

Classroom Guide to Transferable Skills

CLASSROOM GUIDE TO TRANSFERABLE SKILLS



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INTRODUCTION

This Open Education Resource is a handbook for elementary educators (grades 1-8) wishing to learn how to incorporate transferable skills throughout their classes. While intended for an elementary teacher audience, teacher candidates, classroom teachers, education faculty, instructors, support personnel, and administrators can all benefit from the background information and practical suggestions provided in each of the chapters.

The handbook is intended to provide foundational knowledge, teaching strategies, assessment suggestions, and additional resources in response to the elementary Ontario curriculum documents. In particular, note that the Ontario Language curriculum (2023) for grades 1-8 and English grade 9 (2023) requires teachers to integrate the transferable skills into their planning and assessment.

The handbook is not a prescribed lesson-by-lesson program, but rather a framework for addressing the transferable skills underlying effective learning throughout the curriculum. Examples are used to demonstrate how to plan, teach, and assess, underpinned by Ontario Ministry of Education policy. Educators are encouraged to tailor the content to best meet the varied needs of students in their classrooms.

The handbook contains:

- Front Matter
 - What does the curriculum say?
 - A note about assessment
- Main Body – The 7 Transferable Skills
 - Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
 - Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship
 - Self-directed Learning
 - Collaboration
 - Communication
 - Global Citizenship and Sustainability
 - Digital Literacy
- Case studies: Application

Each transferable skill chapter is organized under the following headings:

- What is the definition?
- What does it look like?
- How do I teach this?

- How do I assess this?
- Ask yourself...
- Online resources

Learning for transfer means students can take knowledge and skills learned in one situation and apply them to new and unfamiliar contexts. These skills are developed across all subjects and grades rather than being taught separately. As such, transferable skills prepare students to succeed in a rapidly changing world shaped by technology, automation, globalization, and evolving careers, helping students adapt to new jobs, changing circumstances, and lifelong learning ([Ministry of Education](#)).

This handbook aims to help teachers support this development through varied instructional approaches, authentic learning experiences, and assessment practices within safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environments.

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WHAT DOES THE CURRICULUM SAY?

The transferable skills are outlined in Strand A of the Ontario Language curriculum (2023). Note that Strand A is intended to be taught and assessed in relation to learning in the other strands.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=313#b5p-1>

Source: Ontario Language Curriculum: Grades 1-8 (2023)

Overall expectation A1 of the Ontario Language Curriculum (2023) outlines the required learning for the transferable skills. This [video](#) helps clarify what the expectations say in regards to student learning.

Each slide from the video is also provided below for easier reference.



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A NOTE ABOUT ASSESSMENT



[*Growing Success*](#) (Ontario, 2010) is the Ministry of Education’s policy document for Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting. Given that the primary purpose for Assessment is to improve student learning (page 6), here we will revisit the importance of setting and sharing learning goals and success criteria. *Growing Success* (page 33) states:

DEVELOPING LEARNING GOALS

Assessment for learning and as learning requires that students and teachers share a common understanding of what is being learned. Learning goals clearly identify what students are expected to know and be able to do, in language that students can readily understand. Teachers develop learning goals based on the curriculum expectations and share them with students at or near the beginning of a cycle of learning. Teachers and students come to a common understanding of the learning goals through discussion and clarification during instruction.

IDENTIFYING SUCCESS CRITERIA

Assessment for learning and assessment as learning also require that students and teachers share a common understanding of what constitutes success in learning. Success criteria describe in specific terms what successful attainment of the learning goals looks like. When planning assessment and instruction, teachers, guided by the achievement chart for the particular subject or discipline (see Chapter 3), identify the criteria they will use to assess students’ learning, as well as what evidence of learning students will provide to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. The success criteria are used to develop an assessment tool, such as a checklist, a rubric, or an exit card (i.e., a student’s self-assessment of learning).

Teachers can ensure that students understand the success criteria by using clear language that is meaningful to the students and by directly involving them in identifying, clarifying, and applying those criteria in their learning. Examining samples of student work with their teachers helps students understand what constitutes success and provides a basis for informed co-construction of the success criteria. The success criteria should be open to review and revision, guided by the teacher's professional judgement, as students progress towards achievement of the learning goals. Teachers can enhance their understanding of success criteria and build common knowledge about levels of achievement through teacher moderation – that is, through assessment of student work done collaboratively with fellow teachers.

The following slides provide a refresher and an example of how to create effective learning goals and success criteria. A video follows that will elaborate on the slides.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=308#video-308-1>

Many assessment tools can be created to help support teacher assessment and student learning. One such tool is called a single point rubric. The following video outlines the usefulness of developing and using a single point rubric for effective assessment practices. (video created using Notebook LM). The sample Single Point Rubric referenced in the video is included below.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=308#video-308-2>

Sample:

Not quite yet... (evidence of not quite meeting the criteria)	Success Criteria (given to students, or co-constructed with students)	For sure! (evidence of going beyond the success criteria)
	I can take turns and listen to what my group members say. I can take turns and share my ideas with my group. I can tell the class our group ideas when asked to do so.	
Next steps in learning:		

Overall Expectation B1. Oral and Non-Verbal Communication:
apply listening, speaking, and non-verbal communication skills and strategies to understand and communicate meaning in formal and informal contexts and for various purposes and audiences (Language Curriculum, 2023)

For real-life examples in the classroom of how to establish routines that help students take ownership of their learning, view this video:



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=308#oembed-1>

Media Attributions

- cover Growing Success
- single point rubric sample

1.

CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

What is the definition?

Critical thinking and problem solving involve locating, processing, analysing, and interpreting relevant and reliable information to address complex issues and problems, make informed judgements and decisions, and take effective action. With critical thinking skills comes an awareness that solving problems can have a positive impact in the world, and this contributes to achieving one's potential as a constructive and reflective citizen. Learning is deepened when it occurs in the context of authentic and meaningful real-world experiences.

(Source: Ministry of Education [link](#))

What does it look like?

Student Descriptors:

- Students engage in inquiry processes that include locating, processing, interpreting, synthesizing, and critically analysing information in order to solve problems and make informed decisions. These processes involve critical, digital, and data literacy.
- Students solve meaningful and complex real-life problems by taking concrete steps – identifying and analysing the problem, creating a plan, prioritizing actions to be taken, and acting on the plan – as they address issues and design and manage projects.
- Students detect patterns, make connections, and transfer or apply what they have learned in a given situation to other situations, including real-world situations.
- Students construct knowledge and apply what they learn to all areas of their lives – at school, home, and work; among friends; and in the community – with a focus on making connections and understanding relationships.
- Students analyse social, economic, and ecological systems to understand how they function and how

they interrelate.

(Source: Ministry of Education [link](#))

How do I teach this?

Critical thinking includes skills such as questioning, predicting, analysing, synthesizing, examining opinions, identifying values and issues, detecting bias, and distinguishing between alternatives. Students who are taught these skills become critical thinkers who can move beyond superficial conclusions to a deeper understanding of the issues they are examining. They are able to engage in an inquiry process in which they explore complex and multifaceted issues, and questions for which there may be no clear-cut answers.

Students use critical-thinking skills when they assess, analyse, and/or evaluate the impact of something and when they form an opinion and support that opinion with a rationale. In order to think critically, students need to ask themselves effective questions to interpret information; detect bias in their sources; determine why a source might express a particular bias; examine the opinions, perspectives, and values of various groups and individuals; look for implied meaning; and use the information gathered to form a personal opinion or stance, or a personal plan of action with regard to making a difference.

Students approach critical thinking in various ways. Some students find it helpful to discuss their thinking, asking questions and exploring ideas. Other students may take time to observe a situation or consider a text carefully before commenting; they may prefer not to ask questions or express their thoughts orally while they are thinking.

(Ministry of Education [link](#)).

This example demonstrates one way to approach lesson planning, using critical thinking and problem solving. In the course of this project, grade 4 students will identify an underutilized area of their school or schoolyard and create a presentation about one way to redesign it. To do so, they will:

- identify the issue with specificity
- brainstorm related information, including possible causes and/or solutions
- create categories and classify items appropriately
- identify and use relevant information to propose a solution
- create a presentation to pitch their proposal

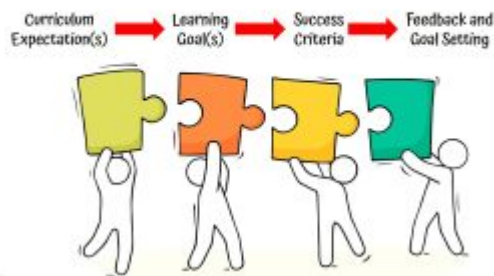


(adapted from <https://parentingscience.com/teaching-critical-thinking/> and <https://www.edutopia.org/article/teaching-critical-thinking-middle-high-school/>)

How do I assess this?

For a refresher about how to use Learning Goals and Success Criteria to support learning, review [A Note about Assessment](#) in the Front Matter.

Creating Learning Goals and Success Criteria



A suggested Learning Goal for this project could be:

- We are learning to use our critical thinking and problem solving skills in order to propose a new use of an underutilized space in the school or schoolyard.

Below are some options for assessing the redesign of the schoolyard project.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=5#video-5-1>

The slides used in the video also appear here for further reference and reflection:



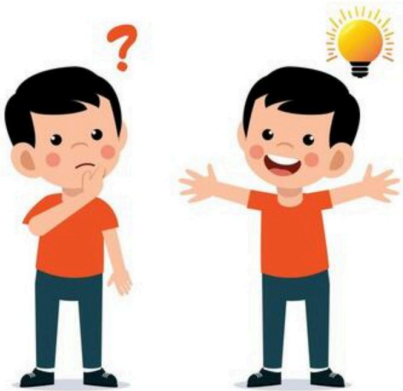
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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=5#h5p-3>

Ask yourself:

- What alternative expectations can I see being used?
- Are there cross-curricular expectations that can be integrated with this task?
- Which expectations make sense to assess as students complete the task?
- Which expectations make sense to assess after the final completion of the task?
- Do I need to evaluate all of the expectations in the final product? Can some of them be self-assessed by the students?

Online Resources:



1. [Think Academy](#) provides a variety of excellent resources. The ideas can be used for a range of learners, and can help you plan explicit lessons to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
2. This [article](#) from Edutopia maps out a plan for developing students' critical thinking skills.
3. Media Smarts is an excellent Canadian resource to help teachers plan lessons around developing critical thinking skills. Here's one example, called [Break the Fake](#), that helps students identify what is real and what is fake online.

Media Attributions

- students planning one in wheelchair
- slide 1

2.

INNOVATION, CREATIVITY, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Innovation, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship

What is the definition?

Innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship support the ability to turn ideas into action in order to meet the needs of a community. These skills include the capacity to develop concepts, ideas, or products for the purpose of contributing innovative solutions to economic, social, and environmental problems.

Developing these skills involves a willingness to assume leadership roles, take risks, and engage in independent, unconventional thinking in the context of experimenting, conducting research, and exploring new strategies, techniques, and perspectives.

An entrepreneurial mindset understands the importance of building and scaling ideas for sustainable growth.

(Source: Ministry of Education [link](#))

What does it look like?

Student Descriptors:

- Students formulate and express insightful questions and opinions to generate novel ideas.
- Students contribute solutions to economic, social, and environmental problems in order to meet a need in a community by: enhancing concepts, ideas, or products through a creative process; taking risks in their creative thinking as they devise solutions; making discoveries through inquiry research, by testing hypotheses and experimenting with new strategies or techniques.
- Students demonstrate leadership, initiative, imagination, creativity, spontaneity, and ingenuity as they engage in a range of creative processes, motivating others with their ethical entrepreneurial spirit.

(Source: Ministry of Education [link](#))

How do I teach this?

One approach to consider using is called Design Thinking. Design Thinking is a problem-solving process that involves five key steps: empathize, define, ideate, prototype, and test.

This video outlines the process in more detail, using a specific example for elementary students.



<https://youtu.be/yvoArEPskDQ>

(Video created using Notebook LM and this source: <https://edtech-class.com/2021/06/16/design-thinking-in-the-elementary-school-classroom/>)

Referring to the Student Descriptors from the beginning of this page, consider in what ways the students in the Design Thinking task demonstrated Innovation, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=24#b5p-4>

Another approach is the Makerspace: a collaborative workspace for making, learning, exploring and sharing tools. Niagara teacher Nicole Netherway provides examples from her experience in [ETFO Voice](#) (2023), expressing the impact using this approach has had on her to “reignite [her] passion for authentic learning and to develop a real approach to differentiated instruction.” She articulates her rationale for this approach as follows:

Michael Fullan, an expert in educational reform, posits that if we want students to come out of school as adaptive and creative thinkers, we need to provide opportunities to foster those skills all through their schooling experiences. The makerspace is the perfect environment for this to happen. By making mistakes with building or creating, students learn what works and what does not. Making mistakes becomes

normalized when every student experiences setbacks and develops the courage to persevere and correct them. Mistakes are what give students pause to rethink an approach and to develop innovation to work towards a new solution. It is precisely when students are encouraged to be creative, without limits, and are provided with logical and tangible steps to guide their idea-development process that they become thoroughly engaged and produce tangible results.



For an example of how teachers in York Region are discovering STEM Makerspace opportunities, view this [video](#). If you are interested in more information, you can consult within multiple school boards and community libraries in Ontario, including Brock University library, as many have access to Makerspace and STEM resources.

How do I assess this?

Here is the Achievement Chart for grades 1-8 for Language (Ontario, 2023).

[Achievement_Chart_1-8_Language](#)

Considering each of the four categories, how might the assessment of the Design Thinking project be managed? Here are some suggestions.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=24#b5p-7>

Ask yourself:

- How might cross-curricular expectations be integrated with this project?
- If this project were completed in a grade 4-6 classroom, how might I use the categories of the Achievement Chart to assess this project? For example, examine the A1.1 specific expectations below. What tasks might need to be tweaked, added, or changed for effective alignment?
- When planning a Makerspace lesson, how might I balance using observations, conversations, and the

final product in my assessments?

Grades 4–6
A1.1 explain how transferable skills can be used to support communication in various cultural, social, linguistic, and domain-specific contexts, and apply them when reading, listening to, viewing, and creating texts of various forms
A1.2 evaluate and explain how transferable skills help them express their voice, be engaged in their learning, and plan the next steps to develop their capabilities and potential

You can refer back to the Front Matter section for a refresher on [what the verbs in the curriculum expectations mean](#).

Online Resources:

1. This [video](#) provides a child-centred example of Innovation, Creativity and Entrepreneurship at the elementary level.



2. TVOlearn has many resources for teachers, including lesson plans, like this one. It's for a [Grade 6 Language lesson](#) on Creativity and Innovation.

3. "What's going on in this picture?" is a regular [New York Times feature](#) that provides evocative image prompts teachers and students can use for creative text creation and ideation.

4. This [article](#) from Education World outlines 10 Strategies to Create a Culture of Innovation in Your Classroom.

5. For researched practice that provides direct classroom experience, this [article](#) describes a day-long makerspace fieldtrip offered by Brock University for students in grades 2 and 3. The authors report on what the teachers learned from the experience and how they transferred these principles to their classrooms.

Media Attributions

- video screenshot
- makerspace screenshot
- 4-6 A1.1 A1.2 screenshot

3.

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

Self-directed Learning

What is the definition?

Self-directed learning involves becoming aware of and managing one's own process of learning. It includes developing dispositions that support motivation, self-regulation, perseverance, adaptability, and resilience. It also calls for a growth mindset – a belief in one's ability to learn – combined with the use of strategies for planning, reflecting on, and monitoring progress towards one's goals, and reviewing potential next steps, strategies, and results. Self-reflection and thinking about thinking (metacognition) support lifelong learning, adaptive capacity, well-being, and the ability to transfer learning in an everchanging world.

(Source: Ministry of Education [link](#))

What does it look like?

Student Descriptors:

- Students learn to think about their own thinking and learning (metacognition) and to believe in their ability to learn and grow (growth mindset). They develop their ability to set goals, stay motivated, and work independently.
- Students who regulate their own learning are better prepared to become lifelong learners. They reflect on their thinking, experiences, and values, and respond to critical feedback, to enhance their learning. They also monitor the progress of their learning.
- Students develop a sense of identity in the context of Canada's various and diverse communities.
- Students cultivate emotional intelligence to better understand themselves and others and build healthy relationships.
- Students learn to take the past into account in order to understand the present and approach the future in a more informed way.
- Students develop personal, educational, and career goals and persevere to overcome challenges in order to reach those goals. They learn to adapt to change and become resilient in the face of adversity.

- Students become managers of the various aspects of their lives – cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual – to enhance their mental health and overall well-being.

(Source: Ministry of Education [link](#))

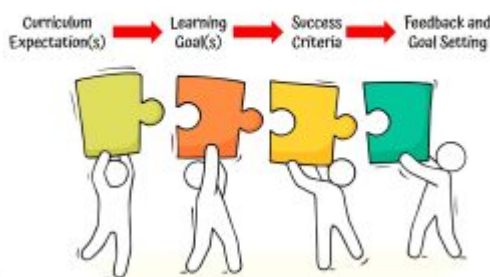
How do I teach this?

As teachers, we provide opportunities for students to build their self-directed learning skills in multiple ways everyday, by:

- creating, communicating, and enforcing classroom routines during the day;
- having students check their understanding during explicit teaching lessons;
- constructing opportunities for working collaboratively with their peers;
- engaging in small-group and/or 1:1 teacher conferences;
- checking in at the end of the day to consolidate learning and organize their thinking in preparation for the next day.

What these opportunities have in common is establishing clearly understood criteria – for routines and for learning – and then developing their “reflective muscle” wherein they can self-assess how they did. A follow-up is to have students establish a next step that will support their growth. Use of effective Learning Goals and Success Criteria that are shared and posted for students to see facilitates an embedded routine of reflective process in the classroom.

Creating Learning Goals and Success Criteria



For a refresher about how to use Learning Goals and Success Criteria to support learning, review [A Note about Assessment](#) in the Front Matter of this book.

In the Language classroom, one method for developing a self-directed learning skillset is to engage in a Writer’s Workshop. Note that, while this example focuses on writing, this approach can be used with a variety of text creations, including graphic, oral, digital, and media texts.

[Literacy Today](#) outlines the benefits of a Writer’s Workshop in the following way:

Writer's Workshop Model

- **Flexible approach:** Teachers can work with the whole class, small groups, or individual students. Students progress through the writing process at their own pace, with differentiated mini-lessons and technology used to support learning.
- **Student choice:** Students have ownership of their writing by choosing their topic, genre, style, audience, and purpose.
- **High engagement:** Writing is based on students' interests, increasing motivation, confidence, and opportunities to share their work with others.
- **Respect for all learners:** Every student participates in authentic writing experiences. Struggling writers practice skills in meaningful contexts and create finished pieces they can be proud of.
- **Focus on continuous growth:** Students work at their individual readiness levels, reducing frustration while receiving support to improve as writers.
- **Shared responsibility for learning:** Students actively contribute by:
 - helping develop writing criteria;
 - discussing authors' writing techniques;
 - keeping writer's journals;
 - reflecting on their writing and setting goals; and
 - maintaining portfolios to document their progress over time.

(paraphrased from source: <https://www.literacytoday.ca/home/differentiation/effective-teaching-strategies/differentiation-and-writers-workshop>)

Working individually, with peers, and in teacher-led conferences, students develop a portfolio of their writing that demonstrates their growth as a writer over time. The portfolio contains texts that are at all stages of the writing process: brainstorming, drafting, creating, revising, editing, polishing, and publishing.

For example, this video shows how two teachers approach the Writer's Workshop in their classrooms, including how their classroom environment supports their lesson intent.



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=26#oembed-1>

Thinking Classroom Example – Mathematics

A Thinking Classroom approach is intentionally designed to have students embrace mistakes, and learn to see them as opportunities for learning, in order to make meaningful connections. It puts the responsibility for the

“heavy thinking” on the students, and puts the teacher in the role of observing and listening to the conversations that are occurring as students work through a variety of tasks, problems, and inquiries. In one example, using the Building Thinking Classrooms framework (Liljedahl, 2020), the teacher provides a problem or task, and students are assigned to random groups, encouraging them to collaborate with different peers, share multiple solution strategies, learn from mistakes, and develop resilience through productive struggle. Doing so reinforces the understanding that mathematics is creative, connected to the real world, and learned through persistence, reflection, and collaboration.

For those interested in the research, the [executive summary](#) of Liljedahl (2020), provides a synopsis of the approach, as does this [video](#) of a roundtable discussion (2026) wherein Liljedahl explores how to build student independence in math classes. This [Pass the Marker video](#) also demonstrates how one teacher adds in a strategy to ensure all students are participating in the collaborative groups.

Ask yourself:

How might these approaches work in other subject areas? For example:

- can you use a math journal with students, wherein they can keep track of, and reflect on, their thinking and problem-solving approaches?
- could a science portfolio be kept, curating student labs that demonstrate growth in their scientific inquiry processes?
- how might a Thinking Classroom approach be considered in science? in social science and technology? in language?
- what might an art or music portfolio look like that showcases the creative process and reflective development of their skills?
- what roles can observations, conversations, and products play in assessment while developing students’ self-directed learning skills?

How do I assess this?

[Growing Success](#) (Ontario’s Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting policy document) provides the following rationale and purpose for student self-assessment and goal setting:

As a result of developing self-assessment skills, students learn to identify specific actions they need to take to improve, and to plan next steps – that is, to define their long- and short-term individual goals with increasing clarity and realism. Teachers begin by modelling the setting of individual learning goals for students. They also provide follow-up support, give specific feedback on learning goals, and help students identify and record focused actions they can take to achieve their goals and procedures they can use to monitor their own progress.

In order to improve student learning and help students become independent learners, teachers need to make a committed effort to teach these skills and provide all students in all grades with opportunities to practise them. Teachers need to scaffold this learning for students, using a model of gradual release of responsibility for learning, as follows:

- demonstrate the skills during instruction;
- move to guided instruction and support;
- have students share in the responsibility for assessing their own work;
- gradually provide opportunities for students to assess their own learning independently.

The ultimate goal of the process is to move each student from guided practice to independent practice, based on the student's readiness.

(Growing Success, page 4)

Both the Writer's Workshop and the Thinking Classroom approaches lend themselves well to developing a student's self-directed learning skill set.

This video demonstrates a sample process for conducting writing conferences that helps students develop their reflective skills and encourages making goals for next steps.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=26#oembed-2>

This [blog](#) and video provide hands-on strategies for capturing observational assessment data, curated and explained by teacher and consultant Lana Steiner from Saskatchewan.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=26#oembed-3>

Online Resources:

1. This video helps students understand what a growth mindset is, and how they can try to reframe their thinking to believe they can do all sorts of things successfully.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=26#oembed-4>

2. This [blog](#), written by a grade 4-5 Language teacher, shows in detail her process for the logistics of writing portfolios for her students. It includes templates and suggestions for how to get started. The comment section in her blog is also valuable as it contains commonly asked questions, and the rationale for her work.

3. In this [blog and podcast](#), John Spencer provides details on building routines for student conferencing to help students build their self-assessment and reflection skills. This resource shows the “why” and the “how” of supporting the development of students’ self-directed learning.



4. John Spencer also provides multiple resources on building student agency in a gradual release model, including this [blog](#) and video.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=26#oembed-5>

5. In this [article](#), author Bexaida Buzzie outlines an approach to igniting students’ curiosity from the very first week of school, with an aim to building a foundation for scientific thinking.

Media Attributions

- slide 1
- john spencer screenshot student conferencing

4.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration

What is the definition?

Collaboration involves the interplay of the cognitive (thinking and reasoning), interpersonal, and intrapersonal competencies needed to work with others effectively and ethically. These skills deepen as they are applied, with increasing versatility, to co-construct knowledge, meaning, and content with others in diverse situations, both physical and virtual, that involve a variety of roles, groups, and perspectives.

(Source: Ministry of Education [link](#))

What does it look like?

Student Descriptors:

- Students participate successfully in teams by building positive and respectful relationships, developing trust, and acting cooperatively and with integrity.
- Students learn from others and contribute to their learning as they co-construct knowledge, meaning, and content.
- Students assume various roles on the team, respect a diversity of perspectives, and recognize different sources of knowledge, including Indigenous ways of knowing.
- Students address disagreements and manage conflict in a sensitive and constructive manner.
- Students interact with a variety of communities and/or groups and use various technologies appropriately to facilitate working with others.

(Source: Ministry of Education [link](#))

How do I teach this?

Collaboration, like every skill, needs to be taught explicitly. Teaching strategies can include things like:

- developing an anchor chart (with students or for students) that shows what collaboration Looks like, Sounds like, Feels like;
- providing and practising sentence stems and questions, such as: “I like your idea, and we could also...”; “Can you explain what you mean by...?”; “Did we meet these criteria for the task...”;
- keeping groups small, and enforcing interdependence with tasks that are more difficult to complete alone (like card-sorting or multi-step puzzles or challenges);
- allowing for and enforcing time after each collaboration to refer back to the criteria – for collaborative skills as much as for the task – to reflect on what went well, what the students could work on, and setting a specific goal for next time; and
- ending sessions with instructions to thank others for sharing their ideas and for working together.

A variety of graphic organizers and protocols can be selected and used to support interdependent work, such as the ones provided on this [site](#). Below is a sampling of commonly used models.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=28#b5p-9>

Organizers that support collaboration can be multi-modal. That is, they can be completed orally, with written text, with images or graphics, completed by hand, or completed digitally. For example, this [video](#) demonstrates an elementary teacher using a well-embedded practice of Think-Pair-Share in her classroom, where students turn and talk.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=28#oembed-1>

Note how the graphic organizers could be used to help students understand what collaboration is and what it is not, and that multiple organizers can be used to support student thinking and collaboration. Often, teachers select an organizer to use with students. It can be helpful to use a variety early in the school year, so that

students can start to select the one they think works best for them, for the thinking tasks assigned, as the year progresses.

When planning for a collaborative lesson, it is important to understand different types and purposes for doing so.

For example, collaboration can be understood as *Cooperative Learning*, in a structured teamwork framework, where students team up in small groups to tackle specific projects and goals. Teacher-planning for this approach is essential. The teacher prepares the task, the resources, and assigns specific roles – think of roles such as timer, notetaker, task reader – to each member of the group to ensure everyone has a role to play. The focus of this approach is to build communication skills while working together in their assigned roles to complete the task. It's important to note that students need practice in different roles so they can individually build the scope of their teamwork skills. Cooperative learning concentrates on accountability and responsibility for task completion, while also demonstrating that everyone's contribution matters.

A different framework for collaboration is *Collaborative Learning*. Whereas cooperative learning is much more structured by the teacher, the goal of collaborative learning is to build knowledge collectively, freely sharing ideas and learning from each other's perspectives. As such, teachers plan more open-ended exploration, such as providing a central inquiry question and inviting students to share ideas together, using evidence from their experiences. One example might be a group discussion about a book they are reading, wherein each student shares their interpretations, building on their classmates' thoughts and deepening their understanding of the text.

(adapted from source: <https://studenttreasures.com/blog/teaching-strategies/collaborative-learning-strategies-elementary-group-projects/>)

How do I assess this?

A natural focus for collaboration is to assess the process of the task completion, equally or – where warranted – more so than the final product of the task. Consider the purpose of your lesson when determining the balance between assessing the process and the product of the collaboration. Students and teachers can be partners in this type of assessment, as they reflect on the collaborative skills they practiced and observed in others and in themselves. They can use the class anchor chart to do so.

Developing and using single point rubrics is one method for facilitating this type of assessment. A single point rubric is prepared by the teacher and provides a specific focus for the task. It can be completed by students, with peers, or by the teacher as a student or a class profile of what the teacher is observing. Note that an opportunity for reflection is embedded in the tool, as the “Next steps in learning.”

Not quite yet... (evidence of not quite meeting the criteria)	Success Criteria (given to students, or co-constructed with students)	For sure! (evidence of going beyond the success criteria)
	I can take turns and listen to what my group members say. I can take turns and share my ideas with my group. I can tell the class our group ideas when asked to do so.	
Next steps in learning:		

For more details about how an assessment tool, like the single point rubric, can support student learning, review the section in the Front Matter of this book, entitled: [*A Note about Assessment*](#).

Ask yourself:

- What do I want students to know and be able to do? What is my intention for using collaboration?
- What balance of assessing the process and product makes sense for their collaborative efforts? Where in the lesson might observations and conversations be assessed and tracked?
- What is my student assessment data telling me about what my students need to continue to improve in their collaborative skills?

Online Resources:



1. This [podcast and blog](#), entitled *Making Cooperative Learning Work Better*, provides an excellent overview of research-informed practices for teaching collaboration.
2. This video encourages teachers to start teaching and using collaboration early in a child's education.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=28#oembed-2>

3. This video shows two elementary teachers working with their students to teach meaningful collaboration in the classroom.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=28#oembed-3>

4. This [paper](#) delivers research that informs collaborative learning in the classroom.
5. This brief video emphasizes modeling empathy in order to build empathy with your students.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=28#oembed-4>

Media Attributions

- single point rubric example
- making collaboration work better screenshot

5.

COMMUNICATION

Communication

What is the definition?

Communication involves receiving and expressing meaning (e.g., through reading and writing, viewing and creating, listening and speaking) in different contexts and with different audiences and purposes. Effective communication increasingly involves understanding local and global perspectives and societal and cultural contexts, and using a variety of media appropriately, responsibly, safely, and with a view to creating a positive digital footprint.

(Source: Ministry of Education [link](#))

What does it look like?

Student Descriptors:

- Students communicate effectively in different contexts, orally and in writing, using a variety of media.
- Students communicate using the appropriate digital tools, taking care to create a positive digital footprint.
- Students ask effective questions to acquire knowledge; listen to all points of view and ensure that those views are heard; voice their own opinions; and advocate for ideas.
- Students learn about a variety of languages, including Indigenous languages, and understand the cultural importance of language.

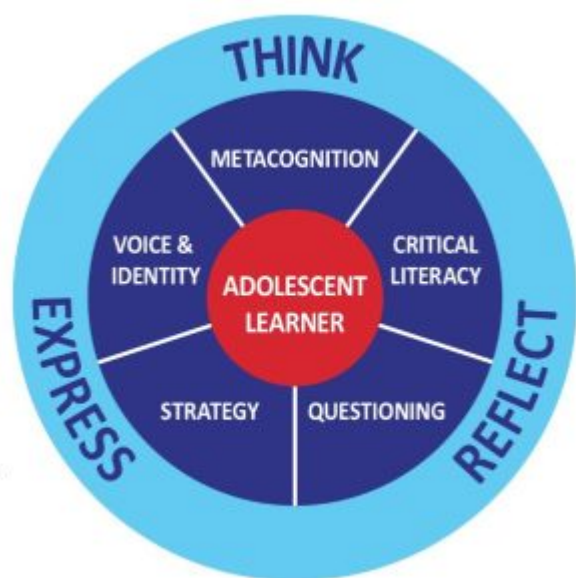
(Source: Ministry of Education [link](#))

How do I teach this?

Communication happens so naturally in a classroom that it can be a challenge to think about how to teach this

transferable skill purposefully and explicitly. Luckily, the development of communication skills underpins the expectations in the Language (2023) curriculum; and the intention of the curriculum is that teachers will integrate teaching and assessing communication in multiple subject areas. By following the curriculum, teachers will be planning lessons to support communication. As such, it's important to remember that communication occurs through written text, visuals, digital interaction, and of course orally and auditorily.

One way to approach teaching communication is to use this paradigm:



(Source: [Adolescent Literacy Guide](#))

Centering lesson planning around Thinking, Expressing and Reflecting encompasses communication skill development, in a way that fits authentically to multiple curriculum documents, including [Language](#) (Ontario, 2023). It encourages teachers to think about both expressive and receptive language – that is, the ways in which we express and receive information when we communicate. Keeping reflection as a part of our paradigm for planning reminds us to create embedded, consistent opportunities for students to self-assess their skill development, and map out next steps in their learning.

How do I assess this?

When teachers learn from their assessments that a specific skill within communication needs attention, they can teach that skill explicitly. Here are some examples, using the Student Indicators outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Each example provides a specific need that might surface from student assessment, and suggests an approach to respond to that need.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=30#oembed-1>

The examples above can also be reviewed in the following slides.



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=30#h5p-13>

Ask yourself:

- Do I provide a variety of opportunities for my students to practice and build upon their oral skills? writing skills? text creation?
- When my student assessment data shows me what my students need to develop their communication skills, can I accurately identify what the need is? Do I know how to respond to teach the skill explicitly?
- Do I provide a variety of opportunities for my students to communicate using a variety of text creations (oral, written, visual, digital, graphic, mathematical) in a variety of formats (individually, with peers, whole class)? Do I provide these opportunities based on the learner profiles of my students?
- What opportunities exist in my school and community (and beyond) for my students to create and communicate for a wider audience?
- What barriers exist for me to employ a variety of communication strategies for my students? How might I problem-solve to surmount these barriers? Who are my contacts to help me do so?

Online Resources:

Improving Students' Oral Reading Fluency in Middle School

Teachers in all content areas can create opportunities for fluency practice to help get students reading fluidly and expressively.

By Tara Brady

June 9, 2025



1. Oral skills can be purposefully taught and practiced, like all skills. This [article](#) from Edutopia provides practical ways to embed opportunities to build your students' oral fluency in multiple, integrated subjects. It uses middle school intermediate grades in its exposition.
2. Another way to embed oral skill development is through small group instruction in your classroom. This video below provides an example in an elementary classroom.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=30#oembed-2>

3. This [article](#) from Edutopia provides practical strategies and tools for teaching students how to ask questions appropriate to the information they are seeking. The goal would be to provide the question stems and the purpose they serve and start by modeling questioning. An effective time to do so would be in a read-aloud or shared reading. In an “I do, we do, you do” kind of model, release the responsibility to the students to create appropriate questions.

4. One tool to use with students to develop their question-building skills is a question matrix. Part of the use of this tool is to have students understand which type of question is appropriate to the information they are seeking. There are a variety of examples available with an internet search. This video shows real examples and how they can be used, for you to develop questions, and for students to develop questions. The goal is to release the responsibility to the students for creating the questions, and to reflect on their understanding of question types and purposes.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=30#oembed-3>

5. This article, entitled [*Teaching Students That Disagreement Doesn't Have to Mean Disrespect*](#), examines how to build a classroom culture for students to express their ideas and listen to their peers constructively.

6. This [article](#) provides practical approaches for honouring diversity in the classroom, thereby understanding the importance of different languages and cultures.



7. When many students hesitate to speak up, teachers can inspire thoughtful, vibrant discussion with these classroom-tested strategies, outlined in this [video and blog](#) entitled *5 ways to elevate classroom discussions*.

Media Attributions

- think express reflect icon
- oral fluency screenshot
- cultural diversity in the classroom screenshot

6.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

Global Citizenship and Sustainability

What is the definition?

Global citizenship and sustainability involves understanding diverse world views and perspectives in order to effectively address the various political, environmental, social, and economic issues that are central to living sustainably in today's interconnected and interdependent world. It also involves acquiring the knowledge, motivation, dispositions, and skills required for engaged citizenship, along with an appreciation of the diversity of people and perspectives in the world. It calls for the ability to envision and work towards a better and more sustainable future for all.

(Source: Ministry of Education [link](#))

What does it look like?

Student Descriptors:

- Students understand the political, environmental, economic, and social forces at play in the world today, how they interconnect, and how they affect individuals, communities, and countries.
- Students make responsible decisions and take actions that support quality of life for all, now and in the future.
- Students recognize discrimination and promote principles of equity, human rights, and democratic participation.
- Students recognize the traditions, knowledge, and histories of Indigenous peoples, appreciate their historical and contemporary contributions to Canada, and recognize the legacy of residential schools.
- Students learn from and with people of diverse cultures and backgrounds and develop crosscultural understanding.
- Students engage in local, national, and global initiatives to make a positive difference in the world.

- Students contribute to society and to the culture of local, national, and global communities, both physical and virtual, in a responsible, inclusive, sustainable, ethical, and accountable manner.
- Students, as citizens, participate in various groups and online networks in a safe and socially responsible manner.

(Source: Ministry of Education [link](#))

How do I teach this?

It is clear by the student indicators that Global Citizenship and Sustainability encompasses a variety of approaches to consider with your students. Three will be examined in this chapter: active citizenship, [environmental education](#), and *Every Child Matters* (Orange Shirt Day) as part of Truth and Reconciliation calls to action.

Example 1: Engaged Citizenship

One way to engage students in the skills required for engaged citizenship is to bring into your classroom current examples that are occurring in their own community. For example, when the build up to a municipal (or provincial or federal) election is happening, there are many ways to involve your students directly. While they are too young to cast their vote, they are not too young to understand the principles and processes behind voting, nor the concept of societal issues underpinning an election platform.

If I Were
MAYOR



As Hamiltonians prepare to head to the polls this fall to choose the city's next leader, we want to know what bold, neighbourhood-driven ideas you would bring to the table if you were the chair of office. What would you do if you were mayor of Hamilton?

Here's one example, from the 2026 build up to the municipal elections in Hamilton, Ontario. Over the span of months leading to the election, community members have been invited to submit their [“If I were mayor...” ideas](#) and have them published in *The Spec* online and print local newspaper. Multiple examples exist to peruse. What could this look like within your own classroom, or your own school community?

Example 2: Environmental Education



When thinking about teaching the concept of living sustainably, this example from an elementary Ontario teacher gives shape to an approach that started in the classroom, and evolved into an ongoing conversation between her students and their local councillor. In her words:

We began our exploration in the closest available green space: our own schoolyard. The lesson began inside our classroom. Students were prompted to consider the nature in our schoolyard with questions such as, “What kinds of plants do we have out there?” and “When you are outside in the schoolyard, what types of activities do you like to do?” They were able to share that there were grass and trees in our schoolyard, but didn’t name the different types and had not examined all the other plants around the field’s edges...

This experience led into a life sciences unit on living things, where we worked together to notice the unique elements of each schoolyard plant...

After our lessons on the school grounds, it was time to take what we had learned about the schoolyard further and go on a few community walks to examine what other local green spaces were like. Were they as big? What did they have to offer our students and their families?...

When we returned to the classroom, students began drawing pictures of the green spaces near their houses and thought about what other local green spaces exist in our area. This exercise was extended into map creation lessons, with one of two ideas as prompts for their work: create a whole new green space for the community or improve a current space. Where would a new space go in our community? What would we enjoy in a green space? What type of green space would benefit our community as a whole?...

After developing and discussing their ideas for new or improved community green spaces, the students used what they had learned and created to write letters to the Port Hope Town Council with their recommendations for better green spaces and more support for our community...

(Source: [ETFO Voice](#))

Example 3: Truth and Reconciliation



Many teachers will recognize September 30 as “Orange Shirt Day,” a day to honour Truth and Reconciliation in Canada. The origin story and events behind the commemoration is described by the indigenous team at [Orange Shirt Day](#). Access to sample lessons gives teachers the opportunity to use a full lesson created by indigenous authors. For example, [this one](#) provides a math lesson, a text for reading, and an image-prompt lesson to guide students as they learn more about residential schools. The reading-a-text lesson is as follows:

Orange Shirt Day Vocabulary

Important Words	Important Thoughts
1. tired	Why is Orange Shirt Day a very important day for all children? It reminds us that all children matter. All children have an important voice that deserves to be heard.
2. schools	
3. lonely	
4. families	It also is a time to learn about residential schools and the children who were forced to attend them. What are residential schools? They are not like regular school. If you went to residential school, you could not go home at the end of the day. You had to stay there all night, too. Even worse, you had to stay for the entire school year!
5. voices	
6. entire	
7. forced	Lots of children felt tired and lonely. They wanted to go back to their families, but no one would listen. They felt like they were not important enough for people to listen to their voices.
8. matters	
9. attend	
10. listen	Thankfully, all residential schools are closed now. No one must go to places like that anymore. Instead, we now have Orange Shirt Day to remind us that <i>every child matters</i> .
11. enough	
12. closed	
13. remind	_____ You read this quietly to yourself _____ You read this with a partner _____ You underlined the important vocabulary words
14. children	
15. residential	
	Time to write or draw about important words and what they mean!

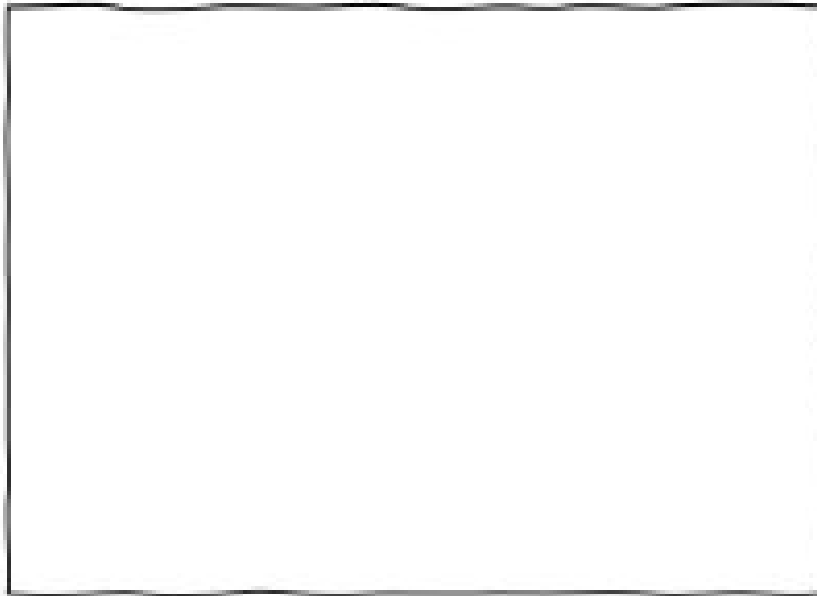
What do you think are the top 3 most important words from the reading?

1. _____ is an important word because

2. _____ is an important word because

3. _____ is an important word because

Time to draw a picture about the reading. Use words to describe what you drew:



How do I assess this?

The focus for this section will be on clustering or integrating expectations, and what that can look like for assessment. To begin, select one of the three examples examined from *How do I teach this?* section above, and follow the prompts.

Examine the Strands of the Language curriculum below. Consider the following:

- What questions can I ask to meet the A1 expectations? For a reminder, consult the [What does the curriculum say?](#) part of the Front Matter.

- How many expectations are authentically linked to the lesson? Which of those will I assess? Consider process and product, as well as observations and conversations for assessment.
- Consider how you might create the Learning Goals and Success Criteria to convey the lesson intent clearly for students and for you. For a refresher on writing Learning Goals and Success Criteria, refer back to [A Note about Assessment](#) in the front matter of this book.

Strand A: Literacy Connections and Applications

Overall Expectation A1: Transferable Skills

Throughout each grade, in connection with the learning in strands B to D, students will:

OVERALL EXPECTATION A1. Transferable Skills:		
demonstrate an understanding of how the seven transferable skills (critical thinking and problem solving; innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship; self-directed learning; collaboration; communication; global citizenship and sustainability; and digital literacy) are used in various language and literacy contexts		
SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS		
Grades 1–3	Grades 4–6	Grades 7–8
Receptive and Expressive Communication		
A1.1 identify how transferable skills can be used to support communication in various cultural, social, linguistic, and domain-specific contexts, and apply them when reading, listening to, viewing, and creating texts of various forms	A1.1 explain how transferable skills can be used to support communication in various cultural, social, linguistic, and domain-specific contexts, and apply them when reading, listening to, viewing, and creating texts of various forms	A1.1 analyze and explain how transferable skills can be used to support communication in various cultural, social, linguistic, and domain-specific contexts, and apply them when reading, listening to, viewing, and creating texts of various forms
Student Agency and Engagement		
A1.2 demonstrate an understanding of how transferable skills help them to express their voice and be engaged in their learning	A1.2 evaluate and explain how transferable skills help them express their voice, be engaged in their learning, and plan the next steps to develop their capabilities and potential	A1.2 evaluate and explain how transferable skills help them to express their voice, be engaged in their learning, and implement a plan to develop their capabilities and potential

Note: See *Ask yourself* section below for A2.

Strand B: Foundations of Language

Overall Expectation B1: Oral and Nonverbal Communication



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=32#h5p-8>

Note: See *Ask yourself* section below for B2 and B3.

Strand C: Comprehension: Understanding and Responding to Texts

Overall Expectation C3: Critical Thinking in Literacy



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=32#b5p-15>

Note: See *Ask yourself* section below for C1 and C2.

Strand D: Composition: Expressing Ideas and Creating Texts



An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=32#b5p-14>

Ask yourself:

What am I learning about how to use the curriculum to guide my lesson planning and assessment? You can find the full Language curriculum (2023) [here](#).

- What would I need to add to my lessons in order to assess A1?
- Is there an authentic correlation to A2? What could I add if I wanted to assess A2 as well? For a reminder, consult the [What does the curriculum say?](#) part of the Front Matter.
- How might I bring in B2 and/or B3? Is there a follow-up lesson wherein these expectations might be integrated and assessed? For additional ideas on how to integrate overall expectations B2 and B3 into your lessons, consult the [Foundations of Language](#) for possibilities.
- In what ways might C1 and C2 be used appropriately, either in the design of this lesson, or in a related lesson?
- Are there authentic connections with other subjects for you to integrate into your planning?

Online Resources:

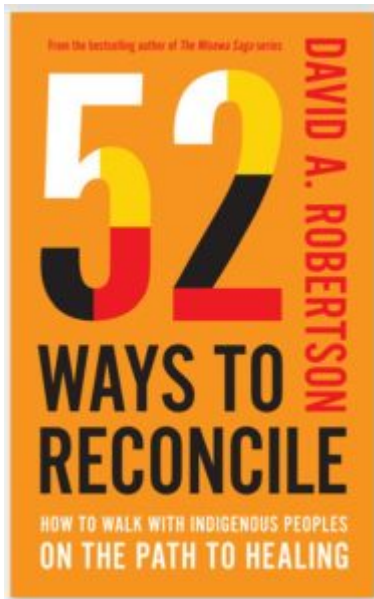


1. [Watersheds Canada](#) is an excellent resource for lessons and ideas related to teaching children about environmental sustainability. [Learning for a Sustainable Future](#) is another Canadian site with rich resources for the classroom.
2. Your local conservation authority will likely have educational resources and lesson plans you can access, such as [this one](#) from Ausable Conservation Authority in Ontario.
3. This video was co-created by grade three students to teach about sustainability. It pits Ecoman against Dumpit man to illustrate multiple concepts about taking care of nature and “going green.”



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=32#oembed-1>

4. The Assembly of First Nations [toolkit](#) provides multiple resource guides, classroom activities, and videos for use, as does [orangeshirtday.org](#). The resources have been created by indigenous peoples.
5. The [Circle of Learning](#) is an Indigenous-owned initiative that promotes Indigenous voices and art, offering authentic stories and accompanying lessons and teacher guides.
6. *52 Ways to Reconcile* author David Robinson’s [blog with resources](#) is a resource that suggests practical, doable steps towards honouring the Truth and Reconciliation action items.



Media Attributions

- if i were mayor screenshot
- etfo voice article screenshot
- every child matters logo
- orange shirt day vocab and text 1
- orange shirt day vocab and text 2
- ketansinhchauhan-children-8328050
- book cove 52 ways

7.

DIGITAL LITERACY

Digital Literacy

What is the definition?

Digital literacy involves the ability to solve problems using technology in a safe, legal, and ethically responsible manner. With the ever-expanding role of digitalization and big data in the modern world, digital literacy also means having strong data literacy skills and the ability to engage with emerging technologies. Digitally literate students recognize the rights and responsibilities, as well as the opportunities, that come with living, learning, and working in an interconnected digital world.

(Source: Ministry of Education [link](#))

What does it look like?

Student Descriptors:

- Students select and use appropriate digital tools to collaborate, communicate, create, innovate, and solve problems.
- Students understand how to manage and regulate their use of technology to support their mental health and well-being.
- Students use digital tools to define and plan data searches, collect data, and identify relevant data sets. They analyse, interpret, and graphically represent, or “visualize”, data in various ways to solve problems and inform decisions.
- Students demonstrate a willingness and confidence to explore and use new or unfamiliar digital tools and emerging technologies (e.g., open source software, wikis, robotics, augmented reality). Students understand how different technologies are connected and recognize their benefits and limitations.
- Students manage their digital footprint by engaging in social media and online communities respectfully, inclusively, safely, legally, and ethically. Students understand their rights with respect to personal data and know how to protect their privacy and security and respect the privacy and security of others.
- Students analyse and understand the impact of technological advancements on society, and society’s role

in the evolution of technology.

(Source: Ministry of Education [link](#))

How do I teach this?

The use of digital tools is naturally embedded in a teacher's daily practice. We often take for granted the extent of our use of digital tools and the thinking that accompanies our use. For example, we use digital tools for tracking and reporting student assessment, for planning, communication, collaboration, research, text-creation, and for reading, learning, socializing, and for entertainment.

Sometimes even we are not necessarily aware of the security and privacy features that are inherent in the platforms we use; and we want to make sure that what we use with our students is vetted for safety and privacy. The best way to do so would be to follow the policy your school board has for technology and digital tool use.

Becoming self-aware and unpacking the skills we are using when we use digital tools is one approach to identifying and scaffolding the skills our students need to become effective digital citizens themselves. When we reflect on and surface our own uses and biases for use, we become more informed in how to help our students similarly establish their own digital-user identity.

Teachers need to prepare their students to use technology both individually and collaboratively: to research, plan, create, document, and share learning. The use of a variety of digital and multimodal tools helps students explore their own skills and preferences, including developing their own set of boundaries for safe use.

Generative AI is increasingly ubiquitous – and controversial. Teachers can have students explore AI as an emerging technology for brainstorming, generating possibilities, supporting planning and creative exploration, while also considering its limitations and the importance of maintaining human creativity, judgement, and artistic decision-making. Students should also be examining the embedded equity, ethical, and environmental impacts of using Gen AI as they start to develop their own digital-use identity. Again, it is important to note that a teacher should consult their school board's policy for use of digital tools and generative artificial intelligence.



Canada's
Centre for
Digital Media
Literacy



Mediasmarts is one of the best Canadian resources for teaching digital and media literacy. It houses and

continues to develop multiple resources for teaching, including four online multimedia textbooks tailored to Ontario curriculum for Language (2023) grades 1-8 and English grade 9 (2023).



An interactive HSP element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferrableskills/?p=34#b5p-16>

Teachers can develop students' understanding of digital citizenship through discussions of privacy, consent, and the responsible recording and sharing of others' work. Students should be taught to acknowledge and reference the sources they use as a natural part of their thinking processes. Importantly, digital literacy also involves knowing when not to use technology.

Teachers can plan lessons for explicit reflection, wherein students are encouraged to consider whether a digital tool meaningfully enhances their work or whether it hampers their natural, innate creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking, asking themselves questions like:

- Why did they select a particular tool?
- How did it enhance their learning?
- What were its limitations?
- Was it used ethically and responsibly?
- Would a non-digital approach have been more effective?

How do I assess this?

The same foundational principles of assessment apply to assessing your students' digital literacy as they do to their other classwork. For a refresher, you can access previous chapters for the following:

- How [the verbs in the curriculum expectations](#) inform my lesson planning and assessment
- [Developing learning goals and success criteria](#)
- [Providing descriptive feedback to enhance student learning](#)
- [Use of single point rubrics](#)
- [Using the Achievement Chart for planning and assessment](#)
- [Building self-directed learners through self-assessment](#)
- [Use of graphic organizers to develop and show student thinking](#)
- [Using your student assessment data to guide next steps in your planning](#)
- [Clustering Language expectations and integrating additional subject areas](#)

In addition to assessing and evaluating the products of your students' digital efforts, you can also consider:

- **Digital Artifacts:** student-created multimedia projects, collaborative shared docs, or digital presentations – for content validity, technical execution, and in reflection on the development of their skills.
- **Observational Checklists:** tracking daily use of digital tools, focusing on safe navigation, respect for privacy, and constructive peer collaboration.
- **Self and Peer Reflection:** asking students to reflect on their screen habits, digital footprints, and choices regarding online well-being.
- **Tool Selection:** choosing the right digital medium to solve a problem or build a product, and explaining their rationale for their chosen tool.
- **Information Literacy:** locating, evaluating, and synthesizing web-based content, including thinking critically about the validity of the information.
- **Digital Citizenship:** managing their privacy, avoiding cyberbullying, and respecting digital footprints; and being able to explain how they are doing so.
- **Self-Regulation:** being aware of how they are managing their technology use to support their mental health.

(sources: [Mediasmarts](#); [Canadian Journal of Education](#); [Information and Privacy Commission](#))

Ask yourself:

- Have I checked my school board's policy on use of digital tools and AI in my classroom? What are my teaching colleagues doing? What am I comfortable using or not using?
- What digital tools does my school already have access to that I can use with my students? Do I need to inform parents of what tools I plan on using with my students?
- What do my students already know about digital literacy? How familiar are they with the use of digital tools? What is their prior experience with use of internet searches, social media, generative AI, etc.?

Online Resources:

1. The Information and Privacy Commission of Ontario worked with Mediasmarts to create [four lessons](#) to teach students in grades two through eight about privacy rights, digital literacy, and online safety. Lessons include privacy principles that every student needs to understand, such as identifying risks, strategies to protect privacy, and respecting others' privacy.
2. OPHEA (Ontario Physical Health Education Association) has created many [excellent resources for teachers](#) to use in the classroom, for specific elementary grade levels. Some of the lessons include videos as case studies in a student voice to address, for example, safety online.

3. TVOLearn has created Ontario-curriculum specific resources for teaching digital literacy. You can access their lessons [here](#).
4. CommonSense Education is another excellent source for videos and other resources to support students in learning about digital literacy. For example, this video explains the concept of a digital footprint.



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferrableskills/?p=34#oembed-1>

5. This excellent [article](#) provides insights into how to help English language learners develop their digital fluency.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

8 Ways to Help English Learners Improve Their Digital Fluency

The fact that software applications have common functions in different formats may not be obvious to students also navigating a new language, and these scaffolds can help.

By **Christine Jorge**

August 3, 2026



Maskot / Alamy

CASE STUDIES

The intention of providing these real-life case studies is to initiate thinking about teaching and assessing the transferable skills. When viewing the case studies, consider the following:

Ask yourself:

- What transferable skills did I see in action in the case study?
- Which additional curricular connections can I make? How might I cluster Language expectations and integrate additional subject areas in the case study?
- What could this look like in my own classroom? What resources might I need, and to whom do I turn for help in securing these resources?
- What opportunities exist that I am already aware of in my class? my school? my community?
- How might I frame something I am currently doing to meet the expectation of embedding transferable skills into my lessons?

Reading Buddies – Pairing older students with younger ones builds reading skills, confidence, and engagement. You can find out more here in this [article](#).



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<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/transferableskills/?p=317#ocmbed-1>

Fairness means accessibility for all – Kindergartners, who notice the barriers that exist for their classmate with a disability, engage with their community to build ramps to improve accessibility. You can find out more in this [CTV news report](#).



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This is Learning – Jordan, a student with an IEP, demonstrates clearly he can perform well when the learning environment (in this case, an Ontario Skills Competition) meets his learning needs.



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“It doesn’t work...yet” – A robotics team feels defeated when their robot did not work as they hoped; but what emerged was their incredible skills in the process of their work.



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