

# CONTENTS

Foreword by Johan E. Uvin . . . . .	v
Preface . . . . .	vii
Acknowledgments . . . . .	x

## CHAPTER 1

Teaching Adults English Language and Literacy with The 6 Principles . . . . .	1
Advancing English Language Instruction for Adults . . . . .	2
Diversity of Adult English Learners . . . . .	3
Profiles of Adult English Learners . . . . .	5
Adult English Language Programs for Literacy and Workforce Development . . . . .	6
The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners . . . . .	7
A Look Back and a Look Ahead . . . . .	8

## CHAPTER 2

What Teachers Should Know about English Language and Literacy Development to Plan Instruction for Adult Learners . . . . .	11
Why Learn English . . . . .	12
What Adults Bring to Learning . . . . .	12
How Adults Learn Best . . . . .	14
Conditions for Second Language Learning . . . . .	15
What Level of English Is Needed . . . . .	23
An Important Caveat . . . . .	25
A Look Back and a Look Ahead . . . . .	26

## CHAPTER 3

Teaching with The 6 Principles . . . . .	27
The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners and Recommended Practices . . . . .	28
Principle 1. <i>Know Your Learners</i> . . . . .	29
Principle 2. <i>Create Conditions for Language Learning</i> . . . . .	34
Principle 3. <i>Design High-Quality Lessons for Language Development</i> . . . . .	40
Principle 4. <i>Adapt Lesson Delivery as Needed</i> . . . . .	57
Principle 5. <i>Monitor and Assess Student Language Development</i> . . . . .	62
Principle 6. <i>Engage and Collaborate within a Community of Practice</i> . . . . .	69
A Look Back and a Look Ahead . . . . .	74

## CHAPTER 4

<b>Addressing the Challenges with Adult English Learners</b> . . . . .	77
Participation and Nonparticipation of Adults in ESOL Classes . . . . .	78
Cultural Adaptation Struggles . . . . .	80
Emerging Literacy Issues . . . . .	83
Disability and Impairment . . . . .	87
Mental Health Issues . . . . .	90
Special Populations . . . . .	94
The Additional Roles, Responsibilities, and Challenges of Teachers of English Learners . . . . .	97
A Look Back and a Look Ahead . . . . .	99

## CHAPTER 5

<b>The 6 Principles in Different Program Contexts</b> . . . . .	101
Learning at Work in the United States . . . . .	101
Preparing for Hospitality Careers in Canada . . . . .	107
Preparing for Work in Australia . . . . .	111
Learning in Affordable Housing in the United States . . . . .	115
An Adult Basic Education ESOL Program at a Community College . . . . .	119
A Look Back and Final Observations . . . . .	124

### Appendix A

Instructional Techniques . . . . .	129
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### Appendix B

Resources for Teachers of Adult English Learners . . . . .	133
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<b>Glossary</b> . . . . .	137
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<b>References</b> . . . . .	141
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# FOREWORD

There are many policies and services that facilitate the integration of adult immigrants and refugees, but without access to high-quality English language instruction, the returns on those policies and services will be limited for individuals, communities, economies, and governments.

English proficiency matters a lot today. It is a gateway to jobs, education and training, and better wages, if you have it. It is a gatekeeper of opportunity, if you don't. A fast-growing group of immigrants, resettled refugees, asylum claimants, and temporary workers in English-speaking countries understand very well the premium that comes with proficiency. They want to learn English to get access to a better job or career. In a growing number of other nations, adults want to improve their English skills so they can get to work in sectors where English has become the language of business. It goes without saying that high-quality instruction is essential, as adults have many responsibilities and have no time to waste. That instruction, if it is to be of high quality and grounded in research, needs to accommodate the significant diversity in the backgrounds, circumstances, goals, and aspirations of adult English learners.

Every day in tens of thousands of classrooms around the world, adult English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) teachers—often in isolation and frequently unappreciated or inadequately compensated—selflessly work hard to support the educational opportunities of adult immigrants, refugees, asylees, and everyone who sees opportunity in advancing their work and life outcomes through learning English. As a former adult English as a second language (ESL) teacher, I aspired to excellence in my teaching but did not always have access to examples of what that looked like or to supports that could help me get to exemplary teaching.

*The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners: Adult Education and Workforce Development*, by Andrea Hellman, Kathy Harris, and Amea Wilbur (Deborah Short, Series Editor), shares with us TESOL's vision for exemplary teaching of adults who are learning English as a part of their preparation for the workforce. This book is written for the large and growing international audience of English teachers who instruct adult English learners in a variety of settings (adult learning centers, adult basic education programs, family literacy programs, workplace education, career training, settlement programs, and refugee serving agencies).

This book is an extraordinary resource for anyone who is part of the global community of English teachers, and by extension administrators, for many reasons. The book opens with solid data on the size and composition of the growing population of adult English learners, offers a comprehensive profile using learner vignettes, and presents a good overview of the institutional contexts in which learning English is facilitated, along with TESOL's statement of the characteristics of effective programs. It then provides a clear and comprehensive view of all the findings from language acquisition and literacy development research that teachers should know about and be mindful of when designing teaching and learning experiences and activities. The book then introduces and discusses in select chapters *The 6 Principles for effective teaching*. Illustrating

each principle with practice tips and vignettes, the book helps the reader develop a mental picture of what research- and principle-based effective teaching looks like. The discussion in Chapter 4 of the various supports learners may need with issues of disability, mental health, and other challenges that can affect the learning of adult English learners is invaluable. The description of the principles in five different institutional contexts and geographies in Chapter 5 brings it all to life in a very real way. The clarity of the manuscript’s language makes it easy to imagine how one could be applying these practices in one’s own context. Always with an eye toward application, the practices—including numerous hands-on techniques, tips, and teaching advice—are informative, motivating, and actionable. It seldom happens that a book for teachers about teaching and learning provides the reader with confidence and enthusiasm about enhancing one’s practice. This book does. In addition, the book adopts a view of adult English learners that acknowledges and leverages the many assets that learners bring and which often remain unlocked, unless teachers are intentional about using a holistic approach. The cultural sensitivity and commitment to creating culturally respectful and responsive learning experiences are two additional strengths the authors have brought forth throughout the manuscript.

One particular area where this book is so unlike many other books for teachers is related to the sixth principle, “Engage and collaborate within a community of practice.” The view of teachers as advocates for learners and policies and as leaders in their respective communities, focused on working with others to ensure access to integrated support services, is refreshing, inspiring, and beyond symbolic.

*The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners: Adult Education and Workforce Development* validates the experiences of seasoned practitioners and provides a well-researched set of practices that all teachers will find useful in their pursuit of excellence. Perhaps more importantly, implementing many of the practices presented in this book will markedly accelerate the integration of adult English learners at work and in our communities.

Johan E. Uvin

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# PREFACE

**T**he use of English is surging on every continent. Around 2.3 billion people have been motivated to learn to speak it in addition to their home language (Crystal, 2019). English is a currency in the knowledge economy: connectivity through the internet and social media are boosting its utility, and no other language has provided the social and economic opportunities around the globe that English can channel to its speakers today.

TESOL International Association advances the expertise of English language teachers, who are in greater demand worldwide now than ever. New approaches to teaching languages are evolving fast. To advance the profession, TESOL brings together professional learning, research, standards, and advocacy. TESOL strives to be the trusted global authority for knowledge and expertise in English language teaching.

On TESOL's 50th anniversary in 2016, the association launched a strategic initiative to define the shared principles of exemplary teaching of English learners (ELs) in the many contexts where English is taught. The diversity of learners and the varied contexts of teaching have made this charge particularly daring. A writing team and many expert reviewers—both from within and outside the association—engaged with a passion to denominate The 6 Principles and the practices that qualify them. The goal was to reflect the state-of-the-art in language teaching practice and research in The 6 Principles while delivering these findings in a user-friendly way so teachers can apply them.

This volume is the second in The 6 Principles series. The first addressed exemplary teaching for English learners in U.S. K–12 schools (TESOL International Association, 2018). This book shows the same principles in action when teaching adult learners. Our volume focuses on those adults who are learning English to participate in the workforce and to meet their life needs—engage within the community, raise a family, or become active citizens. The teaching applications feature primarily inner-circle English-speaking countries (Crystal, 2019), where English is the majority language: the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand; however, the recommendations apply more broadly to teaching adult learners worldwide.<sup>1</sup> This book is for the teachers of adult English learners who have general educational goals at their current life stage. They need English for a job or for career training opportunities; they may be immigrants, migrants, guest workers, or refugees. Most likely, they are at the beginning and intermediate stages of building their functional language skills in English.

The six core principles of exemplary teaching are intuitive statements with a simple ring. All English language teachers can relate to them:

1. Know your learners.
2. Create conditions for language learning.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the third book in this series will address international adult learners who are studying English as a new language for academic or other specific purposes.

3. Design high-quality lessons for language development.
4. Adapt lesson delivery as needed.
5. Monitor and assess student language development.
6. Engage and collaborate within a community of practice.

These statements are the armature around which we mold our field's best ideas to form a coherent model. The practices, which show how exemplary teachers achieve these principles, give the model its true shape. As with a sculpture, once the structure is in place, the details add to the main function. The 6 Principles framework allows us to convey the most important elements of expertise in our field to anyone with a desire to understand and to improve the education of English learners.

## **Audience**

The intended audience for this book includes

- teachers in adult education programs in countries where adults have a reason to learn English as a new language,
- instructors who work with English learners in workplace education and career preparation,
- teachers in integrated English language and citizenship education programs,
- ESOL and literacy tutors who serve adults,
- volunteers in faith-based and community-based English language programs, and
- staff and volunteers at agencies that serve adults who need to learn English.

The secondary audience is

- teacher educators in TESOL and adult education programs,
- consultants who deliver professional development to teachers of adult English learners worldwide,
- trainers of ESOL and literacy tutors,
- creators of English language teaching materials for adults, and
- administrators of adult and workplace education programs.

## **Overview**

We present the principles and practices of exemplary teaching of adult learners in five chapters:

**Chapter 1: Teaching Adults English Language and Literacy with The 6 Principles** offers the rationale for raising the bar for adult English learners' proficiency to meet the demands of the 21st-century workplace. We outline the characteristics of programs that effectively serve adult English learners and introduce The 6 Principles for teaching these learners.

**Chapter 2: What Teachers Should Know about English Language and Literacy Development to Plan Instruction for Adult Learners** summarizes the main factors of learning a new language in adulthood and the role of literacy development for boosting proficiency with English. We emphasize the need for adults to have functional practice with language skills as opposed to receiving knowledge about the English language as an academic subject. We reference the standards documents that are in place to guide the instruction of adult learners whose skills with listening, speaking, reading, and writing are at various proficiency levels. The fundamentals explained in this chapter provide the necessary working knowledge for The 6 Principles.

**Chapter 3: Teaching with The 6 Principles**, which is the core of this book, defines and illustrates each principle. We supply several high-leverage practices that are evidence based and that add depth and clarity to what each principle means. We elaborate Principle 3 the most—design high-quality lessons for language development—because we must plan lessons carefully before delivering instruction, and there are many nuanced ways to create an effective lesson.

**Chapter 4: Addressing the Challenges with Adult English Learners** describes the inevitable obstacles that educators of adult learners face daily with learners’ participation and attendance, their struggles to adapt to new conditions in a new culture, and the burdens of low literacy, special needs, or trauma. We place our recommendations within The 6 Principles framework to encourage systematic, proactive practices, which we can thoughtfully plan.

**Chapter 5: The 6 Principles in Different Program Contexts** shows how we can recognize exemplary teaching in very different classrooms by applying The 6 Principles framework. We feature the classes of five English teachers, who instruct adult learners in five different programs in three countries. All of them deliver high-quality lessons consistently. We point out where and how The 6 Principles are in action in these contexts. Our purpose is to demonstrate what these principles look and sound like in a variety of classrooms to help you picture what it would mean for you to realize them in your own teaching.

## **Moving Forward**

TESOL’s mission is to advance the quality of English language teaching around the world. The 6 Principles framework is an important strategy for that mission. The framework is the result of a two-year process by a team of language experts and educators, who participated in collaborative inquiry and lengthy discussions. The writing team of this current volume accepted the charge to build on the existing framework and adapt it for teaching adult learners. We were able to achieve this by altering the practices slightly where necessary and adding several new teaching practices.

Our work in this volume is consistent with the first 6 Principles book. We use the same framework and terminology to feature teaching practices. Readers who are already familiar with The 6 Principles may recognize that we have continued to refine the practices by adding examples and explanations to those concepts that are not as well known to adult educators in the international context as they are to K–12 educators in the United States. We show, for example, how to plan language objectives based on standards documents and detail the techniques that can help teachers make different types of input—speech, text, content—comprehensible to learners whose English language skills vary. We hope to inspire by revealing the strategies and thoughtful teaching approaches of many exemplary adult educators in action in their classes.

We are excited to contribute a new strand to TESOL International Association’s 6 Principles initiative, whose goal is to bring high-quality instruction to every English language classroom across the globe. We hope that you will become an active participant to make your mark, not only by implementing these principles with your own classes but also by joining TESOL International Association as a member and becoming a 6 Principles trainer for your own colleagues.

Andrea B. Hellman  
Kathy Harris  
Amea Wilbur

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