



Welcoming a newcomer

Critical Challenge

Choose the best way to help a newcomer to our class.

Overview

This challenge explores the ways in which students might help a child who is new to the classroom.

Suggested activities

Explore empathy

To begin, invite students to think about their very first day at school. Guide them in talking about their feelings of uncertainty about how to do things and what was expected of them. Speculate about what it would be like to go to school where many things were much different and the student did not speak the same language as everyone else.

Respond to story about a newcomer

If available, read a story about a newcomer to a class or to a country. Robert Munsch's book, *From Far Away*, tells the true story of a little girl who comes to Canada from Lebanon. A caution about this story is that it contains a scene where the nervous young girl "pees" on her teacher's lap and there are references to Halloween. *Franklin's New Friend* by Paulette Bourgeois could also be used to introduce students to welcoming newcomers in the neighbourhood or school. After reading the story, ask students to think about what it was like for the newcomer. Invite students to compare the character's experiences with their own experiences on their first day of school.

Brainstorm problems and solutions

With the class, discuss and list the newcomer's difficulties and suggest possible solutions for each problem.

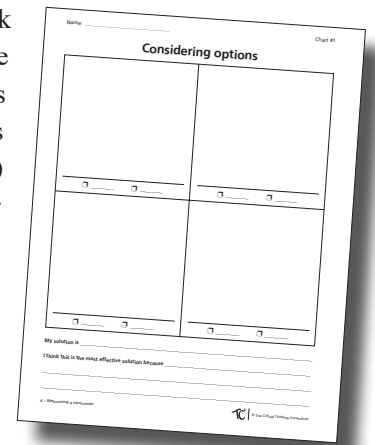
Develop criteria for effective solution to a newcomer's problem

Invite students to imagine that a new student has moved to their school. Choose one of the difficulties the person might encounter and ask the class to suggest possible ways to help with the problem. Discuss the criteria for a successful solution, including:

- the solution solves the problem
- it is something that children are able to do (realistic)
- it respects the person's feelings.

Choose among options

Ask students to draw a picture of the solution that they think would best solve the identified problem. You may wish to use the chart for *Considering options* to structure this activity. Repeat this process for other kinds of problems and solutions that students might encounter. See **Solving the Problem** (Critical Challenge) for detailed suggestions on how to teach and assess the tools for thoughtful problem solving.



Specific outcomes

This critical challenge may address these Alberta social studies outcomes:

Specific Outcome K.1.2.1	Students will appreciate feelings, ideas, stories and experiences shared by others.
Specific Outcome K.1.4.2	How can we show interest and sensitivity toward social, physical, cultural and linguistic diversity in the school, groups and communities?
Specific Outcome K.1.4.4	How can we show respect and acceptance of people as they are?
Specific Outcome K.2.5.5	In what ways can people contribute to a group or community?
Specific Outcome K.S.1.2	Students will compare and contrast information provided.
Specific Outcome K.S.5.1	Students will consider the needs of others.
Specific Outcome K.S.8.1	Students will listen to others in a socially appropriate manner.
Specific Outcome K.S.8.2	Students will respond appropriately to comments and questions, using language respectful of human diversity.

References

From Far Away

Saoussan tells the true story of her family's flight from war-ridden Lebanon. She wrote a letter to Robert Munsch, and together they made her letter into this book.

Munsch, Robert and Askar, Saoussan. Toronto, ON: Annick Press, 1995.

Franklin's New Friend

Franklin has always lived in the same house in the same town and he's grown up with the same friends. Then new neighbours move in—the Moose family! At school, Mr. Owl asks Franklin to be Moose's buddy. Initially, Franklin is afraid of Moose because of his size but he soon realizes that, despite their differences, he has made a new friend.

Bourgeois, Paulette. Toronto, ON: Kids Can Press, 1997.

Adapted from *I Can Make a Difference*, edited by Mary Abbott, Roland Case and Jan Nicol (Richmond, BC: The Critical Thinking Consortium, 2002), 45–56.

Considering options

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My solution is _____

I think this is the most effective solution because _____

Assessing *Considering options* chart

	Precognition	Partial understanding	Basic understanding	Extended understanding	Sophisticated understanding
Identifies solutions	Does not identify solutions.	Incompletely identifies solutions.	Partially identifies solutions.	Sufficiently identifies solutions.	Completely identifies solutions.
Assesses possible solutions in light of criteria	Does not assess possible solutions in light of criteria.	Inaccurately assesses possible solutions in light of criteria.	Simply assesses possible solutions in light of criteria.	Logically assesses possible solutions in light of criteria.	Insightfully assesses possible solutions in light of criteria.
Selects a reasonable solution	Does not select a reasonable solution.	Selects a reasonable solution but does not support decision.	Selects a reasonable solution and simply supports decision.	Selects a reasonable solution and logically supports decision.	Selects a reasonable solution and insightfully supports decision.

Comments: