

See With Fresh Eyes

Now that you are well into the school year, ask yourself: What do I know about my students so far? For this challenge, choose students you find difficult or whom you just don't know very well and see these students with fresh eyes - focused on their assets and potential.

What you will need:

Time estimate: 30 minutes with optional extension

Materials: paper, pen, class roster

Directions:

1. Choose 3 students in your class(es) - perhaps a few students who have challenged you recently.
2. One student at a time, use the reflection prompts below to consider each child from different perspectives. Be as objective and descriptive as possible - focusing on what you know or have observed, rather than what you believe or assume about each child based on reports from last year's teacher, a student's reputation, or even your own interaction with a student in past years.
3. For each student, answer three or more of the following questions that will help you get to know them better.
 - What stories has the student told you or her classmates?
 - What does the student often draw or write about?
 - How has the student contributed to our class?
 - Where does the student typically spend time while in the classroom? On the playground?
 - Who are the student's friends? What is his role among his friends?
 - What types of questions does the student tend to ask?
 - In what ways does the student like to help?
 - What might you learn from this student?
 - What else do you notice about the student?
4. **Keep your responses somewhere safe, out of view of students and classroom visitors.**
5. Spend time with one of the students to get to know them better; consider finding time during lunch, before or after school. You can use the questions to give you ideas for your conversation.
6. A few weeks later, revisit these questions and your responses. Consider how your perspective on these students has changed. Do you have any new answers to the reflection questions?