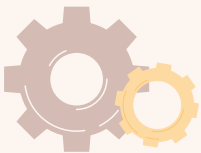


Teaching Soft Skills to Literacy Level and Beginning ELLs

Andrea Echelberger, Minneapolis MN







Which cat
represents
how you feel
about
teaching soft
skills in the
EL
classroom?





Session Contents

1

**Overview of
Soft Skills**

2

**Critical
Thinking**

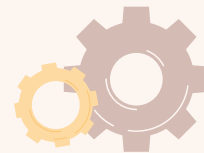
3

**Self
Management
and Learning
Strategies**

4

**Effective
Communication**



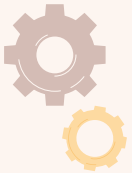
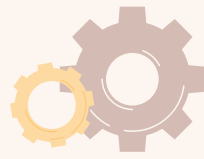


Soft skills are essentially people skills that allow us to interact with others effectively in the workplace.

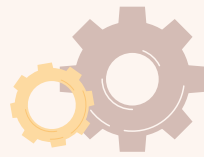
Soft skills translate across a wide variety of jobs and industries.



Transitions Integration Framework (TIF)



Transitions Integration Framework (TIF)



*An ATLAS project to advance transitions instruction
for all Adult Education Learners in Minnesota*

Revised in 2016 and 2023

Originally compiled by Lia Conklin Olson for ATLAS in 2013

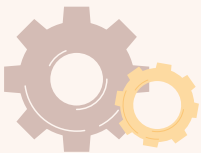


This document is available at:
atlasabe.org/resource/transitions-integration-framework/



Critical Thinking

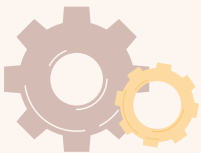




Critical thinking requires disciplined thinking that is open-minded, rational, and informed by evidence in order to arrive at decisions or conclusions that go beyond factual recall.

CT skills are increasingly essential for Adult Education learners to succeed in the workplace, higher education, and in navigating the complexities of 21st Century life.





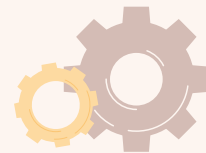
Critical thinking is a mindset- not a language level

English language learners are critical thinkers.

They navigate new systems, make complex decisions, and solve problems every day, often in a new language.

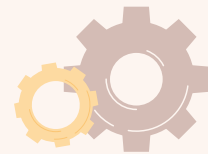
Teachers are not responsible for teaching them *how* to think, but how to do it *in English*, and transfer existing skills.





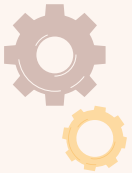
Build Rapport





Apply Context

Ask Questions

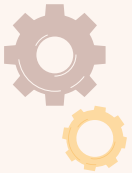
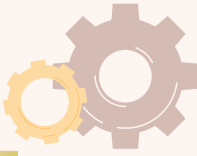




Concrete Suggestions



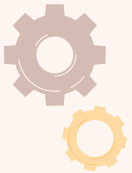
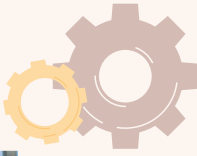
**Would You
Rather...**



Would you rather work with elderly people or children? Why?



Photo Sorts (Organizing and Categorizing)





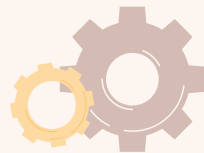
Sort these
foods by...

Count /
Non-Count

Like / Dislike

Healthy /
Unhealthy

I put these foods together because...



Skill 1

Students will be able to (SWBAT) Organize, analyze and illustrate relationships between components, items, and ideas

Sub Skills:

- ☐ a. Sequence components, items, or ideas in a logical or structured manner (e.g., alphabetical, chronological)
- ☐ b. Categorize items or ideas and articulate rationale (positive vs. negative, fact vs. opinion)
- ☐ c. Synthesize information, ideas, and components in a meaningful and structured way
- ☐ d. Support positions using prior knowledge and supporting evidence



25.



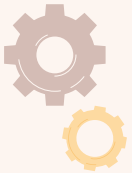
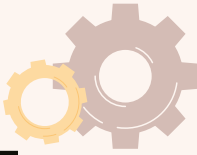
26.

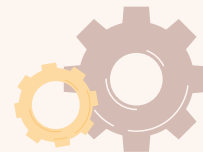


27.



What's Your Evidence?





Skill 1

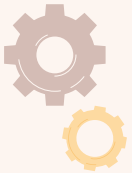
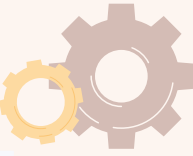
Students will be able to (SWBAT) Organize, analyze and illustrate relationships between components, items, and ideas

Sub Skills:

- ☐ a. Sequence components, items, or ideas in a logical or structured manner (e.g., alphabetical, chronological)
- ☐ b. Categorize items or ideas and articulate rationale (positive vs. negative, fact vs. opinion)
- ☐ c. Synthesize information, ideas, and components in a meaningful and structured way
- ☐ d. Support positions using prior knowledge and supporting evidence



Problem Scenario Pictures



Name: _____ Date: _____

Match the problem with a solution.



Why?

Because _____.

1.



It's only a little money.

2.



I don't have time.

3.



I don't know how.

4.



It's free.

5.



It's fast.

6.



It's easy.

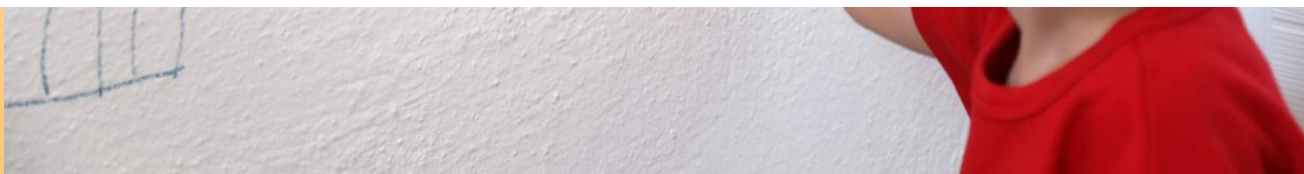


Skill 2

SWBAT... Solve problems

Sub Skills:

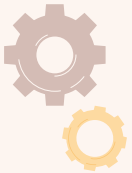
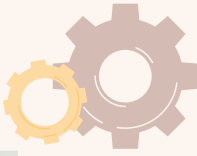
- ☐ a. Identify barriers to accomplishing a task or solving a problem
- ☐ b. Clearly articulate the component parts of a problem
- ☐ c. Identify information needed to solve a problem
- ☐ d. Identify and evaluate potential solutions and possible consequences of those solutions
- ☐ e. Identify, prioritize, and apply steps to solve problems



The problem is...

To fix it I would...

Fact vs. Opinion



Fact

January is very cold.

Skill 3

SWBAT... Use information to draw conclusions and make decisions

Fall starts in September.

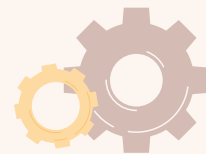
Opinion

May is the best month.

Sub Skills:

- ☐ a. Articulate criteria for decision making as it pertains to a specified goal or purpose
- ☐ b. Identify information needed to accomplish a task or meet a purpose
- ☐ c. Evaluate the quality and validity of information (news reports, gossip, online resources)
- ☐ d. Identify and evaluate options and consequences

Winter has too much snow.



Pre-TIF Lesson

1. Where's the post office?
On Between the library and the bank.
2. Where's the bakery?
Next to the school.
Across from
3. Where's the library?
Between On Green Street.
4. Where's the supermarket?



Pre A-C-E-S

Warm-up:

- Ss get their monthly calendar out of their folders.
- One ss volunteers to go to the board and write today's date, yesterday and tomorrow's day names and what the weather.
- Ss write board information in their notebooks.
- Class chorally repeats board information as volunteer ss leads.

Introduction:

Review place vocabulary (e.g. supermarket) and prepositions of place (e.g. next to).

- Teacher and ss go through worksheet with pictures of vocabulary and chorally repeat.
- T and ss review prepositions of place using classroom realia. T places two objects in relation to each other, and elicits from ss the correct preposition of place.

Controlled Practice:

- Ss read questions about map, and circle appropriate answer to fill in the blank.

Guided Practice:

- Ss work in pairs and use map to complete short cloze dialogues.
- Ss pairs read dialogues out loud after completing cloze.

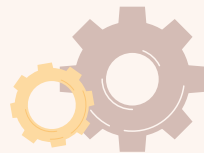
Independent:

- Ss use map and ask each other original "Where is the _____?" questions.

Extension: N/A

Assessment:

- T & volunteer circulate and monitor, checking that language is used and understood appropriately.



Post-TIF Lesson

Warm-up:

- Ss get their monthly calendar out of their folders.
- Teacher elicits answers to a series of questions about the calendar, regarding this specific month. E.g. "How many Mondays are in February?" "What was the day before yesterday?"
- Ss then receive written calendar questions and take on role of T, eliciting answers.
- Continue as time allows.

Introduction:

Review place vocabulary (e.g. supermarket) and prepositions of place (e.g. next to).

- Ss work in small groups & match photos of places with written words. T monitors.
- T directs ss to arrange photos differently using prepositions of place, e.g. "Put the supermarket next to the school."

Controlled Practice:

- Ss work in small groups (3-4), and receive envelopes containing a map template and several blocks labeled with place names.
- T instructs groups where to place the blocks on the map using prepositions of place.
- T then places the blocks on her own map, and ss check their work.

Guided Practice:

- Ss continue in small groups.
- T reads problem #1 from worksheet # and teams work together to accurately place blocks on the map. T repeats directions as necessary.
- Repeat with problem #2

Independent:

- Ss continue in small groups.
- Groups are given worksheet # and instructed to solve problem #3 as a group. Note: this time ss are reading and working independently, rather than having the problem read to them.

Extension:

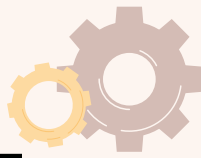
- Ss continue in small groups and create their own block configuration on the map.
- After they have made a configuration, groups write their own instructions using a cloze.
- Groups swap directions and complete a map according to the other group's instructions.
- Groups check each other's work.

Assessment:

- T & volunteer circulate and monitor, checking that language is used and understood appropriately.
- Evaluate group and individual ss performance of the objectives using the rubric.

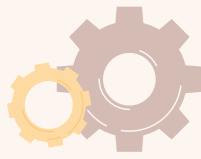


ATLAS Classroom Video: Critical Thinking Skills



1. What do you notice about the differences between the pre- and post-TIF lessons?
2. What interests you?
3. What do you want to learn more about?





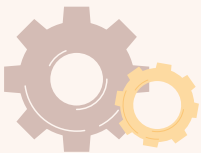
What other critical thinking activities do you already use in your teaching?

What do you want to try?



Self Management and Learning Strategies





Self-management refers to steps, strategies, and skills that individuals can use toward the achievement of goals. Some examples include organizing study materials, setting goals, and monitoring progress.

Teaching self-management will prepare learners to succeed in environments where there is little guidance, structure and monitoring.

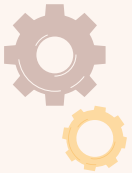
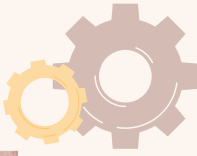




Concrete Suggestions



Goal Ladder



My Health Goals Ladder

Color each rung when you reach your goal for the week.

NAME _____

WEEK 4

I can talk to a doctor.

I have a ____.

My ____ hurts.

It started ____.

The pain is ____/10.

I also have ____.

Can you help me?

What should I do?

Do I need medicine?

Skill 1

Students will be able to (SWBAT) Set realistic goals and work independently to achieve them

Sub Skills:

- ☐ a. Identify steps to achieve a goal
- ☐ b. Identify potential obstacles
- ☐ c. Use strategies and resources to overcome obstacles
- ☐ d. Monitor progress in achieving one's goal and make adjustments as needed
- ☐ e. Persevere and stick with a task until completion
- ☐ f. Evaluate the quality of the outcome or product of a task

I can name parts of the body.

head

neck

shoulder

chest

arm

elbow

wrist

hand

back

stomach

hip

leg

knee

ankle

foot

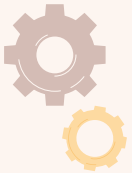
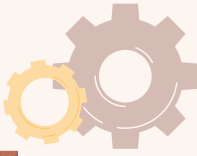
☐ Week 1 complete

☐ Week 2 complete

☒ Week 3 complete

☐ Week 4 complete

Calendar Math with a Purpose



APRIL 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Skill 3

SWBAT... Manage time effectively to complete tasks

Sub Skills:

- ☐ a. Identify time demands
- ☐ b. Utilize tools for time management (planner, calendar)
- ☐ c. Prioritize tasks using criteria (negotiable vs. non-negotiable, proximity of deadline, importance) to build efficiency and competence
- ☐ d. Estimate time needed to complete tasks
- ☐ e. Set deadlines
- ☐ f. Evaluate progress and adjust accordingly

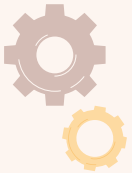
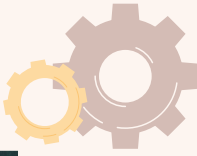
			Test			
--	--	--	------	--	--	--

www.GrabCalendar.com

How many days until the reading test?

April?

Circumlocution



Independent Practice: Role Play

Student Handout A

Look at the picture. Describe to your partner the item in the picture. Do not say the word or tell your partner what is in your picture. You want your

Student Handout C

Point to the item your partner is describing. You will not point to every picture.



Skill 3

SWBAT... Apply appropriate strategies to compensate for and fill in gaps in knowledge

Sub Skills:

- ☐ a. Ask for repetition and clarification of unknown language and concepts
- ☐ b. Compensate for unknown language using paraphrase or circumlocution (using other words to describe or work around an unknown word)
- ☐ c. Use context and what you know to figure out or guess meaning of language
- ☐ d. Identify appropriate resources and/or means to fill in gaps in knowledge (ask a teacher, consult a dictionary, online search)

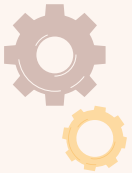
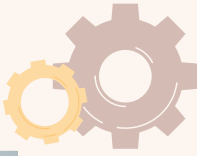
This is usually in...

It's a kind of...

This thing helps people to...



Learning Log Routine





Skill 4

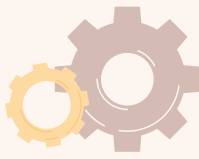
SWBAT... Articulate awareness of what helps one learn language and content

Sub Skills:

- ☐ a. Identify preferences for learning styles/modalities (learning through reading, writing, listening)
- ☐ b. Determine what types of activities help one learn best (cooperative learning, using digital tools, hands-on learning)
- ☐ c. Articulate one's strengths and areas for growth as a learner

One thing I remember is...

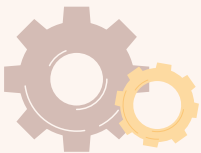
Tomorrow I want to practice...



What other self management activities do you already use in your teaching?

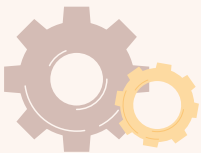
What do you want to try?





Effective Communication





Effective communication is a two-way process between individuals of diverse backgrounds and experience in which information is conveyed and received in ways that are mutually understood as intended. This can include speaking, writing, and all forms of nonverbal communication.

Teaching the skills in this category will help the learner give and receive information in a purposeful, appropriate, and collaborative manner.





Concrete Suggestions



Classroom Communication Routines



Buenos Dias

Nyob zoo

Chào buổi

Habari asubuhi

(Nyaw shong)

sáng

صباح الخير

Subah hulhiri

Good morning!

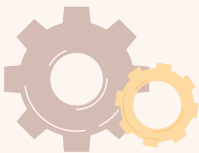
Bel kay jam

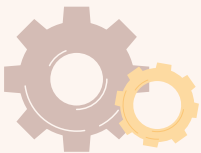
Bonjour

Subax wanaagsan

Akam bulton

Su bah hi





What is your
name?



et to

Skill 1

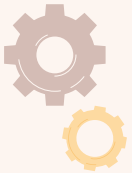
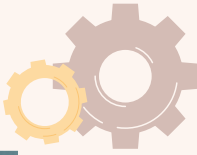
Students will be able to (SWBAT) Engage positively and actively with individuals in both one-on-one and team settings to accomplish goals

Sub Skills:

- ☐ a. Seek and offer clarification (clarifying questions, paraphrasing, restating) appropriately in spoken and written communications
- ☐ b. Repair communication breakdowns respectfully and effectively
- ☐ c. Acknowledge and affirm others (regardless of culture, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation) and their contributions
- ☐ d. Express expectations and acknowledge an understanding or acceptance of the expectations of others
- ☐ e. Participate, make contributions, and encourage the contributions of others in order to accomplish the shared goal of a team
- ☐ f. Employ effective strategies for resolving conflict



Body Language and Cultural Communication



Guided Practice: Reading about Greetings

Greetings

1. Juana has a new job.
2. She meets Ahmed at work.
3. "Hi, I am Juana."
4. "Hello, I am Ahmed."
5. "It's nice to meet you," Juana says.
6. Ahmed holds out his right hand.
7. Juana shakes his hand.
8. This is how co-workers greet each other.
9. Mee and Pang are sisters.
10. Mee gives Pang a big hug.
11. This is how family and friends greet each other.



handshake



hug

Independent Practice: Reading Comprehension

Part 1: Graphic Organizer

Fill in the chart.

Names	<u>Who are they?</u>	<u>What gesture do they use?</u>
	• co-workers • sisters	• hug • handshake
Juana and Ahmed		
Mee and Pang		







Skill 2

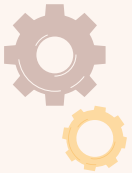
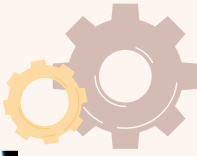
SWBAT... Use language style, level of formality, and nonverbal cues, appropriate to context and task, in oral and written communication

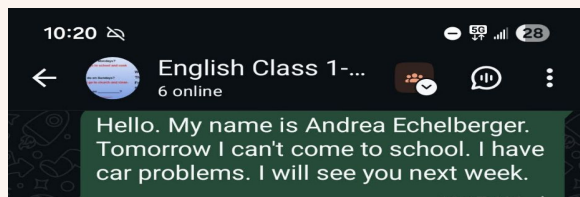
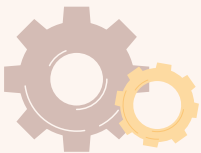
Sub Skills:

- ☐ a. Recognize meaning of gestures and body language (e.g., eye contact, personal space) in a particular context and use appropriately
- ☐ b. Choose appropriate register (level of formality) for audience, purpose, and communication type (person-to-person, text messaging, email, formal letter, phone calls)
- ☐ c. Use appropriate intonation (e.g., polite tone, appropriate rise and fall of vocal pitch)



Practice Messages





Skill 3

SWBAT... Utilize a variety of technologies for communication

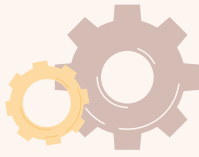
Sub Skills:

- ☐ a. Evaluate and use appropriate technology tools for clear and meaningful interactions to suit purpose and audience (e-mail, texting, online meeting platforms, social media, cell phone)
- ☐ b. Employ protocols (register, tone, etc.) appropriate to audience and purpose when using technology tools (email, text, social media)
- ☐ c. Discern and follow appropriate use of technology tools given the social norms of a particular setting (turning phone off, not texting in meetings, not playing computer games at work)

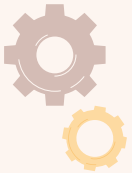
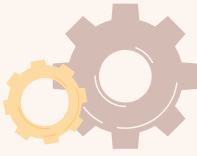


What other effective communication activities do you already use in your teaching?

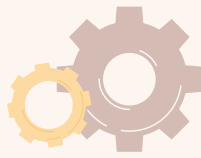
What do you want to try?



**What is one key
takeaway from this
session?**



Additional Resources



<https://atlasabe.org/resources/aces/>



ACES	
ACES Foundations	
TIF Overview & Categories	—
Transitions Integration Framework (TIF)	
Critical Thinking	
Developing Future Pathway	
Effective Communication	
Learning Strategies	
Navigating Systems	
Self-Management	
Other ACES Resources	+



Thank you! Want to learn more?

<https://www.commongroundliteracy.org/>

