1 Learning and teaching contexts

A Warm-up

1 Think back to a language learning situation you know well. Picture as many details as you can. Consider these questions:

- How many learners were in the class?
- Was it a face-to-face class or were lessons online?
- What resources were available to the teacher?
- What was the age range of the learners?
- Did the learners share a common first language (L1)?
- What reasons did the learners have for learning the language? How motivated to learn did they appear?

2 Describe the learning context you thought about to a partner. How similar are the two contexts? How do you think each context impacted on the style of teaching and the lessons generally?

> Recognizing the complex and diverse nature of ELT classrooms around the world … is the starting point of our exploration of roles, relationships and interactions in second language classrooms.
>
> Graham Hall, 2011

B Learners' purposes

1 Here are some commonly used abbreviations to describe learners' different purposes for learning English, and also the situations in which they learn and use English. Can you match them to the definitions?

1 EFL English as a foreign language	a The use of a language other than the learners' L1 to teach a school subject such as science or physical education, with the aim of developing competence in both the target language and specified subject.
2 ESL English as a second language	b The way in which English is now used by many non-native speakers to communicate with other non-native speakers; also called English as a lingua franca (ELF).
3 CLIL Content and language integrated learning	c The teaching of English with the aim of developing a learner's ability to function effectively in a particular domain, such as business or medicine.
4 EIL English as an international language	d The learning of English in a context where English is not generally the medium of communication. For example, this would include a Spanish student having English classes in Spain.
5 ESP English for specific purposes	e An example of ESP with the aim of developing a learner's ability to function effectively in academic contexts, such as studying at an English medium university.
6 EAP English for academic purposes	f The learning of English over a sustained period in a context where English is generally the medium of communication. For example, this would include someone from China living and working in the UK.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009091602.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

2 Here are profiles of learners of English. In each case, identify their purpose for learning English. Use the abbreviations above.

- Han is currently studying a course which focuses on writing essays, giving presentations and following recordings of lectures. She hopes to enrol at an English-speaking university, if she can pass the English language test required.
- Lucia is an Italian-speaking teenager who is studying English as one of her school subjects in Bologna. She also attends an English class twice a week in a local language school.
- Kazankiran is an asylum-seeker in Canada. She speaks Kurdish and Arabic, and is attending English classes with a view to settling in Canada permanently.
- Carmen, who is Brazilian, is the head of marketing in a large export company. She attends a one-to-one English class in Sao Paulo to help her in her business dealings, which are mainly with Middle Eastern clients.
- Kah-Yee is Malaysian and when she was at school, she learned mathematics in English. Her English lessons aimed to ensure that she could follow the mathematics lessons effectively.

C Needs and needs analyses

1 Which of the five learners above are likely to have the most clearly specified needs?

2 Think about the questions below. When you are ready, discuss your ideas in small groups.

a How might the needs of an ESL learner vary from those of an EFL learner?
b How might the needs of an EAP learner vary from those of an EFL learner?
c In a CLIL context, where science is being taught through the medium of English, what sort of language content would you expect to be included?
d Can you think of any implications for teaching if a student is, or will be, a user of EIL (as opposed to using English in an environment in which English is the main language)?

3 How could you find out more about the needs of a particular learner or group of learners? What questions would you ask?

Work with a partner to write some questions which you could ask a member of your TP class.

When you are ready, compare your ideas with another group.

D More differences

1 Read the quote from Graham Hall (above). As well as the learners' purpose for learning English, what other things might contribute to 'the diverse nature of ELT classrooms'?

2 Your trainer will allocate you either a), b) or c) below. Think about the needs of the learners, their likely motivations and any specific activity types that you think would, or would not, be appropriate.

a What are the similarities and differences between teaching:
- a group of 17–18-year-olds who are at B2 level of English and have just started an ESP course in business English?
- a senior manager of a local company on a 1:1 basis, who will shortly be travelling to the USA for a series of meetings?

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009091602.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press

b What are the similarities and differences between teaching:
- a group of 40 14-year-olds who share the same language, at a secondary school in a country where English is not spoken as a first language?
- a group of 15 14-year-olds of mixed nationality, studying a three-week course in the UK over the summer?

c What are the similarities and differences between teaching:
- an online general English class with 15 learners?
- an online general English class with one learner?

KEY WORDS FOR TEACHERS

Check you know the meanings of these terms.
- *EFL ESL CLIL EIL ESP EAP*
- *needs analysis*

REFLECTION

Complete these sentences:
1 One reason that there is no single 'correct' way to teach is that …
2 I would like to find out about the needs of my learners because …
3 I think I would be able to teach ESP in the area of …
4 EAP learners are likely to need …
5 If I had a very small class, I would try to …
6 If I had a very big class, I would try to …
7 In a class where everyone shares the same language, I would …
8 In a class where a variety of languages are spoken, I would …

Reference

Hall, G. (2011). *Exploring English Language Teaching: Language in Action*. Abingdon: Routledge, p.4.

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009091602.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press