# Learners

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# Who are the learners?



In this section we invite you to take a closer look at **the learners in your classroom**. We invite you to explore their use of English inside and outside the school walls and to try to **establish their profiles as English language learner-users**. This will help you build a powerful relationship with your learners, which will facilitate their learning process and identity construction as **confident users of English**.

# ACTIVITY 1—Reflection

The purpose of **Activity 1** is to reflect on your learners' different practices when it comes to using English

Go to the main page and complete Activity 1, which asks you to select those **statements that you _think_ are true** about your own **students' actual use of English**

Once you have completed the activity, please return to this presentation

# Key term 1: *Learner-users*

In the following four slides, we take you through some useful concepts relating to your learners, the central actors in your classroom. They are most likely both:

- *EFL (English as a foreign language) learners*
- *ELF (English as a lingua franca) users*

There is an important difference between being a **learner** of a language which is different from the language you speak at home, and being a **user** of a language you are able to speak with people who don't understand your first language
We would like to focus on this double role and refer to students as **learner-users**

# Key term 2: *Extramural English*

Many learners **use** English **voluntarily** outside the classroom walls. Depending on their experience and capacity, they listen to, speak, read, and write English in different situations for different purposes—we can call this use of English *extramural English*

It has nothing to do with doing homework, and often the aim is not to learn English at all: English is simply used as a **practical *contact language*** – as **ELF** – between people who do not know each other's first languages

Some obvious extramural contexts are **gaming, interaction through social media, online music, films, videos, and other types of text via the Internet**

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# Key term 3: *Emergent multilinguals*

Many learner-users in classrooms across the world grow up with more than one named language

Learning English as a subject at school (and sometimes even before that), they are **emergent multilinguals**: this means that they know more than one language – at different levels of proficiency – with English is the mix

Learning a **third (or additional) language** is different from learning a second language:
- You are likely to benefit from your experience as a language learner
- Also, you are likely to have a more developed awareness of language (**metalinguistic awareness**)

# Key term 4: *Learner multicompetence*

Instead of thinking about multilingual learners' language competence as consisting of separate compartments in the brain, this is now generally recognized as a **multicompetence**, as **one common underlying and integrated, complex language competence**

We activate our different **linguistic resources** in different ways and in different situations, but they are all there, as part of one overall and integrated **linguistic repertoire**.

This **multicompetence is dynamic**; new elements are added as we learn new words and languages.

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# ACTIVITY 2

The purpose of Activity 2 is to **enhance your awareness of your students' multilingualism and their own perception of the position and role of English in their lives**

You will find the instructions for the activity on the next slide. This way you will **get to know your students better as emergent multilinguals with English in the mix**

After completing this activity with your class, please return to this presentation

# Activity 2: Learners' language portraits

**Here is what you can do:**

- Download the language portrait template.
- Print it out and give each student a copy.
- Ask the students to illustrate how they view themselves as language learners and language users by filling in colours for the different languages they know and relate to it in one way or another in their lives.
- Invite them all to present their language portraits.
- Display the portraits on the classroom wall.

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# ACTIVITY 3—Reflection

This is a "long answer" type of activity:

Based on Activity 2, where you were encouraged to make your students visualize themselves as emergent multilinguals with English in the mix,

(a) Was there anything in their language portraits that **surprised** you?
(b) Were you able to discern any **common patterns**?
(c) To what extent was this activity **useful** to you as a teacher of English?

Click the **link** under the video to share your views—Then, please return to this presentation

# Learners' knowledge, skills and strategies

**General success criteria for EFL learners:**

- **Accuracy**

- **Fluency**

- **Complexity**

**Success criteria for ELF users:**

- **Communication strategies**

- **Accommodation skills**

- **Negotiation skills**

# Strategic communicators

"Essentially an appropriate use of the resources of English for a whole range of globalized purposes"

(Henry Widdowson in a podcast about ELF, 2018)

- What is **appropriate use**?
- One answer: **Pragmatic effectiveness**

ELF users do their best to ensure mutual understanding:
- **Simplification**
- **Translanguaging**

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# Learner attitudes

Possible learner attitudes regarding communication, language, and English in general:
- **Lack of confidence** at distance from ideal (=native) speakers or ideal expressed through teaching materials
- **Embarrassment** when being reminded of **errors**

Alternative:
- Celebrate proficiency as ELF users
- Leave out "non-native" altogether in characterizations
- Avoid deficit orientations

**Teachers' ideal aim**: Helping learners to develop into confident and effective users of English

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# Target model of English

- What is a learner's best choice of English language model?
- Who should make this decision?
- Which norms are at work?

- To make full use of the flexibility of ELF, **emergent multilingual users need the courage and self-confidence to speak English the way that best meets their needs**

- All learners need to be met with **sensitivity with regard to their identity construction**
- A **supportive and inclusive learning environment**

# ACTIVITY 4—The good English learner

Activity 4 focuses on what characterizes a **strategic learner of EFL and a user of English as a contact language (ELF)**

Go to the main page and respond to the three parts of Activity 4

Please return to this presentation when you have completed all three parts

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# Learners and their local context

If teachers are to help their learners develop into competent and confident users of English, they need to **raise their awareness** of who their learners are. They need to learn that they are real ELF users who:
- use ELF in particular ways
- will be using ELF in various ways in the future
- have and are exposed to various attitudes to language use and English in particular
- need to develop their communicative capability
- will benefit from increasing their general language awareness and possible differences between their use of English in various contexts

# Integrating ELF usage in EFL lessons?

- Importance of allowing students to **bridge their roles as ELF users and EFL learners**
- Importance of letting your students experience your interest in their actual language use
- Importance of inviting your **students as active participants** in assessment work, choice of tasks, bringing their out-of-school texts into ELF lessons for analysis

- Allowing **critical engagement with language**
- Providing **tasks that facilitate authentic communication**

# ACTIVITY 5: Classroom survey

Here towards the end of our focused attention to students and their profile as learner-users of English, you are invited to **conduct a short survey in your classroom**

Two sets of questions are provided in the model questionnaire on the main page eliciting
**(1) learners' ELF practices outside the classroom**, and
**(2) learners' attitudes to their own ELF usage**

Based on this preparatory work, please share in the Forum your reflections on the questions on the next slide

# ACTIVITY 6—Forum discussion

Questions for reflection and discussion:

(a) How (that is, where and with whom) do your own learners use English outside the classroom (extramural English)?
(b) What are your own learners' attitudes to the way they use English outside the classroom?
(c) Which of your learners' responses did you expect?
(d) Which of your learners' responses did you not expect?
(e) In what ways do you think your teaching practices can be changed or modified based on the findings of your classroom research? Why is that they case, do you think?

# Summing up

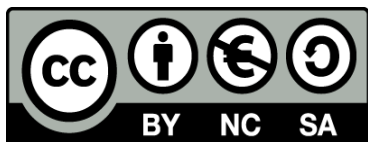The sub-section on learners has been intended to build your capacity for change by inviting you to

- Build your capacity for change
- Become familiar with a few central concepts to do with multilingualism and ELT-relevant factors
- Acknowledge your learners as agents in your local context
- Involve your learners on a personal level, thereby making their language learning richer, deeper, and more motivating

**Good luck as an ELT changemaker!**

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**English as a Lingua Franca practices
for inclusive multilingual classrooms**

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