1 TEACHING ADULTS ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY WITH THE 6 PRINCIPLES

Morgan points to the board to present today's content and language objectives for her level 3 English as a Second Language class at the adult learning center: "Our content objective is to compare standards for food safety. We all work with food. We work with different foods. We cook for different people. We must keep foods safe. Our language objective is to discuss and write rules for food safety." She also writes several key vocabulary items on the board and prompts her students to be on the lookout for these words and keep using them throughout the lesson. For key vocabulary, she chose words that have useful parts that can help produce other words: safer, safety, safely, and keep safe.

Morgan shows four photographs that depict people handling food safely in various situations: the kitchen of a childcare facility, a food stand at a festival, a restaurant kitchen, and a home cook: "Which picture is important to you?" She prompts learners to join one of four groups based on the image that depicts a situation relevant for them. Having four options helps Morgan differentiate her instruction for learners who have varied learning purposes and background knowledge.

Each group begins work with members choosing a team role. These roles are facilitator, recorder, researcher, and presenter. On the wall, a poster illustrates the tasks of each team role. The learners are already familiar with this type of collaborative group work because Morgan conducts most of her lessons in small collaborative groups. The team approach serves to hone soft skills for employment and multiplies opportunities for language use.

Each team has stepwise directions to complete their project: brainstorm a list of foods or select foods from a picture dictionary, separate foods by type to store safely, create a table to organize the information by type of food, list a storing method for each food category, provide details on the methods to keep these foods safe, and summarize findings in a list of rules to post for the cooks. At any step, if the team members need information, they can ask questions. The role of the researchers, who have portable electronic devices, is to locate information on the internet to answer any of these questions.

Morgan circulates to assist each team. She tells the learners that they should build on what they already know, but they need to check their knowledge against online text sources. She also recommends websites where quality information on food safety is available on the researchers' reading level as well as in other languages. Although Morgan encourages learners to work mainly in English, she also supports learners' using all of their resources, including multilingual websites and electronic translations. She reminds the researchers to read carefully, select relevant information, and dictate slowly for the team recorder. The recorder asks for the correct spelling of words. The facilitator keeps checking that the information is transferred correctly from the websites to the group's food safety table of information. After the information is organized, they begin to create their set of rules. The group members carefully craft each rule together and critique and approve each sentence.

The group work results in three products. One is a table in which information is organized by categories of food, the appropriate storing method for each type, and specifics on keeping each type of food safe. The second is a list of sentences that summarize the rules of keeping foods safe. The third is a quick presentation of the table and the rules the group created. Based on the information each work team gathers, the learners compare standards of food safety for different situations and explore the main questions of the day: How do standards of food safety differ? Why?

Morgan's aims with this discussion are to support active listening to each other's presentations, to provide feedback to the groups on their work, and to promote higher order thinking by having students compare and synthesize information. During the conversation, Morgan models active listening and acts as the note taker. She repeats and captures the main ideas of the speakers on the board. When needed, she reformulates learner responses and models accurate English. To sum up the discussion, she groups, connects, and organizes the ideas visually on a sheet of poster paper to make the thinking process visible.

Morgan ends her lesson by asking each team to discuss what they have learned about today's content and language objectives. She also reminds learners to record two items in their journals: the learning strategies they applied that were helpful to them and the new words or concepts they used that they would like to take away from the lesson.

Advancing English Language Instruction for Adults

We write this book to share TESOL's vision for exemplary teaching of adults who are learning English as a part of their preparation for the workforce. Career and technical education opportunities today require English language and literacy in many countries. Adults who wish to be successful in today's workplace need complex language and literacy skills: clear verbal and written communication, problem solving, collaboration, higher reading levels, and digital literacy. English language teaching for these adults must evolve to meet the demands of the 21st-century workforce.

When adults pursue learning English, often their long-term goals are better paying jobs and economic self-sufficiency. They view the English language as a means to reach those goals either because the jobs they seek require communication in English or because proficiency in English gives them access to education and training in their desired field of employment. Indeed, countless workplaces worldwide use English for business, from trade and tourism to manufacturing and the service industry (British Council, 2013). It is important that we position English instruction in a way to serve adult learners' long-term goals and help them beyond learning basic communication and life skills (Parrish, 2015).

Critical thinking, problem solving, verbal and written communication skills, teamwork skills, and professional manners are the top-rated "soft skills" managers seek in employees (Wonderlic, 2016) and are suitable instructional targets for adult English language classes. Today's employees need to rapidly adjust to ever changing job demands, follow written directions, participate in discussions, produce written reports, or conduct electronic research to solve problems. In turn, these same skills can also allow adults to thrive in all areas of their lives, including successfully solving life problems, making informed decisions for their families, and cooperating with others to benefit themselves and their communities.

Learning English is an important part of the acculturation process for immigrants and refugees who settle in English-speaking countries. In these countries, there is growing recognition of the pressing need to advance English language proficiency targets in all adult education programs to assist transitioning to English-language secondary or postsecondary education and professional training programs. In these countries, a large segment of adult education program participants are immigrants and refugees who do not speak English as their primary language and who vary highly in their prior education and literacy.

For example, recent legislation in the United States has raised the proficiency goals in adult English language acquisition programs; the law defines English language acquisition programs that are fundable as programs which help English learners (ELs) achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language and which lead to the attainment of a secondary school diploma, its equivalent, postsecondary education, or employment (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014; WIOA). To further this goal, the new English Language

Proficiency Standards for Adult Education (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, 2016) detail the English language skills adult learners need to successfully access college- and career-ready academic instruction. Likewise, the Canadian Language Benchmarks (Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012) and the Australian Core Skills Framework (Australian Government Department of Education and Training, 2015)—which guide the instruction of adult ELs in Canada and Australia, respectively—also set demanding goals for proficiency, which include being able to comprehend and fluently produce complex texts and complex spoken communication.

The 6 Principles we present here are applicable to all contexts for teaching adult ELs. In this volume, we focus on adult English language programs and workforce preparation programs where participants are developing literacy and relevant content knowledge as they are learning to communicate in English. The vignettes we include describe a range of adult education programs: settlement programs, adult basic education, low-level literacy classes, workplace education, family literacy, integrated English and civics, and integrated English and career training.

The opening vignette in this chapter captured what we mean by rigorous English language instruction for adults with The 6 Principles. The teacher, Morgan, organized her lesson to focus on challenging content and language objectives. All of the lesson activities directly served the lesson objectives, as well as the personal goals of each adult learner in her class. The activities required team collaboration, problem solving, and higher order thinking; in other words, they entailed the soft skills necessary for employment and community interaction.

The students produced frequent and authentic language use through discussion, reading, and writing and were able to build on their prior knowledge and their full repertoire of language skills, including the strategic use of their home language when it supported their ability to solve problems and build content knowledge. They engaged meaningfully with a variety of text types and formats to develop their informational literacy in conjunction with their English language skills. Additionally, the students were able to hone language learning strategies, which will allow them to become independent language learners outside the classroom. The complex interactions in Morgan's class resembled the demands of today's work environment, where adult learners strive to succeed.

Diversity of Adult English Learners

Though not every ethnic and socioeconomic group in the world has equal access to English language instruction, an exponentially growing segment of the world desires to learn English to improve employment prospects either in professional fields or in those industries where English is gaining as the medium for conducting business. Among these are tourism, hospitality, the military, and now also the full range of service providers in health care, retail, shipping, transportation, and call centers (British Council, 2013).

An estimated 30 percent of the world's population (2.3 billion) speaks some English, although only five percent (388 million) acquired it as their primary language. The vast majority of English speakers (83 percent) have learned English as an additional language. Surprisingly, only four percent (71 million) of the world's English learners live in the six countries that linguists refer to as inner circle countries, or countries in which English

If the world had 100 English speakers . . .
18 would live in India
17 would live in China
13 would live in the United States
5 would live in Nigeria
4 would live in the Philippines
3 would live in the United Kingdom
2 would live in Indonesia, Germany, and Russia
34 would live in all other countries

(Crystal, 2019)

is spoken as the dominant language (i.e., Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States; Crystal 2019).

Adult ELs in the inner circle countries, although heterogeneous, are less representative of worldwide diversity. Immigrants, resettled refugees, asylum claimants, and temporary workers, who make up the majority of adult ELs, come from a smaller set of countries. Immigration laws, unique to each country, narrow which groups may be welcome, and the diversity also varies by immigration status (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2018). Table 1.1 summarizes the country of origin of newcomers by their immigration status in five English-speaking countries.

Table 1.1	The national origin of newcomers by immigration status in five English-speaking countries based on 2016/2017 data				
	Australia	**Canada**	**United States (U.S.)**	**United Kingdom (U.K.)**	**New Zealand**
Where did the largest groups of **new permanent residents** arrive from?	India China New Zealand Pakistan Philippines	Philippines India Syria China Pakistan	Mexico India China El Salvador Guatemala Philippines	Romania Poland Ireland India Italy Portugal	China India Pakistan Philippines
Where did the most **newly naturalized citizens** come from?	India U.K. Philippines China South Africa	Philippines India China Pakistan U.S. U.K.	Mexico India Philippines China Cuba Dominican Republic	India Pakistan Nigeria South Africa Bangladesh	U.K. India Philippines South Africa Samoa Fiji
Where did **resettled refugees** mainly come from?	Iraq Syria Afghanistan Burma Bhutan	Syria Iraq Afghanistan Burma Bhutan	Democratic Republic of Congo Burma Syria	Syria Iraq Pakistan Sudan Afghanistan	
What were the sending countries of the largest groups of **new asylum claimants?**	Malaysia Iran Sri Lanka Afghanistan China Iraq	Haiti Nigeria U.S. Turkey Pakistan Mexico	El Salvador Mexico Guatemala China Honduras Venezuela	Iran Pakistan Iraq Bangladesh Sudan Albania	
How much of the total population is **foreign-born?**	28%	20%	13.5%	14%	25%

(OECD, 2018)

The number of new-arrival immigrants who are highly educated and English proficient is growing. For example, about half of the recent immigrants to the United States were college educated, and one-third were bilingual (Batalova & Fix, 2017), much higher than in previous decades.

Specific humanitarian efforts and international agreements govern the intake of refugees in each country; as a result, only a limited number of nationalities qualify each year. For example, in 2017, 94 percent of refugees represented just 15 nationalities (Refugee Processing Center, 2018).

In Canada and in Australia in 2016, resettled refugees came mainly from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Burma, and Bhutan (OECD, 2018).

Refugee claimants or asylum seekers—those who petition for refugee status after they arrive in a country—are a rapidly growing segment of English learners, who outnumber by far the annual intake of refugees who are resettled through international agreements. As table 1.1 indicates, this group varies the most by origin for each receiving country (OECD, 2018).

Another large group of adult English learners are those who are seeking naturalization, which requires the demonstration of language proficiency as well as knowledge of civics. In 2017 in the United States, 703,000 individuals became new citizens. The prior year, 149,457 became naturalized citizens in the United Kingdom; 148,103 in Canada; 133,126 in Australia; and 32,862 in New Zealand (OECD, 2018).

In the inner circle countries, foreign-born individuals make up a significant portion of the population. The labor market of these countries relies heavily on English learners. English skills impact the employment opportunities and earnings of these workers (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2015). For example, in 2016, one in six U.S. workers was born in a foreign country (Gryn & Walker, 2018), half of whom spoke English less than very well (Gambino, Acosta, & Grieco, 2014). Individuals with limited English skills were far overrepresented among low-skilled workers (29 percent; Bergson-Shilcock, 2017).

Profiles of Adult English Learners

To explore the differences among the students we have in mind when we refer to adult English learners in this book, let's think about the following profiles.

> Mahmoud (58) is a father of five from Syria. He fled the country after their neighborhood was destroyed. Mahmoud's family lived under traumatic conditions for two years before they received approval to settle in Canada. He feels relieved that his children are growing up in safety. He is adjusting to the new life, although he often feels overwhelmed with worry for family members who are still under constant threat for their survival. After a year in Canada with daily English classes, Mahmoud can now communicate in basic English, and he is able to read short texts. He is interested in his children's education and would like to help them achieve their best.

> Min (35) grew up in China, where she knew hard work from childhood. In her early twenties, she moved to Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands, where she labored in the garment industry. After arriving in the United States, she became a restaurant worker and assisted in people's homes, interacting mainly within the Chinese community. She often works long hours and several jobs to help her brother with the care of their aging parents in China. Min would like to learn English so she can become certified as a home care aide, although she has very little time or support to pursue studies.

> Acindina (25), a young mother of a three-year-old, relocated to the United States mainland from Puerto Rico. She has been trying to regain a sense of normalcy after a distressing experience losing her home. Although she was a clerk before, now she works through a temporary employment agency in warehouse and assembly jobs. Acindina recognizes the importance of developing her English skills to find stable employment, raise her child, and move to an apartment of her own.

> Diba (41) is a widowed mother of six. She fled the Democratic Republic of Congo for Rwanda. Diba witnessed extreme atrocities while she was in hiding for months. She and her children spent miserable years in a Rwandan refugee camp before they could resettle in

Australia. Diba speaks Tshiluba and Swahili. Prior to starting English classes, she did not have any formal education, and she could not read in any language.

Tareq (26) is a guest worker in the United Arab Emirates from Bangladesh. He works as a mason. He has enrolled in English classes because he is interested in further training to become a maintenance or engineering technician for a hotel chain. He is excited about the opportunities that English skills may open up for him.

Our purpose with this book is to support the English language education of those adults who are resettling in a new country or who pursue language courses to improve their life conditions and employment opportunities, like the individuals above. We define adult learners as persons 18 years or older who are not enrolled in secondary education or university courses. Adult ELs are those who speak a language other than English as their home language and have needs to use English either socially or for work, but who have not yet developed a level of proficiency to be able to fully function in both spoken and written English.

These learners vary in their prior schooling. Like Diba, some have little to no formal education and they are learning to read and write for the first time in their life in English. Others participated in K–12 education without attaining advanced proficiency in English, like Acindina. Some had a few years of schooling but did not complete high school, like Min and Tareq. Still others are highly literate in their native language but arrived with a low-level proficiency in English, as did Mahmoud.

Our examples throughout this volume highlight programs in English-speaking countries that mainly serve immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. However, The 6 Principles and the teaching ideas we recommend apply more broadly.

Adult English Language Programs for Literacy and Workforce Development

A broad range of agencies deliver English language instruction for adults. Local education agencies (e.g., school districts) frequently have adult English as a second language (ESL) classes as part of their adult education programs. Many community agencies serve ELs with the help of public funding and private sponsorship. Other programs are for-profit proprietary language schools. Whatever the type, TESOL recommends that adult English language education in literacy and workforce development programs demonstrate the following characteristics to be effective:

- Programs are responsive to learners' needs and goals.
- Curricula are rigorous and prepare learners for the 21st-century workplace or for secondary or postsecondary education.
- Curricula, instruction, and assessment build on available research.
- Learners' acculturation to a new country is supported.
- Learners' home languages and cultural knowledge are affirmed and respected.
- Learners are assisted in overcoming challenges to participation.

Table 1.2 provides an inventory of adult English language and literacy programs along with the list of agencies that usually offer them. Because public funding for the various types of programs depends on specific legislation, the types of programs that are available change as the laws and regulations change. For example, in the United States, program offerings are in large part a function of each state's WIOA plan, which has resulted in more funding for one-stop career training programs than, for example, funding for adult ESL classes and family literacy; this is a dramatic change from the recent past.

Even as the distribution of the different program types changes and not all kinds of programs are available in every region, the table (1.2) is a good directory for the different ways in which various agencies have successfully offered English language and literacy training. Our hope is that each agency involved in English language education will consider the possible options for instructing adult English learners and choose to offer the kinds of programs that best fit the specific adult learners they intend to serve.

Table 1.2	Types of adult English language and literacy programs
Type of program	**Where to find them**
Public adult basic education programs	School districts Adult learning centers, usually at community colleges Refugee serving agencies Regional career and technical education centers Settlement programs
Workplace ESL programs	Places of employment, usually delivered in partnership with an educational agency
Family literacy programs	Public schools Publicly funded child development centers and preschool programs Libraries
Integrated English and civics programs	Social services agencies Libraries Community and civic organizations School districts
English literacy programs for institutionalized adults	Prisons Youth rehabilitative institutions Dedicated education facilities for institutionalized adults
Out-of-school programs	Homeless serving facilities Youth centers
Drop-in English language programs	Libraries Faith-based organizations Community centers Community schools Refugee camps
Career education programs	Job centers/employment service agencies Regional career and technical education centers Technical colleges and institutes
Fee-based ESOL classes	Privately owned language centers Online education providers

The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners

The 6 Principles put forth in this book are not revolutionary or groundbreaking concepts in language learning. They are well-established guidelines drawn from decades of research in language pedagogy and language acquisition theory. The 6 Principles bring to life TESOL's core values. Though we present them in seemingly simple statements, they carry substantial weight because their effective implementation can make a significant difference for learner success. The 6 Principles must be taken together as a cohesive whole for them to be effective. One cannot know one's learners, for example, and then not use that knowledge when planning lessons.

Figure 1.1 provides a brief explanation of each principle, and later chapters show teachers of adult ELs how they can actualize The 6 Principles in their instruction.

Figure 1.1	The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners

Exemplary teaching of English learners rests on the following 6 Principles:

1. **Know your learners.** Teachers learn basic information about their students' families, languages, cultures, and educational backgrounds to engage them in the classrooms and prepare and deliver lessons more effectively.

2. **Create conditions for language learning.** Teachers create a classroom culture that will ensure that students feel comfortable in the class. They make decisions regarding the physical environment, the materials, and the social integration of students to promote language learning.

3. **Design high-quality lessons for language development.** Teachers plan meaningful lessons that promote language learning and help students develop learning strategies and critical thinking skills. These lessons evolve from the learning objectives.

4. **Adapt lesson delivery as needed.** Teachers continually assess as they teach—observing and reflecting on learners' responses to determine whether the students are reaching the learning objectives. If students struggle or are not challenged enough, teachers consider the possible reasons and adjust their lessons.

5. **Monitor and assess student language development.** Language learners learn at different rates, so teachers regularly monitor and assess their language development in order to advance their learning efficiently. Teachers also gather data to measure student language growth.

6. **Engage and collaborate within a community of practice.** Teachers collaborate with others in the profession to provide the best support for their learners with respect to programming, instruction, and advocacy. They also continue their own professional learning.

A Look Back and a Look Ahead

The number of adults who are learning English increases every day. Teacher professional learning plays a critical role in advancing the outcomes of adult English language instruction. This book lays a foundation for the efforts to professionalize English language education for adults, provides shared language for instructional practices, and aims to improve career and education options for adult learners of English as a new language.

In this chapter, we have done the following:

- explained TESOL's rationale for identifying core principles for exemplary teaching of ELs and the pressing need for their implementation in adult literacy and workforce development contexts

- showed an example of a rigorous English language lesson that serves 21st-century workplace skills

- emphasized inherent challenges in instructing diverse learners who vary widely in their academic preparation and what they wish to gain from English classes

- outlined the types of English language programs various agencies make available

- introduced The 6 Principles, which are discussed in detail in Chapter 3. These principles help teachers create conditions in the classroom that promote language learning and plan and deliver lessons that keep learners' backgrounds, goals, and needs in mind.

Teachers of English learners need to understand that language development in adulthood is complex and that it does not always lead to full proficiency within the time frame available for

instruction. Instructed language learning may be just one—albeit critical—segment of the journey toward proficiency in a new language for adults. Language instruction is formative for eventual attainment of advanced proficiency when it provides learners with the skills and strategies they need to continue motivated and self-directed learning outside the classroom.

Additional resources pertaining to this chapter are available at www.the6principles.org/adult-education

Acronyms Associated with English Learning

EFL	English as a foreign language
EL/ELL	English learner/English language learner
ELA	English language acquisition (in K–12 this refers to English language arts)
ELP	English language proficiency
ENL	English as a new language
ESL	English as a second language
ESOL	English speakers of other languages (refers to students)
ESOL	English to speakers of other languages (refers to programs)
L1	First language (also home language, primary language, native language)
L2	Second language
LESLLA	Literacy education and second language learning for adults (previously, low-educated second language and literacy for adults)
SLA	Second language acquisition
SIFE/SLIFE	Students with (limited or) interrupted formal education

Acronyms Associated with Adult Education Programs

ABE	Adult basic education
ACSF	Australian Core Skills Framework
CLB	Canadian Language Benchmarks
ELL-U	A professional learning network for adult English to speakers of other languages practitioners
ESL Pro	Resource collection for the instruction of adult English learners
GED	General Educational Development (refers primarily to a U.S. high school equivalency program)
HSE	High school equivalency
LINC	Language Instruction to Newcomers to Canada (program)
LINCS	U.S. national leadership initiative to support adult educators
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014