1 Learning and teaching contexts

Main focus
To raise awareness of the ways in which learning contexts can vary and the impacts that these variations will have on teaching.

Learning outcomes
- Trainees can describe a range of language learning purposes and situations, using standard abbreviations.
- Trainees understand how variations in context may impact on teaching, with regard to class size and the profile of learners.
- Trainees understand that different learners have different needs.
- Trainees develop an awareness of how learners' needs can be investigated via simple needs analyses.

Key concepts
- EFL, ESL, CLIL, EIL, ESP, EAP
- needs and needs analyses

Stage	Focus
A Warm-up	introducing some key variations in learning contexts
B Learners' purposes	defining EFL, ESL, CLIL, EIL, ESP and EAP
C Needs and needs analyses	identifying ways in which a teacher can investigate the needs of learners
D More differences	recognizing how class size and other variables will impact on learning and teaching
Key words for teachers	building of specialist vocabulary to talk about teaching
Reflection	trainees consider how they might apply what they have learned in the unit

A Warm-up

Encourage the learners to think back to a concrete situation in which they were either a learner or a teacher. Give them a little planning time to think about what they wish to say. The activity assumes some human interaction (rather than a lesson delivered entirely through a learning app).

As an alternative, this could be set up as a visualization task, with the questions being asked over appropriate music.

Give the learners time to compare the contexts they recalled before reporting back in open class.

B Learners' purposes

1 Write *EFL* on the board and try to elicit what the letters might stand for. Write one or two further examples before setting up the matching activity.
   Answers: 1–d)   2–f)   3–a)   4–b)   5–c)   6–e)
   You could ask the trainees to identify an example of ESP from the list (EAP) in order to highlight how ESP acts as a generic term with specific examples branching from it.
   You may like to feed in more information about the types of learning context. This might include:
   ELT is a generic term that could cover all the other scenarios.
   EFL can be extended to cover short stays in an English-speaking environment when the learner is not a long-term resident in that country. So, a student who comes to the UK for a four-week summer course is also an EFL learner.
   ESL is one commonly used abbreviation for the phenomenon described. However, it may be broken down further. In the UK, ESOL is used to refer to the teaching of English to migrant or other minority groups, learning English in a host country. Learners may use their L1 at home but need English to have full access to the wider community – schools, health care and so on.
   CLIL is one content-based model of instruction and includes the explicit teaching of English to support learners so that they can also achieve in the 'content' subject.
   There is almost no end of examples of ESP courses, but as well as the examples given, common courses include: English for aviation, English for law, and English for hotels and tourism.

2 Give the trainees some time to read the profiles of learners and ask any questions that they need to. They could compare their answers before reporting back to you in open class.
   - Han is an EAP student.
   - Lucia is an EFL student.
   - Kazankiran is an ESL student.
   - Carmen is an ESP student, studying English for business purposes. It seems very likely that she also uses English as an international language.
   - Kah-Yee was a CLIL student. (Malaysia introduced CLIL in the early part of the 21st century, with mathematics being one of the subjects taught through English, but later the CLIL policy was reversed.)

C Needs and needs analyses

1 Invite the learners to look back at the profiles and consider which learners have the most predictable needs. Arguably, it is only Lucia who does not have easily anticipated needs. You may like to ask the trainees to speculate further about some of the needs of the other learners and what sort of content their course might include.

2 Focus the trainees on the questions. Allow them to discuss in pairs or small groups before reporting back.
   a How might the needs of an ESL learner vary from those of an EFL learner?
     The needs of an ESL learner are likely to be more predictable. In some cases they may reflect day-to-day survival needs, such as making an appointment with a doctor, form-filling, and talking to a child's teacher. However, it is fair to say that people ought to have

the opportunity to thrive, not merely survive, and so although these may be reasonable initial aims, they are unlikely to fulfil all of a learner's needs.

b How might the needs of an EAP learner vary from those of an EFL learner?
The needs of an EAP learner will reflect the type of texts they need to understand (e.g. lectures) and also produce (e.g. extended academic essays). This may mean that there is a case for teaching the genre features of those text types. In addition, the learner needs to be able to interact with their teachers in an appropriate manner.

c What sort of language content would you expect a CLIL learner to receive?
This will focus on the language needed for the subject they are studying. Again, there may be a need to study certain text types (e.g. if science is taught via English, they may need to study how to write a lab report). Particular vocabulary and grammar may accompany this (e.g. the passive voice may be taught in relation to a lab report).

d Can you think of any implications for teaching if a student uses, or will use, English as an international language?
There are several implications, including what 'counts' as an appropriate model of English on which to base feedback. However, more easily implementable actions might, for example, be things such as using listening comprehension texts that include speakers from a variety of L1 backgrounds.

3 Try to elicit from the trainees that they could investigate needs by surveying the learners, or by interviewing them.
Point out that if needs are known, courses can be designed to meet them, and this may prove very motivating for learners.
Put trainees into pairs and ask them to write questions that they could use to establish a learner's needs. You may like to start this in open class, by eliciting questions such as *How important is practising reading to you?*.
When the trainees have had some time, they can compare with another group before reporting back in open class. You may like to collate relevant questions on the board.
You could also point out that there are other sources of information, in addition to the learners themselves. For example, information could come from a learner's previous teachers, an HR department that knows the language demands of a company role, and so on.
An alternative to this activity is to provide a simple needs analysis form for the trainees to analyse and comment on. You could use one that your centre uses and you are familiar with, for example.

D   More differences

1 Direct the learners to the quote provided and ask them to speculate on other ways in which classrooms might differ. If necessary, provide an example to start. Trainees may comment on such things as the age of the learners, the numbers in a class, online v physical environments, the resources available, current English proficiency, groups that share a first language v those that don't, the experience and backgrounds of the teachers, and so on. The trainees may also comment on the differences brought about by variables within individual learners (such as their level of motivation). These types of difference are the subject of the following unit.

1 – Learners and teachers, and the teaching and learning context

2   Put trainees into groups of three or four and allocate each group a), b) or c). If you have time, groups could consider all three questions.
   After sufficient time to generate some ideas, the trainees report back.

   a   The main difference would seem to be in terms of experience. It is unlikely that the young group has much actual business experience or can predict accurately what their specific needs will be in the future – and they may vary across the group anyway. However, the senior manager has a lot of experience and has probably taken part in similar meetings before. Their needs are therefore predictable. We might expect that the manager is involved in specifying the content, and to some extent planning, their own course. The degree of business knowledge expected of the teacher might also vary. This leads to a distinction between (paradoxically) 'general' ESP and 'specialized' ESP.

   b   The main differences are obviously in group size and the sharing (or not) of an L1. Teachers might feel more comfortable using pair and group work extensively with a relatively small group that can be easily monitored and have no option but to use English to communicate. They may feel more reluctant with a large group who might use their L1 to communicate. The group based in the UK might benefit from activities centring on places they have seen and will visit during their stay. This is unlikely to interest people who might never go to the UK.

   c   As in a), it is likely that the 1:1 learner can have a greater say in what they want to do in the lesson and what they enjoy doing. Activities can be designed to target particular language areas that are problematic for them or would be useful. With a class of 15, the teacher will need to think about how to set up pair and group work and how they might monitor breakout rooms efficiently. In both cases the teacher would probably want to include a balance of screen- and non-screen-based activities, so that learners do not spend the entire lesson looking at the screen.

> **KEY WORDS FOR TEACHERS**
>
> Remind the trainees of the need to be able to use teaching terms confidently and accurately. Ensure trainees have a range of resources from which they can check key language and teaching terminology. Remind them that there is a glossary at the back of the Trainee Book.
>
> **REFLECTION**
>
> Either focus the trainees on the sentence stems in their books or, if you prefer, dictate the stems. Give learners time to complete the stems before sharing with partners and reporting back.
>
> While a range of answers are obviously possible, the completed sentences produced should reflect an appreciation of the diversity of learning contexts and the need to adapt teaching appropriately.
>
> If time is short, trainees could choose two or three stems to complete, or you could allocate stems to different members of the group.

2 Learners as individuals

Main focus

To raise awareness of individual learner variation and the need to support strategic learning. The primary focus is on those variables over which the teacher has some control.

Learning outcomes

- Trainees can describe a range of language learning strategies and their importance.
- Trainees understand how learning strategies can lead to learner autonomy.
- Trainees can identify factors that are likely to maintain motivation.
- Trainees understand that some learners will enjoy different activity types to others.
- Trainees appreciate the need to embrace diversity and make classrooms safe and supportive spaces.

Key concepts

- language learning strategies
- motivation
- learner training
- learner autonomy
- learner preferences
- learner identity

Stage	Focus
A Warm-up	introducing some key factors in individual variations in learning
B Learner preferences	identifying different learner preferences
C Motivation	recognizing factors that can impact on motivation
D Language learning strategies	identifying a variety of learning strategies
E Learner training	identifying opportunities for learners training and how training might be best achieved
Key words for teachers	building of specialist vocabulary to talk about teaching
Reflection	trainees reflect on various dimensions of individual difference

A Warm-up

1 With books closed, describe the scenario to the trainees. Allow them to think for a few moments before discussing in pairs and reporting back their ideas.

Accept all reasonable suggestions.

Motivation, learner preferences and learning strategies are dealt with in the unit. The trainees may also suggest factors such as age and aptitude, which are not dealt with in detail here because the teacher has no control over them.
If a trainee suggests *learning styles*, explain that you will return to that in the next section of the lesson.

11

2 This would be an opportunity to point out that learning English is simply harder for some people than others because of the 'distance' between their L1 and English. For example, a French learner of English, such as Sophie, will recognize many cognates, see similar grammar patterns and recognize the script and writing conventions of English. On the other hand, a Chinese learner of English (Zhao) will not derive this support from their L1 and will have to learn things, such as the Roman script, that some other learners take for granted. Also, a learner who has already successfully learned other languages will have an advantage – again, Sophie and also Safia. They will, for example, have probably developed successful learning strategies and also may be more resilient if they sense a lack of progress because they will be confident in their ability to learn another language.

B Learner preferences

If a trainee has suggested learning styles as an explanation for individual differences in task A, explain that while different learners may **like** different classroom activities, there is very little evidence to suggest that those preferences impact directly on learning (Lethaby and Harries, 2016). However, doing things we enjoy, may impact on motivation to study and our willingness to invest in particular activities.

1 Ask trainees to reflect on a language learning experience they have had. Encourage them to recall it in as much detail as possible and share one or two thoughts about what they liked and did not like. They then complete the questionnaire individually.

2 Trainees share their responses with others in small groups. Ask them to report back particularly on the contrasts that they found in their groups.

They should understand that within any one class it is likely that there will be learners who like different types of activities. Some, for example, may enjoy communicating with others in small groups, while some may prefer a more conventionally studious approach and enjoy the study of language. Teachers generally plan a variety of activity types within a lesson, and may also consider how a single activity could be used to meet a variety of preferences. For example, a communicative piece of group work could be followed by a focus on, and study of, the language that was produced in that group work. It is also worth noting that learners may not always enjoy the same activities as the teacher.

C Motivation

Note: Motivation is dealt with in more detail in unit 37.

1 Direct the trainees back to the learning experience they recalled for task B and then ask them about the factors that contributed to motivation or diminished it. This can be done in open class.

2 Ask the trainees to read through the list and explain any points that are unclear to them, before giving them time to make their selections.

3 The trainees may already agree on some of the same points, but it is unlikely that they will agree on all four. If there is time, the pairs could again be combined with a view of agreeing on another list of four. The outcomes of these discussions can be reported back in open class.

D Language learning strategies

1 Write *I get very nervous and anxious in English lessons …* on the board. Elicit how this might impact on learning. Ask trainees to suggest any potential solutions.
   Ask trainees to focus on the other difficulties, again thinking of solutions where possible.

2 Trainees match difficulties and solutions and then quickly check answers with a partner. Confirm answers.
   Answers: A–3)   B–5)   C–2)   D–1)   E–4)

3 Focus the trainees on the questions. Explain that there may be more than one learner for each question, and each learner may fit more than one category.
   Answers:
     i A and C
    ii E and perhaps C, although their anxiety may also be treated by avoidance strategies.
   iii B (Trainees might also suggest D, who has taken action to target their listening skills, but difficulties in this area are common at low levels and are not necessarily an indication that learning is not working.)
   You may wish to point out that deliberate strategies to control emotion are often referred to as 'affective strategies'.
   Those strategies that plan and monitor success of an activity (as in person B) are referred to as 'metacognitive strategies' and those actions that are designed to lead to learning (such as downloading a vocabulary learning app) are 'cognitive' strategies.

4 Depending on time, this could be set up as an all-class activity or as group work. Accept any plausible suggestions and prompt and elicit if the trainees struggle to think of ideas.

   What advice would you give these learners?

   a I need to improve my grammar – what can I do?
      There are plenty of online sentence-level grammar exercises, admittedly of varying quality, that a simple search would produce. In order to make such searches, learners need to have some awareness of metalanguage – the language used to describe language. For example, they need to know the names of verb forms or terms such as 'countable/ uncountable noun', and so on.
      There are also more text-level exercises a learner could do. For example, some studies have shown that extensive reading can lead to improved grammar production. Also, learners could record themselves during pair work in a lesson and later transcribe what they said, checking it for accuracy.

   b I want to improve my vocabulary – what can I do?
      Again, reading will help grow the number of words known and also the quality of knowledge in terms of things like collocation and register restrictions. There are also plenty of vocabulary practice activities online. One important factor in remembering new words is the spacing of practice. So, vocabulary should be recycled, and learners should review their notes regularly.

   c I want to improve my speaking – what can I do?
      The learner could access pronunciation materials, look for opportunities to join groups online, arrange a skills swap with someone who wants to learn their language, or make recordings of their speaking, amongst other things. There are a number of online sites that connect people wishing to practise their respective languages, e.g. HelloTalk.

E Learner training

1 It would be a good idea to prepare for this by looking at the coursebook(s) before the session so that trainees can be directed to particular pages. If the coursebook(s) do not have any examples of learner training, you could supply some material that does. Alternatively, you could extend activity 2 and have the trainees suggest what might be useful to add. Assuming there is learner training material in the coursebook(s), ask trainees to identify the strategies presented. Not all strategies will appeal to all learners equally, so many materials will present two or three strategies together, so that learners can experiment with all of them and select what appeals to them.

2 This can feed forward into future planning. Learning strategies can be simply explained, they may be demonstrated, or the teacher may recount examples of their own language learning experiences. Often the best way to present a learning strategy is simply for the teacher to explain it, or if possible, demonstrate it.

KEY WORDS FOR TEACHERS

Remind the trainees of the need to be able to use teaching terms confidently and accurately. Encourage them to experiment with one or more of the vocabulary-learning strategies you have discussed in the lesson.

REFLECTION

1 Answers will vary, and will obviously depend on how well the trainees know their learners by this point in the course.

2 Trainees may, amongst other things, suggest: age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical and mental (dis)abilities, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences.
If the trainees need support in thinking of ideas, they could be prompted by being asked to think about differences between people generally in society, as the members of a class are a subset of the wider population.

3 Suggestions may include: respecting all members of the class; giving equal opportunities to speak and voice opinions/beliefs to all members of the class; ensuring that the classroom is a safe and supportive environment, free of hostility and bullying; using material that represents the lives and identities of all the people in the class.

4 Trainees may make a variety of suggestions. One obvious advantage of understanding more about the learners is that the teacher can make better informed decisions about what topics and material should be included and/or avoided in lessons. In order to do this, teachers might individually interview learners about their lives and experiences, or ask them to write short autobiographies as a writing task. Of course, these strategies are only likely to succeed when there is a degree of trust between the teacher and learners.

Reference

Lethaby, C. and Harries, P. (2016). Learning Styles and Teacher Training: Are we Perpetuating Neuromyths? *ELT Journal*, 70,1, pp.16–27.

14