LANGUAGE LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM
Language Learning Beyond the Classroom

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Language Learning Beyond the Classroom

- Chat Rooms
- Digital Games
- Listening Logs
- Social Media
- E-Mediated Tandem Learning
- Voicethread
- Television Series
Language Learning Beyond the Classroom

Successful language learning...

What happens inside AND outside the classroom...

Research has been dominated by a concern for the classroom...

*How can the classroom, the teachers, the Ss, the resources, provide the necessary conditions for learning to take place???*
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However, we also know there are **limitations to classroom learning:**

- *Large classes* (> 50 Ss in a class in some countries).
- *Limited time* (1 lesson per day).
- *Exam-driven curriculum.*
- Concerns about the quality / appropriateness of *teaching materials*...
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With the internet, technology, and the media, language learners can:

• *Interact with people across the world* using English.

• *Download Apps* that can be used at anytime.

• Enter chat rooms to *interact with other language learners*.

• Play video games that require them to *understand and use English*.

• Watch TV programs, movies...
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Chat Rooms

Chat rooms:

• Where **people interact** with others who have similar interests.

• Chat rooms can be a **low stress** means for students to use English.

• Ss do **not feel under pressure** to “get the language right”.
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How can chat rooms support language development?


Handout 1...

Labelled with ‘1’ on the top right-hand side.
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Yuan (2003):

• Chat rooms provide real-time interaction.
• Ss have to process what they read and give instant responses.
• Therefore, they need to pay attention to the form (grammar, for example) and also to the meaning of their communication.
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The study:

• **Two NNESTs** (staff members, see p. 197).
• **Weekly face-to-face meetings** discussing language problems using participants’ research papers...
• Plus an **on-line chatroom**.
• The researcher and the participants chatted about **topics of common interest** (movies, family, university related matters...)

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- Contents of the chat sessions were printed out.
- The researcher identified language related problems before they met.
- These were discussed with the participants in the face-to-face meetings.
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Findings:

- The participants became alert to the language they produced...although this was not part of the purpose of the chat room.
- They noticed errors they made and would seek clarification or suggest solutions.

Some examples are...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Me:</th>
<th>So are you going tonight?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff member 2:</td>
<td>Maybe (Is this correct? Not may be)…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me:</td>
<td>It’s right.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff member 1:</th>
<th>They say if one get 100 papers, you are on the track to a professorship. Now the number is coming down to 40. The emphasis is the quality. Which journals do you publish your papers in is important.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Me:</td>
<td>OK. That makes sense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff member 1:</td>
<td>“One GETS”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Staff member 2: This is tenurable position.
Me: Wow.
Staff member 2: a tenurable position
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff member 2:</th>
<th>My wife is going to Melbourne on this Saturday and will be back in the middle of next week.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff member 2:</td>
<td>(no ‘on’ for Sat.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Some conclusions:

Yuan reports:

• The combination of traditional classroom meetings and chat room activities provided a varied learning environment.

• Students received both traditional classroom input (learning grammatical structures for example) and the opportunity to use English as tool to communicate meaningfully.
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- In the chat room, the students often noticed the errors they made.
- They offered solutions or sought clarification.
- The combination of the classroom discussions and chat room activities provided learners with an opportunity to focus on form and meaning.
- The on-line chatting provided opportunities for students to correct themselves in real time.
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A chat room example:

http://www.myenglishteacher.eu/blog/chat-room-for-english-learners/
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Digital Games

Alice Chik (2015): Handout 2

• Using English to **interact socially** with other students can be challenging for English language learners.

• Students can make use of **digital games to learn the type of social English** (sports, fashion, travel...) that will help them communicate in social settings.
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• Learning vocab through reading or listening is a receptive approach.

• It is a learning strategy that might not suit all students.

• Digital games can be useful for some English language learners.
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Case study: Edmond

• A Mainland Chinese student studying at an EMI university in HK.

• Talking about everyday topics, such as sports and travel, in English was a challenge for him.

• He wanted to improve his vocab related to basketball so he could interact better with others after a game.
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- He **started playing digital basketball games** on his PC.
- The games had **in-game audio commentaries**.
- He used an **electronic dictionary and kept a vocabulary book**.
- He also searched for gaming strategies from **on-line discussion forums**.
- He **connected online with other gamers** using sports games to learn English.
Edmond’s experience suggests that:

- Learning through digital gaming is good for learners who want to develop **vocabulary beyond what is usually taught in the classroom**.
- **To enjoy the game more**, learners have to improve their **language proficiency**.
- Thus, gamers turn **incidental learning into intentional learning**.
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Possible limitations of games:

• The type of game can limit the vocabulary acquired.

• Game characters might use a lot of slang and / or inappropriate language (play GTA for an example)

• Is there any use to learning this type of language???
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However,

• Learners may welcome the opportunity to learn ‘street language’ that is not traditionally taught in the classroom.

• Confidence gained in learning language in one area can be transferred to greater confidence in learning in other areas.

• That is, the confidence gained may act as a ‘booster’, encouraging additional language learning.
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Some principles for using online games for English language learning:

• Encouraging in-game interaction can enhance opportunities for language learning.

• Encouraging learners to read in-game text to maximize opportunities for language learning.

• Using game-external websites and online communities can enhance opportunities for language learning.
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Listening Logs

• Learners document and reflect on experiences of listening outside the classroom.
• Students document their attendance at out-of-class events, take notes on the content, and later reflect on their experience.

Examples might include:
• Going out with friends,
• watching TV,
• listening to a podcast...
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Betsy Gilliland (2015): Handout 3

• Asked her undergraduate students to document their listening practices outside the classroom.

Students kept listening logs in which they:

• **Summarized** what they heard,
• **responded** to the content,
• and **reflected** on their listening ability.
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*In-class:*

- Students watched an episode of *Friends*.
- Students were encouraged to focus on how they made sense of the character interactions and the plot.
- Together, the teacher and students summarized and discussed the plot.
- The class discussed the strategies they used to understand the story.
- The class discussed any new vocabulary and phrases.
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• The teacher distributed a template to guide students reflections:

  A *brief summary of the event*
  
  A *personal response to the content*
  
  A *reflection on the listening experience*
  
  New expressions and vocabulary learned through the experience.
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- Students could decide what they listened to and when.
- Most popular: TV comedies, dramas, movies.
- Least popular: Lectures, news, documentaries.
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Strengths of listening logs:

• Students take part in authentic listening experiences.

• These experiences can immerse students in community events (attending a public lecture?)

• Learners can broaden their knowledge of a country’s culture.

• Students develop autonomy in learning: The decide what to listen to, when, and are responsible for responding to their listening experience.
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Jenny Kemp (2008): Handout 4

• At Leicester University
• English Language Learning Unit.
• Students recorded activities such as going out with friends, watching TV, listening to a podcast,....
• They reflect on their experience in terms of the degree of difficulty and reasons for this, how well they did, what they might do better next time...
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*Kemp*:

- Students could identify the causes of difficulty.
- See the examples on p. 2: Causes
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*Kemp*:

- Students employed learning strategies.
- See the example on p. 3 ‘strategy use’.
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Kemp:

• Students set themselves challenges.
• See the examples on p. 3 ‘strategy use’.
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*Kemp:*

- Students could monitor their own progress.
- See the examples on p. 3 ‘progress’.
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Challenges:
Finding resources can be challenging

Some online resources are...
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Possible resources for listening logs:
These resources could be a good starting place for learners as they are created for people learning English as second or additional language...

Authentic material can be difficult for learners, especially beginners, as no scaffolding or support is available for people learning English as second or additional language...
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Australia Network:

http://legacy.australianetwork.com/learningenglish/

Click on ‘Living English’ or ‘English Bites’.
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Possible resources for listening logs:

BBC Learning English:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish

A recent example....

http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/course/upper-intermediate/unit-10/session-2
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Possible resources for listening logs:

An example using authentic material:

TED Talks (Technology, Entertainment, Design):

https://www.ted.com/talks
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Social Media

Maria Righini (2015): Handout 5

• Describes **five projects** carried out with advanced **learners of English in Brazil**.

The projects involved the use of:

• A blog

• Voice-recording capable websites

• Facebook
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**Blogging:**

- The teacher posted a comment on the topic and a link to an article for students to read.
- Students were invited to read and post comments.
- However, few students contributed.
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The use of voice recording capable media:

• Students had to produce a podcast on a topic of their choice.

• They recorded it and sent the link to the teacher.

• The teacher responded with recorded oral feedback.

• Few students contributed.

• They reported feeling embarrassed.
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*Facebook groups:*

- Students created the group with one of them as the administrator.
- The teacher contribution was to share links to assigned readings plus some questions for reflection.
- Students read the texts and answered the questions online.
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- They went further and commented on new vocabulary and interesting expressions they noticed in the readings
- Some students uploaded videos and other articles related to the readings
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• Student participation was high with relevant contributions.

• The ideas generated in social media found their way into the classroom.

• The teacher allocated time at the beginning of each class for students to expand on the comments they made on Facebook.

• 70% of students reported that reading the texts was more meaningful and enjoyable.
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*Facebook groups II*

- The **teacher** established a Facebook page.
- The teacher and students had the same status in the Facebook group.
- **Everybody was free to make comments.**
- They shared jokes, comments, ideas on how to improve their English, word lists, grammar tips, photos...
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• The teacher reported a strong sense of community and collaboration.

• Intense online interaction took place.

• These factors contributed favorably to language learning and teaching in the classroom.
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Righini (2015) concludes:

• Students need to feel empowered...
• linguistically and...
• in the use of the communication tool itself.
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- The success of the Facebook projects might be partly due to the easy access and portability of this tool.
- The fact that most students have a Facebook page adds familiarity to the project.
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• Genuine interaction, collaboration, and self-direction occurs when students are given autonomy.

• In the successful projects, students were involved in decision-making and were given choice in the selection of themes.
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Less successful cases:

• The **web tool was complex** to use.
• More preparation was needed (creating logins, authorizing students to join the group, using recording devices...).
• The **challenge involved in the task was seen by students as too high**.
Tandem learning:
• Two people meet regularly to learn each other’s language and culture.

Success depends on:
• Reciprocal dependence and mutual support.
• Tandem partners are experts in their own native language and culture.
• Each partner decides what, how and when to learn.
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Braga (2007): Handout 6

• 10 English language learners in Brazil.
• 10 students of Portuguese in the US.

Using email, students undertook tasks such as:
• Writing a self-introduction.
• Finding out about your partner’s country.
• Plan a trip to Brazil / the US....

Students interacted in Portuguese for some tasks, in English for others.
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• Students were asked to look for interesting ideas in the exchanges that could be developed into further communication.

• This was designed to enhance students social language learning strategies, including:

• Asking questions.

• Cooperating with others.
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In Sample 1 (p. 34):

• A Brazilian student asks some questions and his partner replies.

• In sample 2, the students identify some cultural hook and use questions to develop conversation.
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Using email:

- Allows students to exchange messages from anywhere at anytime.
- To control the pace of learning: they can read and write at their own pace.
- To reflect on their communication before replying.
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Using email:

*Ushioda (2000) (no handout)*

- Irish university students learning German were paired with German students learning English.
- At the end of the project, Dublin students completed a questionnaire, reflecting on their experience.
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*Students reported:*

- Feeling encouraged to think in German and express themselves in a more German way.
- Take risks.
- Try out new phrases.
- Email gave access to language that was informal, relevant, useful to their own needs and interests.
- Valuing the personal dimension to the tandem partnership.
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Some resources for tandem learning:

eTandem Europa:
http://www.cisi.unito.it/tandem/etandem/etindex-en.html

http://www.tandemapp.me/

http://www.mylanguageexchange.com/
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Voicethread

- Voicethread is an online program designed to improve speaking performance.

https://voicethread.com/
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Pontes and Shimazumi (2015): Handout 7

- 30 higher level learners of English in Brazil.
- Students did a speaking test in class comparing different cities they had been to.

As a follow-up activity:

- Students found more information about the city.
- Produced a short recording and uploaded it to their restricted area on Voicethread.
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• Students and the teachers would listen and **record comments / feedback**.

• Students would **listen to the comments on their performance**.

• Next, they would **record a new version** that incorporates the suggestions given to them.
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Student feedback at the end of the project suggested that...

- They valued the opportunity to **bond with others outside the classroom**.
- They **built a level of trust** that allowed them to give peers genuine feedback.
- They liked the fact that **different people, other than just the teacher, gave them feedback**.
- Students had a **strong sense of ownership and accomplishment** throughout the process.
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• Students valued the chance to incorporate feedback very quickly, as soon as they could upload a new version.

• Students valued being able to do recordings and post comments at their own pace.

• Students reported feeling more self-disciplined as they were responsible for the development of the project.
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Television Series

Hanf (2015): Handout 8

• Alex, from USA, living in Korea.
• Previous attempts to learn Korean have been unsuccessful.
• He started to watch popular Korean TV programs.
• Not watching for enjoyment alone but actively listening...
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Alex targeted:

• Communication strategies.
• Politeness strategies.
• He watched the programs with subtitles.
• He took notes of communication strategies and use of politeness.
• He would rewind and replay scenes several times.
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• He created digital flashcards and regularly reviewed them.

• He also met with language exchange partners for practice.
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Hanf’s principles for using TV series in language learning:

Make use of subtitles or captions.

- The use of captions or subtitles helps learners understand the language.

- Captions: A script that is in the foreign (or target) language.

- Subtitles: Translated into the learner’s native language.
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Hanf (p. 140) suggests the following:

**Beginner**: Subtitles *(native language)*
**Intermediate**: Captions *(foreign language)*
**Advanced**: Captions *(foreign language)*

- With subtitles / captions, students can control their learning and adjust it to meet their needs.
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*Find opportunities for comprehensible input and output*

- Using captions / subtitles *provides students with large amounts of comprehensible input.*
- But this is not enough for language acquisition.
- Students must have opportunities to *produce* the language
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For example:

- Alex not only watched the Korean TV series, took notes, and produced flashcards.
- He also interacted with language exchange partners.
- In these conversations he could “test” his emerging language proficiency.
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Target specific areas for language improvement

• Break the language learning down into manageable sections.

• This might involve targeting a specific area for improvement.

• For Alex, this meant targeting communication strategies, such as “pardon me?”, asking for help, checking understanding...
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Working with TV series in the classroom

Hanf suggests the following:

• The teacher should **use some class time to introduce specific areas of language learning that students should target while watching**.

• Students might **not be familiar with this idea of targeting specific areas of learning and might need examples and definitions**.
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• The teacher should demonstrate how to locate specific language areas by pausing, replaying, and taking notes, for example.
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• Introduce students to the following process to help them take greater control while viewing a TV series:
  
  **Planning** (what to watch, how to watch a segment: replaying,...)
  
  **Defining goals** (What will students target while viewing the series?)
  
  **Monitoring** (identifying difficulties, reflecting on comprehension...)
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- After viewing, **students should meet in class to discuss what they watched** and the language they discovered.
- In large classes, students could work in small groups.
- Each **group could be given responsibility for finding examples of specific language areas in the TV series.**
- They would then **report their findings** to the class.
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Advantages of TV series for language learning:

• **Authentic** material.
• **Learner engagement and motivation** can be high.
• Low cost.
• Students can **study at anytime in any location**.
• **Lower anxiety**: Captions / subtitles can act as a ‘safety net’, reducing student anxiety.
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Potential difficulties:

• Finding material with captions / subtitles.
• A large investment of time is needed...pausing and replaying will add to the time burden.
• Authentic material can contain language that is too advanced for learners.
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- Hanf suggests that learners keep a learning diary...
- reflecting, monitoring their progress...
- to help them notice their language gains...
- and maintain realistic expectations.
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Suggested movies and TV series for language learning:

This site has film guides that can be helpful to English language learners working either in or out of the classroom:

http://www.eslnotes.com/synopses.html

Suggested TV series for English language learning:

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In Summary....

• Out-of-classroom language learning offers students a greater variety of opportunities for learning than is usually found in the classroom.

• According to Richards (2015) this variety includes the following:
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- **Location** (home, park...).
- **Modality** (face-to-face, e-mail...).
- **Learning aims** (intentional learning, incidental learning, general, specific).
- **Control** (learner-managed, teacher–managed, managed by others).
- **Type of interaction** (one-way or two-way)
- **Language register** (scripted, unscripted, formal, informal...)
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- **Task demands** (listen, repeat, rephrase, respond, question, summarize...).
- **Manner** (individual, pair, group).
- **Means** (computer, mobile phone, TV...).
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Some possible benefits for learners:

• Learn through interaction and negotiation of meaning.
• Improve accuracy and fluency.
• Have extended contact with English.
• Develop skills of autonomous learning.
• Develop communication strategies.
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For students, out-of-class learning offers other advantages:

• Flexible and convenient learning.
• Pleasurable and positive language use experiences.
• Reflects the needs of learners.
• Reflect their out-of-class activities.
• Allows for social interaction.
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However, Bailly (2011) points out that success in out-of-class learning depends upon:

- *Learner motivation.*
- *Learning resources.*
- *Learning skills.*

Not all students can develop these in their environment.

Without all three, learning can be interrupted.
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• There are opportunities and challenges.
• Teachers and students take on new roles.
• Students become more independent.
• Teachers need to be familiar with the wide range of activities students engage in beyond the classroom...
• and consider the opportunities for language learning that these activities might offer.
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- **Teachers** will also need the **skills necessary to guide their students in effective ways** to make use of out-of-classroom language learning opportunities.

- Out-of-class learning involves **preparation and follow-up by the teacher.**

- Out-of-class learning can **supplement what happens inside the classroom.**
Q & A...
If you want a soft copy of the slides please email me:
jtrent@ied.edu.hk
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References (other than those distributed in this session)

