?
- What is one revision you made after evaluating the AI output, and why?
- Why was this appropriate for your learner level?

What differences do you notice across the three levels?

What Did We Learn?

Same Content Does Not Mean Same Support

- Lower-level learners may need more language adaptation.
- Higher-level learners may need less rewriting and more targeted support.
- Important terminology may stay or be simplified depending on the learning goal.
- Visuals, examples, vocabulary support, and guiding questions can sometimes help more than rewriting.
- AI makes differentiation faster, but the teacher decides what is appropriate.

Accessibility is not one-size-fits-all

A Process You Can Reuse

From **Complex Content** to **Accessible Learning**

ANALYZE → PROMPT → SCAFFOLD → EVALUATE → REVISE → USE



Adapt the language to the learner. Preserve the learning that matters.



Final Takeaways and Questions

- What is the most important thing you learned today?
- What questions do you have?



Thank You!

FOR BEING PART OF THIS JOURNEY

Dr. Dieter Bruhn
President / Vietnam Country Director
One World Training
Email: dbruhn@oneworldtraining.com

LinkedIn
https://www.linkedin.com/in/dieter-bruhn-40978412/

Website
https://oneworldtraining.com/

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