

# **Ascentis Awards in Essential Digital Skills**

## **A Teacher's Guide to Supporting Learners Who Speak English as a Second Language**



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## 1. Introduction

This qualification focuses on bridging the gap between the digital first (individuals who own multiple digital devices and interact with online content on a daily basis) and the digitally disengaged (individuals who have little or no experience of using digital devices and accessing online content).

Research conducted in 2019 found that 8% of the UK adult population have no basic digital skills, 22% of people do not have the essential digital skills needed for day-to-day life and 53% of UK employees do not have the digital skills required for work.

With innovations in technology and the increasing demand for online services, it is important to ensure that all individuals are able to participate in life, work and further study by providing them with the opportunity to gain these increasingly important digital skills. Without these skills, individuals will be at a significant disadvantage. It was found that on average, adults who lack these basic digital skills earn less than those who are competent in the 5 skill areas covered in this qualification. They are also less likely to progress in their careers and are missing opportunities to save money and better manage their finances.

People who speak English as a second language may be doubly disadvantaged, both lacking digital skills and the language and cultural knowledge to acquire them. Others may be confident users of IT in their native language but need support to understand and express themselves in English.

The skills acquired through this qualification will allow learners to be digitally mobile and access important governmental services, transact online and explore technologies, which will improve their social interactions with family and friends and help second language speakers function better in life, study, work and community.

This resource is intended to help teachers to understand the needs of second language English speakers in the digital context and support them to develop the language and literacy skills they need to achieve.



## 2. Why Support Essential Digital and English Language Skills?

- Learners need to know how to carry out everyday tasks that involve technological as well as language skills
- Digital skills support them to find, evaluate and organise information for a wide range of purposes
- They enable learners to create and communicate information which helps them to developing relationships and community
- Carrying out financial transactions requires more than just English language skills
- The ability to use technology to ask questions, identify problems and find solutions supports personal learning and development
- Digital literacy is part of 21<sup>st</sup> century language learning
- For many second language learners there is an additional challenge. As well as being unfamiliar with language they may be unfamiliar with British culture and customs when conducting communications and accessing institutions.

To request the full version please contact [hello@ascentis.co.uk](mailto:hello@ascentis.co.uk).

