

Establishing Context

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Establishing Context

This section focuses on considering:

- one's own **context** and some **taken-for-granted** or “**common sense**” ways of **understanding** the English we use in the act of teaching English

In this section, you will:

- shed light on the common sense ways of understanding English **where** you are
- ask questions about **how** these common sense “truths” **match** the **use** of English you see around you

Establishing Context

The goal is to help you raise your **awareness** and **understanding** of **your own context** and:

- how English is used **in society**
- how **teachers** and **learners** use English both in and outside of school
- how **English education** relates to these uses

ACTIVITY 1

To start this processes, Activity 1 asks you to reflect widely on the *users, teachers* and *learners* of English **where you are** or **in your own context**.

ACTIVITY 1

Users of English

- How would you describe **the main purposes for using English in the society** in which you teach?
- Are there **certain people who use English more or less than others?**
- Are **age, jobs, gender, interests, family background, etc. factors** in who is using English the most?
- In general, is there **more oral or written English** in society?

ACTIVITY 1

Teachers of English

- How would you describe **your use English outside the classroom?**
- How would you describe **your teaching colleagues' use of English outside the classroom?**
- Given the teachers you know, are there **certain teachers who use English more or less than others in terms of age, gender, interests, family background, etc.?**
- Would you say these **teachers use more oral or written English outside of the classroom?**

ACTIVITY 1

Learners of English

- Based on your own experience, how do **learners in your context use English outside the classroom?**
- Are there **certain learners who use English more or less than others** in terms of **age, gender, interests, family background, etc.?**
- Would you say that **learners use more oral or written English?**
- How do you imagine these learners will use English **in the future**, i.e. 20 years from now? Will the use be the same? Different? If so, how do you think it will change?

What is *context*?

A simple definition of **context** is that it refers to where you are in **place** and **time** — This is your *contextual positioning*

To shed light on **your own positioning for English language teaching** (ELT), we will explore:

- 1) the special characteristics that describe English **where** you teach (the **place**)
- 2) how the use and teaching of English in your context has changed **over time**

Context as complex and layered

Macro level:	Society
Meso Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Institutions of education• Professional communities• Schools• Classrooms
Micro level:	Individual experience

A wide versus retrospective lens

Wide lens will direct our attention to:

- the special characteristics that describe English in the **place** where you teach (for society and for individuals)

Retrospective lens will direct our attention to:

- how the goals and teaching of English (for schools and teachers) have changed **over time** in your context

Looking through the Wide Lens

Activity 1 asked you to consider English in society and in the experience of individuals in society.

Take a moment to **review** your response to and compare it to those of two other course participants.

- Note **three things that you found particularly surprising or interesting**, either about your context or the context of others

Looking through the Retrospective Lens

Professional and Educational Context of English education and teaching for:

- Institutions of education
- Teachers
- Schools
- Classrooms

Activity 2

Activity 2 considers the **historical development** of ELT over time where you are

Note: Where **Activity 1** compared society's need for English and individuals' use of English, this activity looks at **ELT on a continuum of time**

Preparation for Activity 2

Before we begin, you will need to create the following table:

<i>Post-World War II (ca. 1950s-60s)</i>	<i>21st Century (today)</i>

The next two slides will give you ***guiding questions*** to help you reflect on ELT both *then* and *now* in your own context.

Note your reflections using use key words, short phrases etc. in each column.

ELT post-World War II (1950s and 60s)

Imagine the year **1960**. Consider **who was using English** in your context then, **with whom** they were using it and **what the goals of English education** were.

Ask yourself:

- *How was English relevant for use in society?*
- *Who was learning English and for what purposes?*
- *What was English education or teaching like?*
- *Who were teachers of English and what type of education or qualifications did they have?*
- *What did the English classroom look or sound like?*
- *What types of instruments or tools were used to teach English?*

ELT in the 21st century

Consider **who** is **using English** in your context **today**, **with whom** and, based on your reflections in Activity 1, **what the goals of English education** are.

Ask yourself:

- *What are relevant uses of English in society in your context today?*
- *Who is learning English and for what purposes?*
- *What is English education or teaching like?*
- *Who are teachers of English and what type of education do they have?*
- *What does the English classroom look or sound like today?*
- *What types of instruments or tools are used to teach English?*

ACTIVITY 2

Once you have completed **both sides** of the table, return to **Activity 2** on the main page and participate in the **Forum**.

Briefly summarize changes you discovered in your own context for:

- Users and learners of English
- Purpose of English teaching
- Learners' needs

Read and respond the post of two others in the **Forum**.

Establishing Context

Thus far, this section has focused on:

- **your own context** and the taken-for-granted ways of **understanding** English teaching

This has been considered both in relation to:

- **place** (*what is special or unique about **where I teach?***), and
- **time** (*what is special or unique about **when I am teaching**—today as compared to the past?*)

The future of English?

Consider what you have thought about **your context** in this section. If you want, go back to the **Forum** and **enrich** your responses to **Activity 2**.

Given what you have uncovered:

- *How would you define “**English**” in your context?*
- *What **changes** do you find, and what are the main causes behind them?*
- *How do you see the situation for English developing in your context in the **future**?*
- *What **realities** and potential **challenges** do you predict for **users, teachers** and **learners** of English over the next 20 to 50 years?*

Establishing Context

The goal of this section has been to help you **raise your awareness** of your own **context** in:

- Identifying characteristics **unique** to your **local context**
- Understanding your **past**
- Considering your **present**, and
- Imagining the **future**

What follows

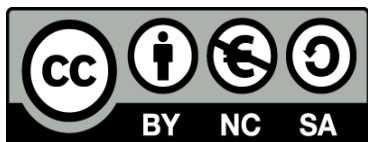
The sub-sections in this module focus more narrowly on:

- your **Instructional Context** for English language teaching, as it impacts what teachers may or may not do in the classroom, and
- the **Learners of English today** – their modern experience and their needs for English language learning.

The ENRICH Project is funded
with the support of the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.

Grant Agreement: 2018-1-EL01-KA201-047894

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