1 The 21st Century English Learner

The skills and knowledge needed to be successful today are different from those needed fifty, twenty, or even ten years ago. As the global marketplace rapidly evolves, the landscape of education must also evolve to adequately prepare students for life beyond secondary school. (Tucker, 2012, p. 3)

THE DIGITAL AGE ELD/ESL CLASSROOM

English language development (ELD) programs and English as a second language (ESL) methodology has evolved over the years from a variety of practices starting with no model at all, as in the "sink or swim" method, to grammar translation, the audio-lingual method, total physical response (TPR), and the sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP), to name a few. Each methodology improved on previous strategies to better assist English learners (ELs) achieve proficiency. Today, with the arrival of the digital age, it has become necessary to reexamine the delivery of ELD/ESL instruction once again, in order to provide our students with 21st century skills and experiences. It is important as teachers of ELs to ask, what exactly is 21st century learning, and how are we preparing ELs to participate in this new educational environment? In this book we examine current understandings of digital age education and explore how we can improve instructional methodology for English learners to meet the demands of this new classroom era.

In order to clarify what 21st century learning encompasses, the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) provides all educators with discrete skills that students are expected to acquire in order to participate successfully in the fast-paced, globally oriented digital age. Let's take a

look at the outcomes described from the P21 framework (http://www .p21.org/our-work/p21-framework) and how they may relate to ELs:

1. *Content knowledge and 21st century themes*. In addition to essential core content knowledge in traditional subject areas such as English, world languages, mathematics, science, social studies, and art, the framework includes the integration of 21st century themes such as global awareness; environmental, health, and civic literacy; and financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy. This blend of content knowledge and literacies requires that we provide ELs with a skills base that far exceeds previous academic, cultural, and linguistic demands.

2. *Learning and innovation skills*. These are the skills that separate today's learner from the past and assist them in navigating our complex digital age. The emphasis is on the 4 C's: creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. In this book, we add and discuss a fifth "C" for culture, in order to raise global awareness and the need to address diversity and multiculturalism in the classroom.

3. *Information, media, and technology skills*. Information and communication technology literacy (ICT) must be integrated into core subject areas and includes a student's ability to create, assess, and apply information and digital media effectively. This also includes understanding and using the most current technology tools. For ELs we must always be mindful of the digital divide that currently exists between communities of learners and work diligently to pursue equitable access to digital resources for our students.

4. *Life and career skills*. The final student outcome included in the P21 framework recognizes the need to develop a student's socioemotional skills in conjunction with core content knowledge. Topics included in this theme include flexibility and adaptation, productivity and accountability, initiative and self-direction, leadership and responsibility, and social and cross-cultural skills. English learners often come to this country with acute socioemotional needs related to the cross-cultural transition they are experiencing and require additional assistance to navigate the life and career skills mentioned.

ENGLISH LEARNERS: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Traditional practices such as explicit teaching of grammatical structures and direct instruction in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in order to

achieve communicative competence in English need to evolve to meet the needs of today's student. The 21st century English learner must become adept at the 5 C's (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and culture) as well as master a new language while also attaining complex, grade-level academic content. This is no small feat! Therefore, teachers must find innovative ways to foster digital literacy and provide English learners with targeted, student-centered instruction. By modeling the appropriate use of technology and engaging English learners with the tools and strategies in this book, teachers will not only improve academic outcomes and enhance language acquisition but also cultivate digital citizenship.

DIGITAL AGE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Let's start with an overview of current technology integration models and instructional strategies along with insight on the application of these resources to ELD/ESL instruction. The use of technology in the classroom is not the goal in and of itself. When a technology tool is successfully integrated into a classroom, the technology itself becomes "invisible" and supports teachers as they create, deliver, and assess learning experiences to engage students and improve academic outcomes in an exciting new way.

Before we can begin to explore the various ways that technology can enrich and even redefine instruction, let's review something that every teacher had to learn in college. Do you recall Bloom's taxonomy? Take a look at the 21st century version that has turned Bloom's taxonomy literally upside down (see Figure 1.1). The skills are inverted as students begin with creating, then move up the pyramid through evaluating, analyzing, applying, understanding, and finally, remembering. According to Shelley Wright (2012), "In the 21st century, we flip Bloom's Taxonomy. Rather than starting with knowledge, we start with creating and eventually discern the knowledge that we need from it." An important part of transforming education for ELs, and for all students in the digital age, is the shift in priority from students as consumers of information to students as creators.

This is good news for ELs, because the 21st century shift in Bloom's taxonomy as just described means increased opportunities for students to interact with peers and use English in context to complete authentic tasks. Bloom's 21 is a natural approach for ELD/ESL instructors who already understand the importance of using the four skills + 1 (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing) to apply content and language knowledge in order to remember information. Carefully scaffolded questioning techniques lead ELs to evaluate and analyze tasks that require higher-order thinking skills and develop academic discourse.

Figure 1.1   Bloom's 21
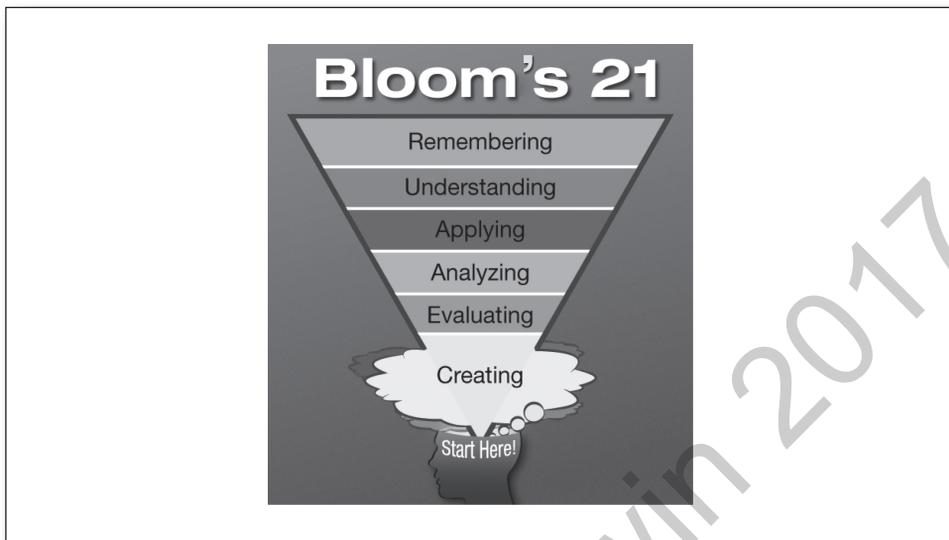
Later in this book, we discuss the benefits of inverting the classroom for ELs through the flipped instructional model. The flipped methodology is neatly aligned to best practices for ELD/ESL instruction and includes an added dimension of using new technologies for direct instruction in order to provide more time for hands-on learning. With an understanding of Bloom's 21 and the flipped learning model, teachers of ELs invert the traditional classroom and build a foundation for self-directed learning.

ISTE STANDARDS

The ISTE Standards

Throughout this book we'll reference the International Society for Technology in Education Teacher and Student Standards. We have incorporated these standards in each chapter in order to provide guideposts for lesson planning and delivery. Here are the categories for each set of standards.

ISTE Standards for Teachers

1. Facilitate and inspire student learning and creativity

2. Design and develop digital age learning experiences and assessments

3. Model digital age work and learning

4. Promote and model digital citizenship and responsibility

5. Engage in professional growth and leadership

ISTE Standards for Students

1. Creativity and innovation

2. Communication and collaboration

3. Research and information fluency

4. Critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making

5. Digital citizenship

6. Technology operations and concepts

UNDERSTANDING ELs

The Understanding ELs section in each chapter offers specially selected methodologies and recommended strategies directly connected to the theme of the chapter. These research-informed strategies were chosen based on both seminal publications and current studies.

Who are our English learners? How can we best respond to the diversity among this student population? Honigsfeld and Dove (2015) suggest that educators recognize and carefully address the complex variation that exists among ELs. It has been noted that ELs are far from being a homogenous group requiring a one-size-fits-all approach; instead, they may differ based on the following factors: (a) immigration status, (b) prior schooling, (c) level of language proficiency in the native tongue or in any additional languages, (d) level of literacy in languages other than English, (e) level of language proficiency in English, and (f) the student's learning trajectory. See Table 1.1 and reflect on which of these groups and subgroups of ELs you work with in your own school.

The purpose of this summary table is to alert our readers to the vast *within-group* diversity that they are likely to encounter when working with ELs and to offer a quick reference guide to the complex background experiences and readiness levels that are to be expected among ELs. The technology tools and practices we suggest will also have to be carefully selected, adjusted, or modified to best match the needs of ELs. To better understand the unique background experiences and cultural knowledge that ELs bring to the school, educators must not only collaborate with each

Table 1.1 Diversity Among English Language Learners

Immigration status	❑ Recently arrived in the United States under typical circumstances ❑ Recently arrived in the United States as a refugee ❑ Recently arrived in the United States without legal documentation ❑ Temporarily living in the United States or visiting the United States ❑ U.S.-born, U.S. citizen
Prior education	❑ Formal, grade-appropriate education in another country ❑ Formal, grade-appropriate education in U.S. school system for a certain period of time ❑ Limited formal, grade-appropriate education in another country ❑ Interrupted formal, grade-appropriate education in another country ❑ Interrupted formal, grade-appropriate education in U.S. school system
Linguistic development in language(s) other than English	❑ Monolingual in native language only ❑ Bilingual in two languages other than English ❑ Bidialectal speaking both a standard language other than English and a dialect or Creole/Patois ❑ Multilingual in three or more languages
Status of language proficiency and literacy in language(s) other than English	❑ Only receptive language skills ❑ Productive oral language skills ❑ Limited literacy skills ❑ Grade-level literacy skills ❑ Any or all of the above skills in more than one language other than English
Level of English language proficiency	❑ *Emerging:* Being exposed to English with no or very limited language production ❑ *Beginning:* Demonstrating receptive and emerging productive language skills ❑ *Developing:* Employing basic oral and written language skills with predictable error patterns ❑ *Expanding:* Employing more advanced oral and written language skills with fewer errors ❑ *Transitioning:* Approximating native language proficiency
Learning trajectory	❑ Demonstrating typical academic and linguistic developmental trajectories ❑ Demonstrating academic and linguistic developmental challenges and difficulties that respond to interventions ❑ Demonstrating academic and linguistic developmental challenges and difficulties that require special attention

Adapted from Honigsfeld and Dove, 2015, p. 4.

other and engage in ongoing professional learning opportunities; they can also reach out to the community both physically and virtually. Creating multilingual, interactive online resources for parents of ELs that identify

what they need to know about enrolling their child and supporting their learning in an American school is an often overlooked opportunity to enhance parent engagement.

When English learners represent such complex subgroups as depicted in Table 1.1, teachers may find it overwhelming to find out and keep in mind each student's background information regarding the following key questions:

- Were there any unusual circumstances such as trauma surrounding the child's arrival to the United States?
- Is there sufficient information available about the child's previous educational background, and how can the transition to the U.S. school system be as seamless as possible?
- What is the child's language proficiency and literacy level in the home language, in English, and in any additional languages?
- Are there any indications of gaps in education, learning difficulties, or other predictable challenges?

Table 1.2 ELL Profile-at-a-Glance Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

Student Background Information	
Student Strengths	Student Needs
Academic Goals	
Language Development Goals	
Accommodations or Modifications (if necessary)	

Adapted from Honigsfeld and Dove, 2015.

We suggest maintaining important information about the ELs in your school in a student management system or database for student profiles such as ones provided in Infinite Campus, Power School, or Ellevation that would allow each teacher to have access to basic information about each EL. Teachers can also create their own database by using Google Forms to survey their students individually using the profile template shown in Table 1.2.

MAKE-IT-YOUR-OWN LESSON SEEDS

In order to meet the academic needs of English learners, we have included sample lesson seeds that you can adapt to your own classroom. Each lesson seed includes learning targets, as well as sections for activating students' prior knowledge and promoting engagement and collaboration. The lesson seeds are intended to demonstrate how ELs can be supported through scaffolded instructional strategies along with technology tools. The checklist in each lesson seed is designed to highlight key elements that should be considered when planning instruction for ELs.

The lesson seeds are shared as a quick reference of ideas to help teachers in the deeper development of a comprehensive lesson plan. Teachers can add their own strategies and content when expanding the lesson seed.

Each lesson seed accomplishes the following:

1. **Sets student goals that encompass 21st century skills**

   Learning targets allow students to understand what they are expected to learn and how to demonstrate what they have learned. As mentioned earlier, 21st century lessons must integrate core content, with technology and language targets that relate to real-world communication and collaboration. ELs must be empowered to take ownership of their learning and effectively develop communicative skills through a variety of appropriate technologies.

2. **Activates students' prior knowledge**

   Activating prior knowledge helps ELs make connections to the new information they are learning in the classroom. Educators can tap into what students already know by first assessing prior knowledge and skills and then making connections between the new concepts being taught and the students' knowledge and experiences. ELs whose funds of knowledge are not aligned to what is taught in U.S. schools greatly benefit from activities that explicitly build foundational skills and background information.

3. **Enhances student engagement**

   Teachers can make content accessible for English learners by providing an environment in which students learn by doing. Teachers can differentiate

instruction through a blend of technology resources that provide a variety of modes of communication and entry points. ELs can then interact with the content and participate as active learners in the classroom. Educators need to deliver instruction in a manner that is comprehensible to students and meets the language demands of grade-level content. Including explicit instruction of academic language is important to the development of higher-order thinking processes associated with literacy and academic settings.

High levels of student engagement may be achieved through careful planning of learning activities that motivate students while also providing opportunities for frequent student-to-student interactions within the classroom. For ELs, activities should integrate all language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing), as well as address digital literacy and empower ELs to apply content and language knowledge using technology resources.

CONSIDER THIS

To support critical thinking about the chapter content and to allow for immediate application of new learning to your own context, we offer a reflection and thinking prompt in each chapter, called Consider This. It contains a question or a unique scenario, which may also offer an extension to the discussion in the chapter.

DIGITAL AGE EXPLORER'S CORNER

Creating Professional Learning Networks

In order to provide a vision for the digital age classroom, in this section we share vignettes from educators who are bravely exploring the digital age frontier by incorporating technology into their learning environments in creative ways. Our first digital age explorer has found a simple but effective way to bring teachers together to discuss classroom technology.

Great Neck Schools has promoted the formation of professional development groups (PDGs). PDGs are professional learning networks within each school in the district. Professional learning networks

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(PLNs) are similar to collegial circles but also include an online component to help build capacity and foster collaboration among teachers. In order to support teachers as they work toward integrating technology into their classroom, Great Neck's professional development groups (PDGs) conduct peer-led informal gatherings that meet regularly for 30 minutes to discuss instructional technology. During each session, one person volunteers to demonstrate a particular technology application or lesson that he or she is currently using with students. This sharing of best practices and the peer discussion that ensues promotes professional growth and leadership within the learning organization.

PLN QUESTIONS

We encourage teachers to create professional learning networks within their own communities. To ensure a comprehensive approach, PLNs can be composed of content area, ELD/ESL, and technology specialists and should extend participation to a virtual space via online social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, Ning, Edmodo, or Google Classroom. #ELLchat is an example of a very popular online PLN.

To facilitate discussions about ELD/ESL methodology and technology integration, you will find targeted questions at the end of each chapter that encourage conversation based on the central themes and ideas presented.

1. What role do you think technology should play in educating English learners?

2. What types of technology do you currently use with ELs in your school and why?

3. How does Bloom's 21 pertain to the ELD/ESL classroom and the use of technology?

4. How can technology help to create a more student-centered learning environment?

5. How can the P21 framework guide instruction for ELs?

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

A complete list of technology resources is provided in Appendix A. ELD/ ESL methodology resources are provided in Appendix B.

UNCOVERING THE CURRICULM FOR ELs

With the arrival of college and career readiness standards and even more rigorous standardized assessments, meeting the needs of linguistically and academically diverse learners is more challenging than ever before. Teachers dedicate time to "covering" curriculum that many ELs are not yet ready to learn because of language and sociolinguistic barriers. Rather than "cover" curriculum, this book is designed to help teachers "uncover" curriculum for ELs through the use of technology. As ELD/ESL instructors, we understand the complex demands all teachers face when working with ELs. We hope that this book will provide educators with ideas and everyday applications for using technology with ELs.