We Adult ESL professionals are a passionate lot!

We fervently believe in our learners’ ability to succeed and are delighted to share their success stories in support of our convictions. Now, even more than before, we recognize that their success is tied to educational attainment, literacy levels, and the ability to solve problems in technology-rich environments (PIACC, 2013).

Up until recently, most of us operated within an ESL silo: providing a welcoming and robust language learning environment, promoting those learners who persisted from level to level, wishing them well when they left us, and turning our attention to the next group of learners at our door. Now, however, thanks to the rigorous requirements of the 21st century, we see the silo as an impediment to our English learners’ success. We recognize our learners’ need for access to adult basic education content, career and technical education content, and academic and employability skills preparation alongside their English language development.

This leads us to search for the techniques, strategies and tools that will help us do the best possible job of facilitating our learners’ language development. We demand research-based and classroom-tested instructional support to serve our learners as they work towards their life goals; goals that include postsecondary degrees and credentials, family-sustaining jobs, effective civic participation, and successful advocacy for themselves and their families.

As the co-author of the Oxford Picture Dictionary and the series director of Step Forward Second Edition I invite you to explore the resources on these pages with an eye to the 21st century skill development they provide for your learners, and the instructional support they provide for you. I am delighted to share my passion for 21st century English language instruction with you in collaboration with Oxford University Press.

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