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# ENGLISH LANGUAGE THROUGH EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

## THE KEY TO SUCCESS IN ENGLISH LEARNING CAN BE INVOLVEMENT IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR

Summarized by Dau Thi Thanh Luy <sup>(1)</sup>

Extracurricular activities have been proven to bring considerable benefits to students through skills development, curricular goals achievement, success in higher education, receiving higher scores in tests, and creating positive relationships between students and school, students and teachers, and among peers. In the article, the author investigates how these activities effect the language education and also facilitate the process of English language learning.

In English language learning, educators suggest using extracurricular activities as supplementary actions to enrich the school curriculum because of their usefulness. Among the advantages are

that they increase interaction among participants, strengthen friendships and cooperation, find student's talents or skills, and change introverted student attitudes positively. Meetings, interviews, presentations and school publications, for instance, are great learning activities that increase good communication skills for second language learners.

In the study, the author did an experiment with a group of 15 students in Suleimania Preparatoy School which required students to reach at least pre-intermediate level of English at the end of the year to continue their education. Mixed methods with mostly communicative approach via language-oriented extracurricular activities

were used. The author claimed that learners would acquire the target language with fun regardless of very few obstacles, and that they pass the final examination successfully. After 24 weeks constantly joining extracurricular activities, 75% students in A1 level became almost 80% reaching intermediate level, and all students successfully passed the English Preparatory School Program.



In conclusion, extracurricular activities did positively change learners' mindsets to develop their language skills. Learners become more productive, motivated and increased their chances of achievement. Those students who engage in these activities can create their own foundation to step forward in their language

learning process. Therefore, to educators, school coordinators and language teachers, the author recommends embedding and implementing language-oriented extracurricular activities in the school curriculum because it creates a good environment for students to learn collaboratively or individually.

<sup>1</sup> Yildiz, Y. (2015). The Key to Success in English Learning Can be Involvement in Extra Curricular. From <http://www.researchpublish.com/download.php?file=The%20Key%20to%20Success%20in%20English-2097.pdf&act=book>

# LEARNING OUTSIDE OF CLASSROOM: EXPLORING THE ACTIVE PART OF AN INFORMAL ONLINE ENGLISH LEARNING COMMUNITY IN CHINA

Summarized by Truong Ngoc Tuong Linh <sup>(2)</sup>

In this article, the authors analyze how the GRE Analytical Writing Discussion Forum, a sub-discussion forum in China's most popular informal online learning community, contributes to the improvement in their members' English writing proficiency. They then propose pedagogical implications for both informal and formal online learning communities in educational settings that can be leveraged to support structured educational practices. To get the concrete results, the study was guided by two research questions:

1. To what extent does teaching presence, cognitive presence and social presence exist in the active part of GRE Analytical Writing Discussion Forum?
2. What are members' perceptions on teaching presence, cognitive presence and social presence in the GRE Analytical Writing Discussion Forum?

The research was conducted in a forum of an open public online community in China for all people. They requested only a valid email address and an ID user. The data was collected from March through May 2014 from the GRE Analytical Writing Discussion Forum for members who were preparing for the GRE Analytical Writing Section and/or wanted to improve their English writing proficiency. To explore the evidence of teaching presence, cognitive presence, and social presence in the GRE Analytical Writing Discussion Forum, the researchers employed the transcript analysis-coding scheme, which was adapted from the statements of the CoI survey developed by Arbaugh et al (2008). In addition, the aim of analyzing members' perceived teaching presence, social presence, and cognitive presence could be achieved by the adapted CoI survey via email which was translated to responders' first language with some changes in some specific terms and items. Thirty-nine items in the survey requested participants to rate their perceived teaching presence, cognitive presence, and social presence on a five-point Likert scale.

In general, extensive evidence of teaching



presence, cognitive presence, and social presence were found in the active part of the GRE Analytical Writing Discussion Forum from the coding results. However, the limitation of this study was pointed out with the low response rate, which resulted from many objective reasons such as the voluntary basis, changes in members' email address, and vague memories about the forum within a long period. Despite this limitation, some profound implications for practice and policy were discovered:

- \* In online communities, a well-designed collaborative environment is the cornerstone that shapes the frame of this learning process.
- \* It is also necessary to gain the benefits from distributed expertise of learners in online learning communities.
- \* Motivation should be considered as an essential contribution to the effectiveness of learning in online learning communities.

<sup>2</sup> Sun Y., Franklin T. & Gao F. (2017). Learning outside of classroom: Exploring the active part of an informal online English learning community in China. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, Vol 48, No.1, pp.57-70. From <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/bjet.12340>

For further investigation, this study suggested the following:

- \* A participant survey in a larger scale and follow-up interviews to understand how members conduct a self-directed learning process in the GRE Analytical Writing Discussion Forum, and how the learning process benefits the test preparation.
- \* The difference in individual learning experiences of members to understand members' experience when a posting has no

replies, and why it happens.

- \* The motivations and strategies in instructional design of moderators in informal online language learning community.
- \* The experience of non-participants in the discussion forum to understand why they choose not to participate and whether they benefit from reading others' postings. Also, this provides insights on how to promote participation in a CoI.

## IMPACT OF LANGUAGE-ORIENTED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN LANGUAGE PREPARATION SCHOOL

Summarized by Mai Thi Minh Tho <sup>(3)</sup>

In order to enhance students' language skills, language teachers have been using different techniques to expose students to the language as much as possible. In this article, the author conducts research on the impacts of using extracurricular activities (ECAs) at Preparatory Schools to find out whether ECAs are beneficial to students who did not reach the required level of language skills.

Firstly, the author suggests some basic principles of extracurricular activities to make ECAs more effective for language teaching. This includes such principles as the use of different types of activities; the arrangement of activities based on students' interests, abilities, and ages; the involvement of key implementer, and adequate and accessible opportunities for all students. Furthermore, the author also reviews the importance of ECAs as



well as some possible difficulties for participation in these activities. Particularly, there would be higher rate of students' attendance in class, and class disciplines and their attitudes towards their own learning were highly evaluated. However, students' demotivation, tiredness and stress due to participants' excessive concern might affect negatively students' educational success, and it might be costly to organize ECAs.

Despite these drawbacks, ECAs are very important in EFL as they can support and help students to be successful in their studies, as well as fill the gaps between the academic study of the target language and its future practical application. Therefore, the author would like to reconfirm the effectiveness of ECAs in teaching and learning a foreign language: (1) erasing some students' low motivation and anxiety; and (2) promoting students' learning management by watching television or playing computer games.

<sup>3</sup> Yildi Y., (2016). Impact of Language-Oriented Extracurricular Activities on Academic Achievement in Language Preparation Schools. Journal of Education in Black Sea Region. From <https://jeps.ibsu.edu.ge/jms/index.php/jeps/article/view/27/35>

# BENEFITS OF OUT-OF-CLASS SPEAKING ACTIVITIES FOR EFL STUDENTS

Summarized by Nguyen Thi Anh Thu <sup>(4)</sup>

Abdullah Coskun, an Assistant Professor Doctor at Abant Izzet Baysal University, studied the benefits of out-of-class speaking activities for EFL students in Turkey.

His qualitative study is based on open-ended survey questions dealing with the opinions of students on the benefits of out-of-class speaking activities over a six week period. The participants of the study were 21 first-year university students at the Department of English Translation and Interpretation in a state university in Turkey. Their English proficiency level was B2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Volunteering participants worked in groups of three to seven. They were asked to freely choose and carry out a six-week speaking activity by coming together at least twice per week outside the class. Five activities emerged: Fantasy Role-Playing (FRP), Continuous Story, Debate, Radio Program, and Broadcasting on Periscope. At the conclusion of the six-week period, the study gathered the participants' perceived benefits of each activity:

## **Fantasy Role-Playing (7 participants)**

*Description:* Fantasy role-playing is a game during which players take the roles of fictional characters in a context whose rules are determined by group members.

*Benefits:* All participants thought that the activity was beneficial in terms of practicing unrehearsed speaking, solving problems, speaking English in a fun way, practicing acting skills, vocabulary and pronunciation development as well as critical thinking skills.

## **Continuous Story (4 participants)**

*Description:* The idea behind the activity is to



*Benefits:* Except for one student holding the idea that the six-week implementation of the activity was not sufficient to get benefits from it, all the other participants argued for the benefits of the activity regarding their creativity, fluency, and learning new vocabulary from their group friends.

## **Debate (4 participants)**

*Description:* They negotiated about current news and topics such as culture, health, and different practices in different countries.

*Benefits:* The group members expressed their satisfaction with the activity outcomes, highlighting that the activity enabled them to practice their English, feel more relaxed while speaking English, become familiar with news on the Internet, and learn new vocabulary items along with their pronunciation.

## **Radio Program (3 participants)**

*Description:* Participants created a Radio Program dealing with various topics (e.g. fashion and magazine), during which each member of the group took a certain role (e.g. radio presenter, guest).

<sup>4</sup> Coskun, A. (2016). Benefits of Out-of-class speaking activities for EFL students. *Uluslararası Türkçe Edebiyat Kültür Eğitim Dergisi*, 5(3), 1448-1464. From <http://www.tekedergisi.com/DergiPdfDetay.aspx?ID=654>

*Benefits:* All group members believed that the activity was beneficial in terms of gaining confidence and having natural conversations.

Broadcasting on Periscope (3 participants)

*Description:* The activity is about broadcasting live videos from their phones about various topics on Periscope, a social media platform.

*Benefits:* According to the students taking part in this activity, Periscope was useful as they could practice their English with people online and learn some daily language during their practices. In addition to the out-of-class activities created and carried out by students in the study, Coskun draws attention to the following out-of-class

language learning resources in his recent paper: chat rooms, self-access centers, language villages, e-mediated tandem learning, listening logs, digital media, digital games, and television series. Coskun also emphasizes that such out-of-class learning activities are plentiful in today's world, and thus should be used for language learning purposes.

In summary, in response to the survey questions regarding the benefits of out-of-class speaking activities, students' reactions were generally found to be positive. Therefore, the author suggested that these out-of-class speaking activities should be included in the EFL programs.

## NEWS

### The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on TESOL at SEAMEO RETRAC

The 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference on TESOL will be organized by SEAMEO RETRAC in cooperation with Curtin University, Australia. The Conference aims to provide an excellent venue for academics, researchers, students and professionals in the field of English language education to share and discuss research findings, experiences, and practical and theoretical issues related to the teaching of English to learners of different backgrounds, levels, interests and motives.

**Key theme:** *English Language Teaching in the Era of Globalization 4.0: Embracing Challenges and Innovations*

**Sub-themes:**

- Innovative approaches in Teaching English Language for the Globalization 4.0
- Content and Language Integrated Learning and English as a Medium of Instruction
- Teaching English to Young Learners
- Emerging technologies and applications for English Language Teaching
- Curriculum and Materials Design and Development



- Learning Achievement Assessment and Classroom Assessment Techniques
- Teacher Professional Development

**Time:** Thursday & Friday, August 06–07, 2020

**Venue:** SEAMEO RETRAC, 35 Le Thanh Ton Street, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

**Website:**

<http://www.vnseameo.org/TESOLConference2020>

## The 2020 Asian Conference on Language



The Asian Conference on Language (ACL) is an interdisciplinary conference which provides an opportunity for academics, researchers, and professionals to connect, share, and learn about impactful ideas and important experiences in the fields of language acquisition, psychology, linguistics, culture, communication, and technology.

The conference, in collaboration with IAFOR (The International Academic Forum) research center at Osaka University, has engaged in various interdisciplinary initiatives, which are believed to place an important impact on domestic and international public policy conversations.

At the intersection of theory, pedagogy, and praxis, the Asian Conference on Language invites researchers and teachers to submit proposals in the following areas:

- Language Acquisition
- Language and Communication
- Language and Culture
- Language and Psychology

- Language and Technology
- Language Learning and Teaching
- Linguistics

### Time & Venue:

- Date: March 29th – April 1st, 2020
- Venue: Toshi Center Hotel, Tokyo, Japan
- Website: <https://acl.iafor.org/>

## The 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Education (ICEDU-2020) in Bangkok, Thailand

The 6th International Conference on Education – (ICEDU 2020) will be organized on 3rd – 5th April, 2020 in Bangkok, Thailand, by The International Institute of Knowledge Management (TIKM). The aim of the conference is to provide an excellent venue for researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers to discuss issues, tackle challenges, develop professionally, share opinions, find solutions and explore opportunities in the multiple areas of education. The conference serves the purpose of promoting a tight link between theory and practice and explores different perspectives on the application of research findings into practice.



### Conference Theme: *The New Face of Education: Innovation in Practice*

### Time & Venue:

- Date: April 03 - 05, 2020
- Venue: Ambassador Hotel Bangkok, Bangkok, Thailand
- Website: <https://educationconference.co/>

# Online Training Course on Exploring English: Language and Culture

This course is developed by the British Council, which provides a unique opportunity for learners of English to explore British culture and English in use to improve their language skills.

Through short videos, course participants will learn about popular culture topics and different lifestyles in the UK, incorporating English as a global language, the countryside, music, and literature. Moreover, this will also help them to develop their listening skills from authentic examples of people speaking English as well as examine some of the language used in the videos and analyze its use to learn how to use it again in practice.

Topic areas for the course:

English: the global language

- Why is English so widely used?
- How does technology help you learn?
- Language focus: passives
- Useful expressions

Music: making a difference

- What does British music mean to you?
- Music and society
- Language focus: clauses

Countryside: a green and pleasant land

- What do people think about the British countryside?
- A visit to the Lake District in north-west England
- A look at the different parts of the UK
- Language focus: description

Literature: books and identity

- British literature
- Shakespeare and the Globe Theatre
- Anniversaries in British literature
- Language focus: comparatives and superlatives

For further details, please go to the website: <http://lnnk.in/pfM>



## Free Online English Language Training Courses



Learners of English can find useful free online English training courses for the development of their English language skills, work-related communication skills, as well as intercultural competence.

In this website, learners are given a great number of useful lessons and exercises to enhance their four macro language skills and improve their vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar. Moreover, they will learn interesting cultural information from the lessons of “Life in

the UK” and “Life in the USA”. More interestingly, there are also some new featured lessons with the following topics:

- Valentine’s Day
- Learn English with songs
- English for work
- Functional skills English
- Computers and the Internet

For further details, please go to the website: <https://www.esolcourses.com/>

## Training Course on Assessment for Learning in Practice



In this MOOC, course participants will learn the theory and guidelines for knowledge construction on the topic of formative assessment, and they will be offered support in designing assessments which can be applied as a tool for learning and training of competences. Moreover, they will find out key concepts of what formative assessment is and how formative assessment can contribute to the learning of your pupils or students.

By the end of the course, participants will be able to learn the following:

- what formative assessment is and how to apply it;
- what methods there are to perform formative assessment;
- how to analyse assessment in their contribution to learning.

For further details, please go to the website:

[https://platform.europeanmoocs.eu/course\\_toetsen\\_voor\\_leren\\_in\\_de\\_prakt](https://platform.europeanmoocs.eu/course_toetsen_voor_leren_in_de_prakt)

# SUGGESTED EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY: JAPAN FROM THE OUTSIDE

Kashiwazaki Board of Education, Niigata Prefecture

**Name of ALT:** Valerie Hogue

**Type of School:** Elementary School (also works well in Junior High School)

**Participants:** unlimited

**Age level:** all ages including the teachers

## **Activity Objective:**

Students come to realise the far reaches of Japan and its people within the global society. They learn that they are part of a large global family that expands beyond the confines of their own country.

## **Summary of Activity:**

Students are introduced to a person or a group of people interested in learning about the students' experiences and everyday life through the simple sharing of a card, short note, letter, or picture. This is not the typical pen pal/e-pal project as this project is more of a one-shot activity.

## **Preparation and Planning:**

The project takes nothing more than one period or one lunch break to complete. Since this can be either seasonally or thematically based, the activity can be used at any time of the year. For lower grades such as 1 to 3 elementary, the students draw pictures only. For grades 2 to 4, students can also trace out pre-written messages. For grades 5 to 6, students copy (freehand) a set message. If you plan to use this activity at the junior high school level, let the students write their own messages. The most difficult part of this activity is finding someone to correspond with. I have used people I already know who have agreed to receive and send back a quick note to the students. In one case, I asked a professor of Japanese language at a university overseas to be the contact. The younger students were amazed to learn that Japanese live and work overseas! In the case of junior high, I tried to match up my students with friends who shared commonalities and would be good role models through their current work to the students.

## **Execution:**

In the elementary school, I facilitated a lunchtime English reading program. I read a story about a girl's birthday and then asked my students to help me make birthday cards for a Japanese friend who teaches overseas. Using a mixture of English, gestures, and a few Japanese words, the students asked me questions about my friend. They were then given pre-cut stock paper and shown how to fold and make birthday cards. The students then designed cards and wrote special birthday messages (younger children copied a simple pre-written greeting). After the activity, the children put the cards in a pre-addressed envelope and together we sealed the envelope. Within 2 weeks, the children received a thank you card from my friend and she listed the name of every student who made the card and thanked them in Japanese. I read the message to the students over the school public address system on a subsequent school visit.

## **Evaluation:**

It was evident that the students enjoyed the activity because they asked to do another project. Some of the older students were encouraged by their teachers to research the countries where my friends reside and to share their findings with the younger students. Receiving an acknowledgement note is important in solidifying and making tangible the experience for the students. Using a similar project at the junior high level yielded similar results. I paired some boys who enjoy science and are thinking about engineering as a course of study with a female friend who is an engineer. They were amazed to learn that

gender has no bearing on the possibilities of occupations available. This was a pivotal learning point that could never be taught within the confines of the classroom walls. Feedback from those who received the cards or letters was extremely positive and enthusiastic. They especially appreciated receiving pictures of the students working on their cards as it forged a stronger connection to a group of students in a country far away.

Source: <http://jetprogramme.org/wp-content/MAIN-PAGE/current/publications/altcirseahandbook/6extra.pdf>

## FUN CORNER

### HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY



A milkman became very wealthy through dishonest means. He had to cross a river daily to reach the city where his customers lived. He mixed the water of the river generously with the milk that he sold for a good profit. One day he went around collecting the dues in order to celebrate the wedding of his son. With the large amount thus collected, he purchased plenty of rich clothes and glittering gold ornaments. But while crossing the river the boat capsized and all his costly purchases were swallowed by

the river. The milk vendor was speechless with grief. At that time he heard a voice that came from the river, "Do not weep. What you have lost is only the illicit gains you earned through cheating your customers."

A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed that, as one problem was solved, a new one arose.

Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to a boil. In the first, she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil without saying a word. In about twenty minutes, she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl.

Source: <http://www.english-for-students.com/Honesty-is-The-Best-Policy.html>

## THE HOSPITALITY OF THE PIGEON

Once upon a time, there lived two pigeons. They were husband and wife. They spent their days looking for food. In the evenings, they would come and rest on their favorite tree in the forest.

One evening, the wife returned home early. As usual, she was waiting for her husband, when suddenly it started raining. She started to worry. "Where are you, my dear? You never get so late," she whispered to herself.

Just then she saw a bird-catcher coming towards her. In a cage he had a pigeon. It was her husband! "Oh no, what shall I do now?" "I wish I can help my husband," she said. She desperately tried to distract the bird-catcher by flapping her wings, but all in vain.

Soon, it stopped raining. "Brrr! It is so cold," said the bird-catcher. His clothes were wet. He decided to sit under the same tree where the two pigeons lived.

The poor wife sat by her husband's cage, and she started to cry. The husband said, "Do not feel sad, dear. We now have a guest. This man is shivering and hungry. He needs your help." Hearing this, the wife flew around getting dry twigs. She made a fire for the bird-catcher. Then she looked at the bird-catcher and said, "You are our guest. Since I have no food to offer, I will jump into this fire. In few minutes I will become an edible item for you. You can eat me."

By now, the bird-catcher was



overwhelmed by the hospitality of the humble pigeon couple. He at once stopped the wife jumping into the fire.

He also opened the cage and set the husband free. "I have been cruel and selfish. I will never trap any bird in my net again," said the bird-catcher, and he went away. The two pigeons were happy to be reunited.

